



Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia

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Table of contents

	Page
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Introduction	13
3. Context	14
4. What is happening?	17
• Youth crime	18
• Specific crime types	21
• Regional analysis	23
• Gender analysis	25
• System responses	28
5. Why is it happening?	33
• Developmental theories of crime and delinquency	34
• Risk factors	38
• Protective factors	57
• Summary - risk and protective factors by domain	60
6. Jurisdictional review of interventions/prevention practices	64
• Examples of effective/promising interventions	69
• Summary and conclusions – best practices	88
• Examples of ineffective interventions	90
7. Programs and issues identified by government staff providing youth services	93
• Inventory	93
• Specific initiatives	101
• Common themes	106
8. Interventions in the works	110
9. General observations	113
10. Appendices	
• Appendix A: How the YCJA is operating	115
• Appendix B: Definitions	118
• Appendix C: Bibliography	119

1. Executive Summary

Concern by the Department of Justice, stakeholders and the general public about youth crime in Nova Scotia prompted the department's Policy, Planning and Research (PP&R) branch to provide a snapshot on youth justice issues in Nova Scotia. The resulting paper presents statistical information on youth criminal activity and system responses, an overview of risk and protective factors, insights on effective interventions, perspectives from government officials and others providing youth services, as well as programming information. The intent is to help inform discussion on early prevention/intervention efforts that will assist in preventing youth crime. General observations are also provided.

The report begins with a section on widely-accepted conclusions by experts in the field about the development of youth-offending behaviour. They conclude that while most youth commit crime, most typically grow out of crime as they age. Longitudinal studies further suggest there are several risk factors that place certain youth at increased risk of offending. At the same time, there are youth with many risk factors who never participate in offending behaviour while there are youth with few risk factors who have established criminal careers. Developmental theories of delinquency suggest a need to target resources on those who are more likely to develop serious, chronic and violent criminal careers into adulthood rather than on those who will likely desist from offending without any formal intervention.

Highlights from the context section

- Most youth commit crime, the majority of which is relatively minor, and most have never been apprehended by police; the majority of youth who commit crime are one-time offenders.
- Young people aged 15-24 represent the group which has the highest age-specific rates of offending.
- The incidence and prevalence of youth-offending behaviour is significantly higher among males than females.
- The majority of youth court-related activity is committed by a small percentage of offenders.
- In general, violent young offenders tend to be frequent or persistent offenders; however, they commit more nonviolent offences than violent offences.
- Violent youth tend to have many other co-occurring problems, such as poverty, substance abuse, truancy, dropping out of school, gang membership, teenage pregnancy and experiences of previous victimization.

- An early age of onset is associated with a relatively long criminal career duration and the commission of many offences. Compared with adolescents who become involved in delinquency in their teens, child delinquents between the ages of 7 and 12 have a two- to threefold greater risk of becoming serious, violent and chronic offenders.

Highlights from a statistical review of youth criminal activity in Nova Scotia

The second section of the report outlines trends in youth crime in the province between 1999 and 2004. Highlights from this section:

- Between 1999 and 2004, Nova Scotia experienced a 12% increase in the rate of youth charged with violent offences. Specifically, there has been a 43% increase in the rate of youth charged with assault level 2 (assault with a weapon) as well as a 38% increase in the rate of youth charged with robbery.
- However, between 2003 and 2004, youth violent crime decreased 8%. It is too early to tell if this is the beginning of a downward trend.
- Between 1999 and 2003, rates of violent crime increased for young men and young women, with a 21% increase in rates of violent crime committed by young men and a 24% increase among young women.
- In Nova Scotia, as in most other parts of the country, crime is more likely to be committed by males than females. Young females (12-17 years old) were responsible for only 19% of all criminal activity that took place in Nova Scotia in 2004. Just over a quarter of all violent crime was committed by young women (mostly level 1 assault), while 16% of property crime was committed by young women. This proportion is reduced even further when examining motor vehicle theft (15%) and drug offences (13%), two offences which warrant particular attention in Nova Scotia.
- Common assault (the least serious form of assault) traditionally accounts for the largest proportion of violent crime. In 2004, common assault accounted for 51% of violent youth crime. This proportion has been decreasing since 1999 when common assault accounted for 55% of youth violent crime.
- Only a small proportion of violent crime committed by youth in Nova Scotia involved a firearm. However, over the past two years, rates of robbery involving a firearm have been higher in Nova Scotia than the national average.
- There has been a steady decrease in overall youth crime in Nova Scotia since 1995; this decrease is largely attributable to a decline in the rate of property crime.
- The rate of youth charged with property crime decreased 50% between 1999 and 2004.

- In Canada, the proportion of youth court cases including at least one offence against the administration of justice has steadily increased over the past decade from 30% in 1994/95 to 40% in 2003/04. Nova Scotia reported the most rapid increase in administrative offences from 24% in 1994/95 to 43% in 2003/04.
- A recent Statistics Canada study notes that youth are more likely to physically and sexually assault other youth. Therefore, if the rate of youth violent crime is increasing, it is safe to assume the rate of youth violent victimization is also increasing.

Highlights from a statistical review of system responses

Research staff also looked at system responses to youth criminal activity, including diversion efforts, sentencing trends and custody, noting the following:

- Similar to national trends, there has been an increased reliance on diversion in Nova Scotia. Most crime types noted substantial increases in the rate of youth being diverted from the formal criminal justice system.
- While all regions of the province are increasingly diverting youth, three areas emerge as being the most likely: HRM, North-Central and the Valley. The Cape Breton region was least likely to divert youth from the formal criminal justice process.
- Despite the overall increase in youth violent crime between 1999 and 2004, there has been a 49% reduction in the number of youths sentenced to custody over this time period (from 112 youths in 1999/00 to 57 youths in 2003/04). The number of youths on remand has also decreased from 23 in 1999/00 to 19 in 2003/04.
- Similarly, the rate of youths who received probation has decreased by 36% (from 167 per 100,000 youth in 1999/00 to 107 per 100,000 youth in 2003/04).
- Despite a reduction in caseload, Nova Scotia had the longest average elapsed time from first to last appearance in youth court in 2003/04.
- For a 2002 group of young offenders, 66% re-offended within one year of release from the correctional facility. This level of re-offending represents an increase compared to the preceding time period.

Highlights from a review of risk and protective factors for youth crime

The report also presents a review of empirical literature that specifies risk and protective factors for youth crime. Developmental theories of delinquent behaviour were also reviewed. Some highlights follow:

- Many precursors to youth violent, chronic or serious offending behaviour are found in early childhood and continue along developmental pathways.
- Risk factors are often highly interrelated, occurring together or clustering to produce added risk. There is also evidence that several problem behaviours share common risk factors. Thus, multi-component prevention interventions appear to be required to significantly reduce risk for violent behaviour.
- No one risk factor will guarantee offending behaviour. Indeed, risk factors have a cumulative effect in that the more risk factors present, the greater the likelihood of delinquency and violence.
- The identification of risk factors provides a means to reduce the *likelihood* of future criminal behaviour by designing empirically-based prevention strategies based on the identified risk factors.
- There may be reason to focus preventive interventions on groups or populations exposed to multiple risks rather than limiting prevention efforts to only those youths meeting a given risk profile.
- Based on empirical studies reviewed for this project, several risk factors appear to be consistently and strongly related to delinquency and violence:
 - raised in poverty;
 - neighbourhood crime/disadvantage;
 - exposure to/victim of violence;
 - early childhood aggression;
 - hyperactivity/impulsivity;
 - association with deviant peers/siblings/parents;
 - early initiation of violent behaviour and involvement in other forms of antisocial behaviour (e.g. substance use);
 - poor family management practices;
 - poor academic achievement;
 - member of a gang;
 - being male.
- Child delinquents (ages 7-12) tend to have longer offending careers than juveniles who become delinquent at a later age; as a result, these children will constitute a disproportionate threat to public safety and property.

- Early signs of disruptive behaviour in children should not be dismissed, particularly since child delinquents tend to have criminal careers of greater duration than those of later onset delinquents. But early intervention is complex given that most children who do show early disruptive behaviours do not persist in them.
- Risk factors for child delinquency tends to fall initially in the individual and family domains given where they are in development. As the child grows and becomes integrated into society, new risk factors related to school, peer influences and the community have a greater impact on the individual's behaviour.
- The majority of studies on risk factors are focused on male samples. Therefore, generalization of findings to female children and youth is uncertain.
- According to a recent study, the following risk and protective factors, though associated with delinquency, do not appear to differ for girls and boys:
 - family dynamics (structure and stability, supervision and control, family criminality, family violence);
 - school involvement;
 - availability of community-based alternatives to detention.
- According to one author, several factors proposed to contribute to girls' delinquency include:
 - problematic family dynamics and parental relationships;
 - gender-based oppression and abuse;
 - mental health and personality factors, including depression, low self-esteem, conduct disorder, suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviour;
 - school difficulties, including low achievement, low school attachment, and dropping out of school;
 - the alleviation of boredom and attention seeking grounded in a need to be noticed, included, stimulated and valued;
 - the abuse of and chronic use of alcohol and drugs by the parents of delinquent and aggressive girls and by the girls themselves;
 - connections to delinquent peers, especially older males; and
 - negative self-representations, particularly the belief that others see them in negative ways.
- Studies have shown that a substantial proportion of female delinquents report a history of sexual and physical abuse. Female victimization, and perhaps abuse in particular, is a risk factor that must be considered in any discussion of risk factors for female youth and is particularly important for appropriate prevention/intervention initiatives for girls.
- In a recent Canadian study, Fitzgerald (2003) found that males and females were affected differently by experiences of victimization. While there was a higher level of victimization among males, female victims had a higher likelihood for offending.

- The absence of protective factors while being exposed to risk factors places the individual at significant risk for later persistent serious offending.
- Certain protective factors may have significant influence in protecting children and youth from engaging in a lifestyle of antisocial behaviour. Factors which consistently appear to have a strong influence include:
 - school attachment and performance;
 - association with conventional, pro-social peers;
 - attachment to family;
 - schools and communities that emphasize positive social norms;
 - good family management practices;
 - warm, supportive relationships and bonding with adults;
 - opportunities to become involved in positive activities;
 - recognition and support for participating in positive activities;
 - cognitive, social and emotional competence;
 - nondisadvantaged/low-crime neighbourhood;
 - being female.
- Many studies have confirmed the importance of school attachment in preventing high-risk youth from engaging in delinquency and violence. In a recent Canadian study, school attachment was found to protect early-aggressive children from violence. Thus, initiatives to promote school attachment must occur as early as childhood.

Jurisdictional review of interventions/prevention practices – lessons learned

A discussion of successful intervention programs follows, with note of significant intervention elements which appear to be required in any successful intervention effort. A review of popular, but ineffective, intervention/prevention initiatives is also provided.

- Successful interventions are those that address multiple risk factors.
- Single-focus interventions are unlikely to be effective because antisocial behaviour emerges from a complex array of risk factors.
- Programs that involve the family will be more effective than those that do not.
- The earlier the intervention the more effective it is. Interventions starting before adolescence are more effective.
- Treatment that lasts a relatively long time is more effective and longer lasting in effect than short interventions.
- Many crime prevention activities require long-term investments before results in terms of reducing crime and victimization are visible.

- Programs that identify and refer for treatment children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) or other disorders will have more powerful, long-range effects than those that do not.
- Interventions that are successful with specific groups of youth may not transfer to a universal setting where fewer youth exhibit similar problems.
- Interventions must have a theoretical basis and be clearly and concretely described so that they can be systematically evaluated and replicated.
- Researchers must consider the child's development and larger context, regardless of the chronological age or risk factors involved.
- In Canada, information about which interventions work, the conditions that contribute to success or failure, and the transferability of interventions from one situation to another is only in the early stages of development.
- A consistent and coordinated multi-systemic approach is required to effectively prevent or reduce delinquency and violence. No single system can prevent or reduce delinquency on its own.
- Effective family-based intervention programs include: home visiting programs; preschool intellectual enrichment programs; parenting education programs, and cognitive and social skills training.
- The most promising school and community prevention programs for child delinquency include: classroom and behaviour management programs; multicomponent classroom-based programs; social competence promotion curriculums; conflict resolution and violence prevention curriculums; bullying prevention; afterschool recreation programs; mentoring programs; school organization programs; and comprehensive community interventions.
- Ineffective interventions identified include: Scared Straight (prison tours); DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and zero-tolerance policies; boot camps; punishment without treatment and rehabilitation services; removal of antisocial youth from their families, schools, neighbourhoods and communities for treatment; large custodial facilities; long terms of confinement; curfew laws; general deterrent policies; punishment in adult prisons; out-of-home placements for mental health treatment; youth gang suppression without other interventions; programs involving large groups of antisocial adolescents; and piecemeal solutions.

Inventory of current programs within Nova Scotia

To help round out the discussion, a high-level summary of programs offered by key provincial government departments is included in this paper. Those departments include Community Services, Education, Health, Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection. Some specific intervention initiatives have also been singled out through discussion with staff.

Issues identified by provincial government officials and others providing youth services

Staff also sought the opinions of provincial government employees who are involved in various aspects of youth programming – from child protection and mental health services to public school education, youth employment and health promotion. Their comments are grouped according to the following themes:

- inter-connectedness of risk and protective factors;
- need for integrated/horizontal approach to intervention;
- early intervention/community-based approaches seen as most effective;
- principles for effective intervention;
- preventing problems before they occur;
- engagement/connectedness key;
- focusing on positive behaviours;
- importance of family/community;
- clarifying departmental roles/responsibilities and connection between departments;
- lack of services, especially to 16-19 year olds;
- outdated legislation;
- difficulties reaching high-risk youth;
- ongoing professional development for service providers;
- research to guide policy options;
- proactively identify priorities and share costs.

Interventions in the works

The Department of Justice continues to push for changes in the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* at the federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) level. In addition, it is working with the Department of Community Services on a safer communities initiative, where the initial focus is on communities experiencing high crime rates and significant socioeconomic challenge. Other departments throughout government also have initiatives underway, including a Child Welfare Redesign Project with a focus on a placement services, after-hours emergency services, foster/adoption resources and shared services, and an “Employed youth engaged society” strategy developed by the Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat.

General observations

The Department of Justice offers this research paper to help inform work that is underway to develop a broad-based approach to intervention and crime prevention. The paper demonstrates there are many programs for families and youth and great cooperation between many agencies. Numerous efforts are also underway to further understand and act on research relating to risk and protective factors. Inter-agency collaboration is also happening in many programming areas and the focus of intervention is moving upstream to reach the causes of crime.

Two overall themes are clear:

- Enforcement isn't enough: If we are to reduce youth crime we must attack both crime and the causes of crime. The department recognizes the justice system alone cannot address youth crime; by the time the justice system is engaged, some harm – possibly serious, irreparable harm – has been done to both victim and perpetrator. So, partnerships are required among the many agencies, public and private, that work with youth and families.
- What's missing is an overall strategy: Collaboration, or lack of it, does not appear to be the problem. Some partnerships, such as CAYAC, are formal, while others are informal and particular to one aspect of youth. However, there is no comprehensive strategy in place linking various interventions and strategies across departments. It is therefore unclear how existing interventions and strategies relate back to risk and protection factors, which makes it difficult to identify gaps. Nor is there a comprehensive approach in place to measure, track and evaluate overall progress in achieving positive outcomes relating to children and youth.

With respect to youth crime specifically, the department is pursuing a four-pronged approach, which includes: pushing for changes to the Youth Criminal Justice Act (Canada) to give our courts greater discretion to order “out-of-control youth” to be held in custody; in partnership with law enforcement and the Public Prosecution Service, strengthening efforts to bring criminals to justice and to enforce court orders which release youth back to the community; updating programs for youth in custody and under community supervision; and developing an overall strategy to prevent youth from engaging in criminal activity and to provide them with hope and opportunity.

2. Introduction

Crime in Nova Scotia is garnering considerable attention by government and the general public, driven in part by reported increases in rates of violent crime and violent victimization as well as the perception of increasing risk of crime and victimization for the public.

This is cause for concern not only for justice but for all aspects of Nova Scotia society. There is the obvious concern for personal safety; fear alone, however low the risk, impairs our quality of life. But there is also an economic cost. Crime is a burden on the economy that falls disproportionately on the poor. About \$235 million¹ is spent on justice in Nova Scotia each year. This does not include the cost of social and educational programs that indirectly attempt to prevent crime through human development. Nor does it include the hidden costs of economic loss and forgone benefits – the small business that fails because its neighbourhood is perceived to be unsafe; and the countless individual decisions made elsewhere about whether to visit, go to university, or relocate to Nova Scotia .

Youth crime is of particular concern in this province, and the subject of a public inquiry ordered by Government after the release of a 16-year-old youth from court two days before he stole a vehicle and crashed into a car killing Theresa McEvoy. Prior to the tragedy, a Justice Partners Forum began discussing ways to become more proactive in addressing youth crime and in identifying what could be done that may minimize youth crime activity in the longer term. The forum is comprised of officials from the Department of Justice’s senior management team, the Nova Scotia Barristers’ Society, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, Public Prosecution Service, the Canadian Bar Association, the judiciary, Justice Canada, the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association and the RCMP.

The need for research to inform discussion and the development of policy options prompted the department’s Policy, Planning and Research (PP&R) branch to undertake this research initiative, which provides:

- a statistical profile of youth crime in Nova Scotia, including a review of youth activity captured by the criminal justice system and “system” responses to those activities;
- risk and protective factors of youth crime based on a literature review;
- jurisdictional review of prevention/intervention practices;
- a summary of program/issues identified by government staff providing youth services;
- specific government interventions now underway;
- general observations.

¹. The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics reported that approximately \$235 million was spent on administering justice in Nova Scotia in 2002/2003 (the latest figures available).

3. Context: What do we know about youth offending behaviour?

To understand the complexity of youth crime, it is important to point out several widely-accepted conclusions by experts in the field about the development of youth offending behaviour:

- Most youth commit crime, the majority of which is relatively minor, and most have never been apprehended by police (Doob et al, 1995; Sprott and Doob, 2005);
- Young people aged 15-24 represent the group which has the highest age-specific rates of offending. For instance, in 2003, persons in this cohort represented 14% of the total Canadian population while accounting for 45% of those accused of property crimes and 32% of persons accused of violent crime (Pottie Bunge et al, 2005).
- The prevalence of offending peaks in the late teenage years – between ages 15 and 19 (Farrington, 2002);
- The peak age of onset of offending is between 8 and 14, and the peak age of desistance from offending is between 20 and 29 (Farrington, 2002);
- An early age of onset predicts a relatively long criminal career duration and the commission of many offences. Compared with adolescents who become involved in delinquency in their teens, child delinquents between the ages of 7 and 12 have a two- to threefold greater risk of becoming serious, violent and chronic² offenders (Snyder et al, 2003; Farrington, 2002; LeBlanc and Fréchette, 1989);
- There is marked continuity in offending and antisocial behaviour from childhood to the teenage years and to adulthood. “This means that there is relative stability of the ordering of people on some measure of antisocial behaviour over time, and that people who commit relatively many offences during one age range have a high probability of also committing relatively many offences during another age range” (Farrington, 2002: 223);
- The incidence and prevalence of youth offending behaviour is significantly higher among males than females. In 1998-99, self-reported delinquency among 12- to 15-year-old Canadian adolescents shows that one female for every six males engages in property-related delinquency, while two females for every nine males engage in violent forms of delinquency (Artz et al, 2005).
- The most common type of crime committed by youth is property crime (Pottie Bunge et al, 2005).

²Chronic offenders are defined here as those who have been referred to youth court at least four times.

- The majority of youth who commit crime are one-time offenders, dispelling the image that most youth who come into contact with courts become chronic offenders (Carrington et al, 2005; Howell, 2003; Smart et al, 2004);
- Most youth cease committing crime as they age through adolescence. “For the most part, the involvement of young people in crime (including violent crime) tends to ‘go away’ on its own without any formal intervention whatsoever...in growing up most young people do stop committing crimes” (Doob et al, 1995: 40; Spratt and Doob, 2005);
- The majority of youth court-related activity is committed by a small percentage of offenders. These offenders are typically chronic/persistent offenders³ (Carrington, 2005; Howell, 2003; Smart et al, 2004). “In general, these chronic offenders have an early onset, a high individual offending frequency, and a long criminal career” (Farrington, 2002: 224);
- Offenders are versatile rather than specialized; that is, repeaters tend to commit several types of offences. For instance, “violent offenders are indistinguishable from frequent offenders in childhood, adolescent, and adult risk factors”(Farrington, 2002: 224);
- Offenders tend to be versatile not only in committing several types of crimes but also in committing several types of antisocial behaviour such as heavy drinking, reckless driving, sexual promiscuity, bullying and truancy (Farrington, 2002);
- Most offences up to the late teenage years are committed with others, whereas most offences from age 20 onwards are committed alone. This appears to be a developmental outcome of aging (Farrington, 2002);
- Different types of offences tend to be committed at distinctively different ages (Farrington, 2002). For instance, shoplifting is typically committed before burglary, which in turn is typically committed before robbery (Le Blanc and Fréchette, 1989). “In general, diversification of offending increases up to age 20; as each new type of crime is added, previously-committed crimes continue to be committed. Conversely, after age 20, diversification decreases and specialization increases” (Farrington, 2002: 224);
- In general, violent young offenders tend to be frequent or persistent offenders and commit more nonviolent offences than violent offences (Farrington, 1998);
- Violent youth tend to have many other co-occurring problems, such as substance abuse, truancy, dropping out of school, gang membership, teenage pregnancy and victimization (Farrington, 1998);

³The definition of chronic offender differs depending on the jurisdiction. In Canada, chronic offenders are defined as persons referred to court in relation to five or more criminal incidents. In a Canadian study of the criminal careers of 59,000 young people, chronic offenders made up the smallest group of alleged offenders (16%), but they were responsible for 58% of all court referrals involving the sample population. Source: Carrington et al, 2005).

- While there are numerous agreed upon risk factors for criminal/antisocial behaviour, many at-risk children and youth do not commit crime; at the same time, many violent youth do not progress to become violent adults (Farrington, 2002; Spratt et al, 2000).

It is clear from the above statements that youth crime is multifaceted. On the one hand, most youth commit crime, and most typically grow out of crime as they age. Longitudinal studies further suggest there are several risk factors that place certain youth at increased risk of offending. At the same time, there are youth with many risk factors who never participate in offending behaviour while there are youth with few risk factors who have established criminal careers.

Research on youth crime has recently focused on developmental theories of delinquency and crime to advance knowledge on what distinguishes young offenders who are likely to desist from delinquency from those who are likely to persist in their criminal careers. This focus speaks to the need to target resources on those who are more likely to develop serious, chronic and violent criminal careers into adulthood rather than on those who will likely desist from offending without any formal intervention.

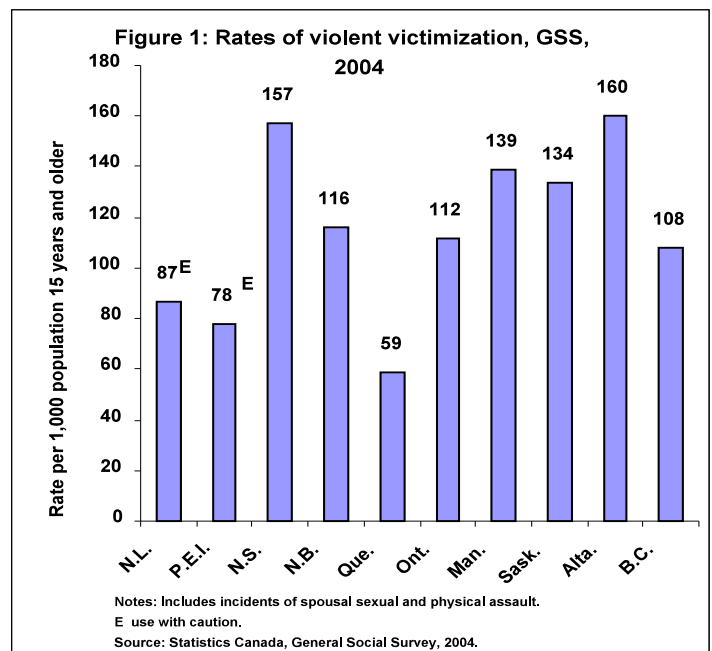
4. What is happening?

The purpose of this section of the report is to determine to what extent youth crime has increased or decreased in Nova Scotia, whether this is an urban or a rural phenomenon, as well as to determine whether youth crime varies by gender. When discussing youth crime, the analysis will focus on violent crime and property crime.

This information is based on police statistics. Many factors influence police-reported crime statistics, including the public's willingness to report to the police; police reporting to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics; changes in legislation, policies, or enforcement of these new initiatives; and social, demographic or economic changes (Sauve, 2004).

Furthermore, Nova Scotia was excluded from a recent Statistics Canada study which examined offenders' court careers. That study noted that a small percentage of offenders (16 %) are responsible for a large volume (58 %) of crime. While the data for Nova Scotia was not included, there is no reason to believe that we are any different in that a small number of offenders are responsible for a large volume of crime committed (Carrington, Matarazzo & de Sousa, 2005).

First information on overall crime rates is presented. The crime rate and victimization rate in Nova Scotia has generally been increasing over the past five years. The overall crime rate increased 4% between 1999 and 2004, driven mostly by increases in violent crime (up 15%) and other *Criminal Code* offences (up 10%). Between 1999 and 2004 there was a 4% decrease in property crime. Furthermore, the violent victimization rate⁴ in Nova Scotia increased 65% between 1999 and 2004. In 2004, Nova Scotia noted the second highest violent victimization rate in the country (157 per 1,000 Canadians) (Figure 1), and the census metropolitan area (CMA) of Halifax (229 per 1,000) had the highest violent victimization rate in the country.



⁴ In Canada, there are two primary sources of data on the prevalence of crime: victimization surveys such as the GSS on victimization, and police-reported surveys such as the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey. These two surveys are very different in survey type, coverage, scope, and source of information. In particular, the GSS is a sample survey, which in 2004, sampled about 24,000 individuals aged 15 years and older. The sample is weighted so that responses represent the noninstitutionalized Canadian population aged 15 years or over. In comparison, the aggregate UCR survey is a census of all incidents reported by police services across Canada. While the GSS captures information on 8 offences, the UCR survey collects data on over 100 categories of criminal offences. Perhaps the most striking difference between the two surveys is that the UCR survey records criminal incidents that are reported to the police and the GSS records respondents' personal accounts of criminal victimization incidents (Gannon et al., 2005).

Recent trends, 2003 to 2004

Between 2003 and 2004, there was a 2% increase in the overall crime rate in Nova Scotia. This was driven by a 7% increase in property crime. Between 2003 and 2004, there was a 1% decrease in violent crime and a 2% decrease in other *Criminal Code* offences (e.g. mischief, disturbing the peace). It is too early to tell whether the decline in violent crime and other *Criminal Code* offences is the beginning of a downward trend or an annual fluctuation.

YOUTH CRIME

Youths aged 12 to 17 who come into contact with the law can be formally charged or dealt with by other means. While this has always been true, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)*, which came into force on April 1, 2003 replacing the *Young Offenders Act*, requires that police consider the use of extrajudicial (non-court) measures for less serious offences before considering a charge. As a result, it is essential to take into account both youths formally charged by police and youths “cleared otherwise” in measuring youth criminal activity coming to the attention of police (Wallace, 2003). This analysis will present trends for youths charged, youths “cleared otherwise”, and the crime rate resulting from the combined counts, otherwise known as the accused rate. It should be noted that any increase in youths cleared otherwise may be partly attributable to increased reporting by police of youths not formally charged due to the new *YCJA* provisions on extrajudicial measures.

Rate of youth charged

Overall, the rate of youth charged with crime in Nova Scotia in 2004 was marginally higher than the national average (3,423 per 100,000 youth in NS compared to 3,065 per 100,000 youth in Canada). This was the case for the rate of youth charged with violent crime (863 per 100,000 youth in NS compared to 788 per 100,000 youth in Canada), property crime (1,329 per 100,000 in NS compared to 1,190 per 100,000 youth in Canada), and other *Criminal Code* offences (1,232 per 100,000 youth in NS compared to 1,087 per 100,000 youth in Canada).

In comparison to other jurisdictions, Nova Scotia fares reasonably well in the areas of property crime and other *Criminal Code* offences – we rank fifth out of 10 provinces. However, the issue of violent crime is another matter. In Nova Scotia, we rank third out of ten jurisdictions, falling behind Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The rate of youth charged with violent crime increased steadily between 1999 and 2003 from a rate of 773 per 100,000 youth to a high of 942 per 100,000 youth in 2003 (an overall increase of 22%). This increase was driven largely by increases in level 2 assault (up 43%) and robbery (up 38%). On a more positive note, between 2003 and 2004, the rate of youth charged with violent crime decreased 8%; however, it is too early to tell if this is the beginning of a downward trend.

Assault

Violent crime includes a wide variety of behaviours, ranging in seriousness from common assault (which involves pushing, slapping, punching and face-to-face verbal threats) to robbery with a firearm. Common assault (the least serious form of assault) traditionally accounts for the largest

proportion of violent crime. The proportion of youth violent crime accounted for by common assault was 51% in 2004. It has been decreasing since 1999 when common assault accounted for 55% of youth violent crime. On the other hand, assault level 2, which involves carrying, using or threatening to use a weapon against someone or causing someone bodily harm, has made up an increasing proportion of youth violent crime in Nova Scotia, from 15% in 1999 to 23% in 2004. Assault level 3, which involves wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of someone, continues to be a relatively rare occurrence amongst youth in this province.

Table 1- Rate per 100,000 - Youths Charged, Not Charged and Accused, Nova Scotia, 1999 and 2004

	Charged			Not charged ¹			Accused		
	Rate 1999	Rate 2004	% Change	Rate 1999	Rate 2004	% Change	Rate 1999	Rate 2004	% Change
Homicide/Attempted Homicide	0	3	N/A	0	0	N/A	0	3	N/A
Total Assaults	574	640	12	293	1017	247	866	1657	91
Level 1	427	439	3	277	935	238	704	1374	95
Level 2	137	196	43	16	82	413	153	278	82
Level 3	9	5	-42	0	0	N/A	9	5	-42
Other Assaults	67	68	3	7	15	122	73	83	14
Sexual Assaults - Total	59	48	-17	11	27	152	69	75	9
Level 1	56	48	-14	11	27	150	67	75	13
Level 2	1	0	-100	0	0	N/A	1	0	-100
Level 3	1	0	-100	0	0	N/A	1	0	-100
Other	3	4	51	0	1	N/A	3	5	102
Robbery – Total	72	99	38	1	17	1211	73	117	60
Violent crime – Total	773	863	12	311	1078	246	1085	1941	79
Break and Enter – Total	790	482	-39	162	348	114	953	829	-13
Residence	496	268	-46	104	199	91	600	467	-22
Business Premises	148	161	9	27	86	223	174	247	42
Other	146	52	-64	32	63	97	178	115	-35
Motor Vehicle Theft	189	178	-6	29	121	313	218	299	37
Theft Over	15	3	-82	12	9	-22	27	12	-55
Theft Under	1187	352	-70	447	1107	148	1634	1459	-11
Possession of Stolen Goods	378	274	-28	11	380	3355	389	654	68
Fraud	110	40	-64	25	82	224	136	122	-10
Property Crime – Total	2670	1329	-50	687	2047	198	3356	3375	1
Mischief	451	340	-25	279	1194	327	731	1534	110
Counterfeiting Currency	1	7	404	1	8	505	3	15	455
Bail Violations	124	318	157	5	50	833	129	368	185
Disturbing the Peace	65	47	-28	112	370	231	177	417	136
Offensive Weapons	48	35	-27	9	55	491	57	90	57
Prostitution	1	4	203	0	1	N/A	1	5	303
Arson	25	28	11	11	36	240	36	64	79
Drugs	233	156	-33	83	325	294	315	480	52
Other	824	454	-45	242	644	166	1066	1098	3
Other Criminal Code – Total	1540	1232	-20	660	2340	254	2200	3591	63
Total Criminal Code	4982	3423	-31	1658	5438	228	6641	8907	34

N/A - The rates were not available due to the low cell counts

¹ Not charged includes charges cleared by warnings, cautions, referrals to community programs, referrals to extrajudicial sanctions programs (formally known as alternative measures) and those cleared by other means (e.g youth is already in custody, has died or is under 12). It is likely an underestimate of the number of informal cautions/warnings given out.

Note: Percentage changes are based on unrounded figures.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

Property crime

The rate of youth charged with property crime declined substantially between 1999 and 2004 (down 50% from a rate of 2,670 per 100,000 youth in 1999 to 1,329 per 100,000 youth in 2004) (Table 1). Decreases were noted in the majority of offence categories with the exception of the rate of youth charged with breaking and entering on business premises, which increased 9% over this time period.

Unlike the decline noted in violent crime between 2003 and 2004, the rate of youth formally charged with property crime increased 4%. Despite this recent increase, rates in 2004 were significantly lower than they were between 1999 and 2003. Again, it is too early to tell if the recent increase in the rate of youth charged with property crime is the beginning of an upward trend or an anomaly.

Other *Criminal Code* offences

The rate of youth charged with other *Criminal Code* offences declined between 1999 and 2004 (down 20%), with the exception of bail violations⁵ (up 157% from a rate of 124 per 100,000 to 318 per 100,000) (Table 1). Decreases continued between 2003 and 2004. During this time, there was an 11% decrease in the rate of youths formally charged with other *Criminal Code* offences.

Offences against the administration of justice

Over the past decade, Nova Scotia reported the most rapid increase in the proportion of youth court cases involving at least one offence against the administration of justice from 24% to 43%. Offences against the administration of justice include failure to appear, breach of a probation order, unlawfully at large, failure to comply with an order, and other offences against the administration of justice.

Rate of youth cleared otherwise

Given the introduction of restorative justice in Nova Scotia in 1999 and the introduction of the *YCJA* in 2003, it is not surprising that there has been a notable increase in the rate of youth cleared otherwise between 1999 and 2004 (Table 1). For example, the rate of youth cleared otherwise has increased 246% for violent crime. Particularly, an increasing number of youth are being diverted for level 1 and level 2 assault (up 238% and 413% respectively).

Increases in the rate of youth cleared otherwise were also noted for property crime (up 198%) with the exception of the rate of youth cleared otherwise for theft over \$5,000, which was down 22% (however, this is not a high-volume offence).

The rate of youth cleared otherwise is highest for other *Criminal Code* offences (e.g. mischief, disturbing the peace, drug offences). This is the offence category which has also experienced the greatest increase in the rate of youth being diverted (up 254%). Many of these offences could be

⁵ Increases were also noted in the rate at which youth had been charged with counterfeiting currency, prostitution and arson, however these rates are based on small numbers and as a result are volatile.

considered minor in nature (e.g. mischief) and, therefore, an increased reliance on diversion would be expected.

It appears as though Nova Scotia is following a national trend in diverting youth for most *Criminal Code* offences. In Canada, the rate of youth diverted for violent crime increased 59% over the last six years. Diversion has been used for many types of violent crime, including assault level 1 (up 50%), assault level 2 (up 88%) and robbery (up 60%). Diversion has also been increasingly used for property crime (up 51%) and other *Criminal Code* offences (up 86%).

Rate of youth accused

In 2003, Statistics Canada began to take into account both youths formally charged by police and youths cleared otherwise to measure criminal activity that comes to the attention of the police. In Nova Scotia, between 1999 and 2004, the combined rate of youths charged and youths cleared otherwise increased substantially for violent crime (up 79%) and other *Criminal Code* offences (up 63%) (Table 1). These increases were driven, in large part, by the rate of youth being diverted.

Despite increases in the rate of youth being diverted for property crime, the rate of youth accused (combined rate) with property crime rose a mere 1% between 1999 and 2004. The small increase in the rate of youth accused with property crime was largely offset by the large reduction in the rate of youth charged with property crime (down 50%).

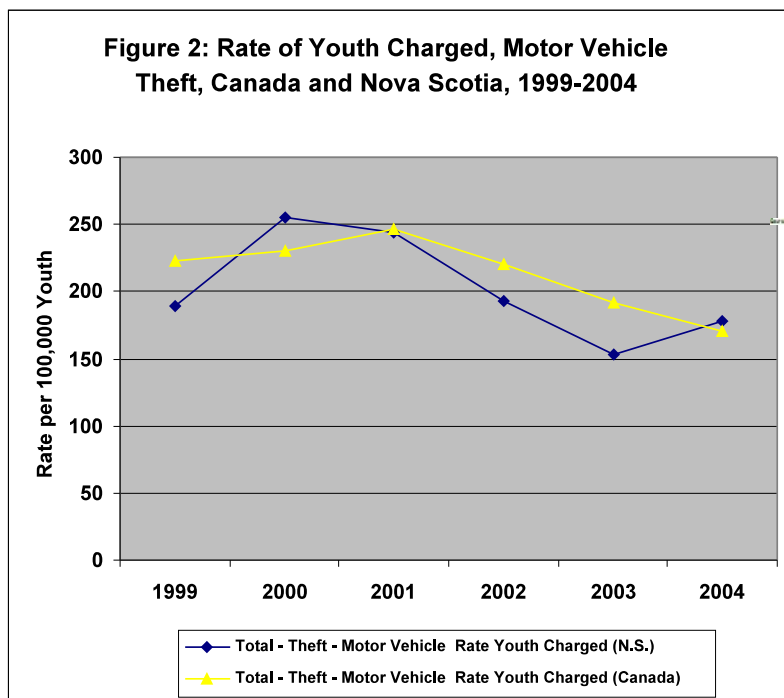
EXAMINING SPECIFIC CRIME TYPES

In addition to examining overall crime trends, this report looks specifically at motor vehicle theft, drugs and firearm use – offences which warrant particular attention at this point in time.

Motor vehicle theft

Given the focus of the Nunn Commission, this report examines the rate of youth charged with motor vehicle theft. Between 1999 and 2004, Nova Scotia consistently had lower than national levels of youth charged with motor vehicle theft, with the exceptions of the year 2000 and, to a lesser extent, 2004 (Figure 2).

The overall rate of youth charged with motor vehicle theft decreased 6% between 1999 and 2004 (from 189 per 100,000 youth in 1999 to 178 per 100,000 in 2004). However, the year in which the McEvoy tragedy occurred, rates of motor vehicle theft were slightly higher than



the previous year. Over this same time period, there has also been a substantial increase in the number of youth who have not been formally charged. The rate of youth who were not charged with motor vehicle theft increased 313% between 1999 and 2004 (from 29 per 100,000 youth to 121 per 100,000 youth in 2004) (Table 1).

Drugs

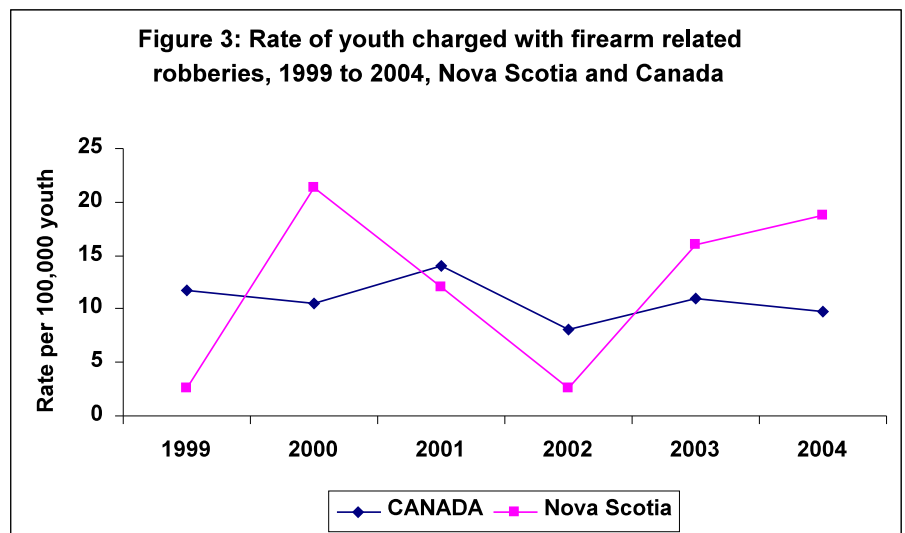
Recently, it has been suggested that a large part of the youth crime problem in Nova Scotia, particularly the HRM area, is largely attributable to drugs, and especially crack cocaine. In 2004, the vast majority (88%) of charges laid for drug offences involved cannabis, while only 12% involved charges for other types of drugs (e.g. cocaine, crack), and this proportion has remained relatively consistent over the past six years. Furthermore, there has been a 33% reduction in the rate of youths charged with drug offences over this same time period (from a rate of 233 per 100,000 youth in 1999 to 156 per 100,000 youth in 2004) (Table 1).

Most recently (between 2003 and 2004), the rate of youth charged with drug offences increased 52% (from a rate of 103 per 100,000 youth to 156 per 100,000 in 2004). The rate of youth charged with drug offences was up for all drugs, including cannabis, cocaine and other drugs. However, it should be noted that in comparison to cannabis, cocaine and other drugs are low volume offences.

Over the 1999 to 2004 time period, a substantial increase (294%)⁶ was noted in the rate of youth not charged with drug offences (from a rate of 83 per 100,000 youth in 1999 to a rate of 325 per 100,000 youth in 2004). As would be expected, the increase in the rate of youth who were diverted was driven primarily by cannabis offences.

Firearms

The issue of violence with firearms has recently received national attention. In some areas of the country, it is a larger issue than in other areas of the country. In Nova Scotia, the rate of youth charged with offensive weapons⁷ decreased 27% between 1999 and 2004. However, there has been a significant increase in the rate of youth not charged (491%)⁸ (Table 1).



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

^{6,8} Note: In the April 7th version of this report these percentages were reversed.

⁷ Offensive weapons includes explosives, firearm usage, prohibited weapons, weapons possession, restricted weapons, trafficking, importing and exporting weapons and other.

In the CMA of Halifax, the rate of youth charged with having a firearm present during the commission of an offence has decreased 41%, from 11.6 per 10,000 youth in 2000 to 6.8 per 10,000 youth in 2004. Furthermore, in the CMA of Halifax in 2004, of all offences where a weapon was present, only 4% of these offences involved a firearm. The majority involved physical force.

In addition to collecting national data on offensive weapons, CCJS also collects national information on robberies involving a firearm. In 3 out of the past 6 years the rate of youth charged with a firearm-related robbery has been higher in Nova Scotia than the national average (Figure 3).

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

To fully understand how crime is changing in Nova Scotia, it is important to look at both provincial-level information and crime by region. The following analysis examines crime by five regions in Nova Scotia: North-Central⁹, Cape Breton, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), Valley¹⁰ and South-West¹¹.

Not surprisingly, given its population base, in 2004, HRM ranked first in the proportion¹² of youths charged with total violent crime (47%), total property crime (37%), and other *Criminal Code* offences (30%) (Table 2). Similarly, HRM accounted for the largest proportion of youths charged in 1999.

Table 2 - Percentage Distribution of Youths Charged by Region									
Region	Total Criminal Code		Violent Crime		Property Crime		Other Criminal Code offences		
	1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004	
North-Central	21	19	16	14	19	17	26.6	24	
Cape Breton	14	20	14	18	11	15	18.6	26	
HRM	37	37	45	47	41	37	25.9	30	
Valley	15	14	17	8	17	20	11.3	11	
South-West	13	11	8	13	12	11	17.5	9	
Total (%)	100	*101	100	100	100	100	100.0	100	

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

* Percentage does not add to 100% due to rounding.

Violent crime

⁹ North-Central is comprised of Antigonish, Colchester, Cumberland, Guysborough, and Pictou counties

¹⁰ Valley is comprised of Annapolis, Digby, Hants, and Kings counties.

¹¹ South-West is comprised of Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne, and Yarmouth counties.

¹² Proportions, not rates, are used in this section of the analysis because population data are not available for youth in these regions.

Between 1999 and 2004, an interesting shift has occurred at the regional level. In 1999, HRM consistently ranked first when examining the number of youth charged with a wide variety of violent crime (e.g. total violent, total assault, assault level 1), while the Valley region consistently ranked second. By 2004, the region of Cape Breton was consistently ranking second (Tables 2 and 3)¹³.

Table 3 - Percentage Distribution of Youths Charged with Assault by Region						
	Total Assault		Assault Level 1		Assault Level 2/3	
	1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004
Region						
North-Central	17	13	17	15	14	8
Cape Breton	15	20	14	21	17	18
HRM	43	46	38	41	56	55
Valley	19	8	22	9	8	6
South-West	7	13	8	14	5	13
Total	*101	100	*99	100	100	100

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

* Percentage does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

In fact, while an overall increase in the rate of youth charged with violent crime has been noted at the provincial level between 1999 and 2004, it is evident that this has not been the case uniformly across the province. During this time period, increases in the number of youth charged with violent crime were noted in the following regions: HRM, Cape Breton and South-West, while decreases were noted in the regions of North-Central and the Valley (Table 4).

Property crime

Given that the rate of youth charged with property crime has declined by half since 1999, it is not surprising that all regions of the province experienced declines during this time period. This was particularly the case in the regions of HRM and North-Central (Table 4).

Table 4 - Number of Youth Charged by Region								
	Total Criminal Code		Violent		Property		Other	
	1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004
Region								
North-Central	787	480	95	87	384	169	308	224
Cape Breton	517	502	79	118	223	147	215	237
HRM	1377	944	263	303	814	366	300	275
Valley	567	352	99	50	337	198	131	104
South-West	496	273	45	85	248	110	203	78
Total (n)	3744	2551	581	643	2006	990	1157	918

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

¹³ It should be noted that the region of Cape Breton ranked second in 1999 and 2004 for level 2 assault.

Motor vehicle theft

Of all youth charged with motor vehicle theft in 2004, the majority were in the HRM (39%), the Valley (22%) and North-Central (20%). This trend is fairly consistent with 1999 information. Between 1999 and 2004, slight increases were noted in North-Central, Cape Breton and the Valley, while declines were noted in the HRM and South-West regions.

Drugs

In 1999 and 2004, the HRM accounted for the largest proportion of total youth charged with drug offences (30% and 39% respectively), followed by the North-Central region (27% in 1999 and 22% in 2004). This trend remained consistent for cannabis charges, with the HRM ranking first in 1999 and 2004, followed by the North-Central region in both time periods. Charges for cocaine and other drug offences made up 12% of all drug charges laid against youth in 2004, the majority of which were laid in the HRM region.

GENDER ANALYSIS¹⁴

In addition to examining regional differences, gender differences in crime were examined to more fully understand how the scope of youth crime is changing in Nova Scotia. Before examining specific crime types, it is important to note that in Nova Scotia, as in most other parts of the country, crime is more likely to be committed by males than females. For example, young females were responsible for only 19% of all criminal activity that took place in Nova Scotia in 2004. Just over a quarter of all violent crime was committed by young women (mostly level 1 assault), while 16% of property crime was committed by young women. This proportion is reduced even further when examining motor vehicle theft (15%) and drug offences (13%), two offences which warrant particular attention in Nova Scotia.

Violent crime

As previously mentioned, between 1999 and 2003, a 22% increase in youth violent crime was noted. During this time the rate of males charged with violent offences increased 21%, while the rate of females charged with violent offences increased 25%. It should be noted that while the increase in female violence is larger than that of male violence, males continue to account for approximately 75% of all violent criminal activity in Nova Scotia.

Recall from earlier that increases in violent crime were driven mostly by increases in level 2 assault and robbery. Examining these crime types by gender, we see the increase in level 2 assault is driven mostly by males (up 61%), while increases in robbery were noted for both males (up 38%) and females (up 55%) (Table 6).

The overall trend also indicated that the rate of youths charged with level 1 assault had increased. Most of this increase can be accounted for by increases in female youth being charged (up 27%

¹⁴ Gender analysis will cover the period 1999 to 2003 because population statistics are unavailable by gender for 2004.

from 257 per 100,000 youth in 1999 to 327 per 100,000 youth in 2003) and, to a lesser extent, by increases in male youth being charged (up 10%).

Property crime and other *Criminal Code* offences

Given the overall decrease in the rate of youth charged with property crime between 1999 and 2004, it is not surprising that declines were noted for young males (down 49%) and females (down 62%).

Other *Criminal Code* offences was the only crime category for which gender differences were noted. While the overall rate of youth charged with *Criminal Code* offences decreased over the past six years, this has been driven largely by decreases in the rate at which young males have been charged (down 14%). The rate at which young females have been charged with other *Criminal Code* offences has actually increased 17%.

Table 6: Rate of Youths Charged by Gender of Those Accused						
	Males			Females		
	Rate 1999	Rate 2003	% Change	Rate 1999	Rate 2003	%
Homicide/Attempted Homicide	0	5	N/A	0	3	N/A
Assaults - Total (levels 1, 2, 3)	825	1020	24	309	396	28
Level 1	589	650	10	257	327	27
Level 2 – Weapon	218	351	61	52	55	5
Level 3 – Aggravated	18	18	0	0	14	N/A
Other Assaults	88	83	-6	44	41	-6
Sexual Assaults – Total	109	112	3	5	0	-100*
Level 1	104	101	-3	5	0	-100*
Level 2 – Weapon	3	10	302*	0	0	N/A
Level 3 – Aggravated	3	0	-100*	0	0	N/A
Other Sexual Offences	5	5	0*	0	0	N/A
Robbery – Total	117	161	38	25	38	55
Violent crime – Total	1144	1386	21	383	477	25

* Based on low cell counts – use with caution

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

Gender differences in the regions

Violent crime

As previously noted, a shift in the number of youth charged with violent crime occurred in Nova Scotia between 1999 and 2004. This shift holds true for young males as well as young females. In 1999, the HRM was the region with the most violent crime for young males and young females.

Consistently ranking second for males was the region of North-Central, while for females, the Valley region consistently ranked second.

By 2004, the Cape Breton region consistently ranked second in the number of youth charged with violent crime for both young males and young females. HRM continued to rank first.

Similar to the overall regional trends, increases in the number of youth charged with violent crime were noted for young males and young females in the regions of Cape Breton, HRM and South-West, while decreases were noted in North-Central and the Valley.

Property crime

In 2004, the HRM accounted for the largest proportion of male and female youth charged with property crime (35% and 49% respectively). The Valley region ranked second in volume for male youth charged (21%), while the North-Central region ranked second in volume for female youth charged (18%). The volume of young males and young females charged with property crime declined in all regions of the province between 1999 and 2004. This was particularly the case in the HRM where the number of male youth charged decreased by half, while the number of female youth charged decreased by a third.

So what does all of this mean?

On the basis of the analysis presented above, it is safe to say that there has been an increase in the rate of youth violent crime over the past six years. Despite the recent decrease in the rate of youth violent crime between 2003 and 2004 (8%), rates in 2004 were still 12% higher than in 1999. It is important to keep in mind that common assault continues to account for the largest proportion of youth violent crime in Nova Scotia; however, the recent increases noted in level 2 assault are of concern.

A substantial increase has not been noted for the rate of youth charged with property crime. It is too early to tell if the recent increase in the rate of youth charged with property crime (between 2003 and 2004) is the beginning of an upward trend.

A recent study published by CCJS found that youth aged 11 to 17 years were most likely to be physically and sexually assaulted by a close friend or acquaintance, someone of the same sex, and someone within the same age group (AuCoin, 2005). In short, the study found youth are more likely to physically and sexually assault other youth. Therefore, if the rate of youth violent crime is increasing, it is safe to assume the rate of youth violent victimization is also increasing. This is important because previous research has demonstrated that the emotional consequences children and youth experience as a result of victimization may lead to hostility, withdrawal and aggressiveness (Ristock, 1995). Research has also shown that individuals who have been victimized have higher rates of delinquent behaviour (Fitzgerald, 2004). These results indicate that childhood experiences of victimization can contribute to the likelihood of experiencing or initiating violent behaviour in later years – therefore continuing the cycle of violence.

SYSTEM RESPONSES

How Canada deals with young offenders

From 1984 to 2003, Canada's policy toward young offenders was guided by the federal *Young Offenders Act (YOA)*. The *Act* was then replaced in April 2003 by the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)*. In its 2005 Criminal Justice Indicators publication, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics notes "this new legislation is aimed at reducing the use of youth courts for less serious, nonviolent offences through the implementation of extrajudicial sanctions (or alternative measures as they were known under the *YOA*). The *YCJA* also seeks to reduce the use of custody, especially for nonviolent offences, and reinforces the importance of non-custodial sentencing alternatives. Under the *YCJA*, there are a number of new sentencing options for youth. Non-custodial alternatives to sentencing include reprimands, intensive support and supervision program orders, and attendance orders. New custodial sentences include deferred custody and supervision, and intensive rehabilitative custody and supervision orders.

"Despite the *YCJA* legislation making no distinction between open and secure custody as did the *YOA*, determination of custody types still lies within the responsibility of the jurisdictions. The *YCJA* states that the determination of open or closed custody is made by the Provincial Director unless, under an Order in Council, the youth courts have been given that responsibility. All jurisdictions had opted for the Order in Council; therefore, the level of custody determination in all provinces and territories lies in the hands of the judge."

In another document titled "Why Did the Government Introduce New Youth Justice Legislation?" prepared by the Federal Department of Justice, it is noted that: "The youth justice system under the *YOA* was criticized for not appropriately involving victims, parents, family, community and representatives from other disciplines. Youth crime is often a complex phenomenon. Involving others can improve understanding and provide support for the victims, youth, families and communities in responding constructively and meaningfully to the offending behaviour.

"The *YCJA* specifically encourages "conferences" at many stages of the proceedings, including those involving the police, sentencing judges and provincial directors. Some conferences may involve bringing together professionals, such as child care workers, school psychologists or others who are already involved with the youth to seek advice and verify continuity of services. Others may be in the nature of sentencing circles or family group conferences involving victims, offenders and their families."

"The legislation also expands the possible mandates of Youth Justice Committees. These are committees of citizens who can assist in any aspect of the administration of the *Act* or in any program or services for young people. They can encourage community members and agencies to take an active role in supporting constructive resolutions for the victims, families, youth and others implicated by youth crime."

See Appendix A for a summary of an annual statement prepared by the federal Department of Justice on how the YCJA is operating.

Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program

The Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program is a referral-based alternative criminal justice program for young persons between the ages of 12 and 17. Referrals of eligible cases are directed to regionally-based restorative justice agencies for processing. Referrals can come from police, Crown, courts or corrections for a wide range of offences.

Once a referral is received, it progresses through three distinct phases in the agency service delivery - pre-session, where all intake and preparatory work is undertaken to prepare all parties for the upcoming session; session, where a facilitated process is presented by the agency as the accountability measure against the youth referred; and post-session, where the youth is provided with structured support in order to have him/her complete the elements of the agreement which emerged from the session. Throughout these three phases, the agency is in touch with the youth, youth supporters, referral source, the victim and victim supporters, etc.

The agency is bound by service agreement requirements to conduct sessions within specified time frames; report to the referral source in similar time frames; and to conduct its services following specific guidelines with respect to session constitution, facilitation approaches, agreement terms, etc.

With pre-charge and post-charge referrals, the Restorative Justice Program serves as Nova Scotia's program of *extrajudicial sanctions under the YCJA*. Post-finding of guilt and post-sentence referrals operate somewhat differently in that the agency service is part of a pre-sentence or a reintegration phase, and references Section 19 Conferencing Provisions of the *YCJA* which provides for the convening of conferences.

Diversion

As previously noted, there has been an increased reliance on diversion in Nova Scotia since the introduction of the Restorative Justice Program in 1999 and the *YCJA* in 2003. While all regions of the province are increasingly diverting youth, three areas emerge as being the most likely: HRM, North-Central and the Valley. In 1999 and 2004, the region of HRM accounted for the largest proportion of youths not being charged. This is not surprising given the large population base in the HRM. Specifically, in 2004, 1,394 youth were diverted in the HRM region, the majority of which were for property crime, followed by other *Criminal Code* offences and violent crime. This is up from the 442 youth who were diverted in 1999.

Similarly, in North Central, 940 youth were diverted in 2004, up from 331 in 1999. Unlike the HRM region, youth in North Central were more likely to be diverted for other *Criminal Code* offences, followed by property crime and violent crime.

In the Valley, 770 youth were diverted in 2004 up from 249 in 1999. Similar to the North-Central region, youth in the Valley were most likely to be diverted for other *Criminal Code* offences, property crime and violent crime.

Overall, the region of Cape Breton is the least likely region in Nova Scotia to divert youth from the formal criminal justice process. This was consistently the case for violent crime, property

crime and other *Criminal Code* offences (Table 5). This may also partially account for the higher proportion of crime noted in Cape Breton in 2004.

Given the increased reliance on diversion in Nova Scotia, it is interesting to note that the number of youth involved in restorative justice has decreased over the past three years. In 2002-03 there were 1,647 youth involved with restorative justice; in 2003-04 this number dropped to 1,404; and by 2004-05 the number of youth involved with restorative justice was 1,393.

Table 5 - Number of Youths Not Charged by Region									
Region	Total Criminal Code		Violent		Property		Other		
	1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004	1999	2004	
North-Central	331	940	25	162	150	346	156	432	
Cape Breton	153	400	21	73	69	130	63	197	
HRM	442	1394	130	300	162	623	150	471	
Valley	249	770	47	148	102	271	100	351	
South-West	71	582	11	120	33	155	27	307	
Total (n)	1246	4086	234	803	516	1525	496	1758	

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

Sentencing trends

The youth court caseload in Nova Scotia declined 10% between 2002-03 and 2003-04. In 2002-03, there were 2,213 cases before youth court; in 2003-04, this had declined to 1,991 cases. The year-over-year decline follows the introduction of the *YCJA* in April 2003, while the overall decline is attributed to a steady decline in the number of *crimes against property cases*. Despite this reduction in caseload, Nova Scotia had the longest average elapsed time from first to last appearance in youth court. To illustrate, it took, on average, 175 days (up 31 days from the previous fiscal year) in 2003-04 to clear a case through youth court compared to the national average of 141 days¹⁵.

Elapsed time in youth court in Nova Scotia is somewhat exaggerated by the inclusion of restorative justice as well as bench warrants. Further examination of processing time in youth court reveals that it took on average 144 days in 2003/04 for a youth case to be processed. This excludes restorative justice as well as bench warrants¹⁶. Despite an increase in caseload in 2004/05, elapsed time in youth court was 134 days (a reduction of 10 days).

In 2003/04, 49% of cases before youth court resulted in a finding of guilt; 3% were acquitted; and 47% were withdrawn or dismissed, which is the highest percentage among reporting jurisdictions.

¹⁵ Note: 140 days was listed in the April 7th version of this report.

¹⁶ Excluding Restorative Justice (RJ) for Nova Scotia is valid because other jurisdictions do not include restorative justice in their elapsed time estimates. For example, New Brunswick (elapsed time 69 days) and PEI (elapsed time 84 days) exclude RJ in their elapsed time. Furthermore, in Alberta and Ontario, charges which were disposed of via some type of Alternative Measures Program were removed from the CCJS processing file prior to calculating elapsed time. Elapsed times were also calculated excluding bench warrants. This was done because it is the new methodology being employed by CCJS.

In 2002-2003, 58% of cases resulted in a finding of guilt; 2% were acquitted; and 39% were withdrawn or dismissed.¹⁷ Sixteen percent of cases with a guilty finding resulted in custody, which was the second lowest in Canada.

Community supervision

The average number of young persons aged 12 to 17 held on remand and supervised on probation also declined since the introduction of the *YCJA*, but to a lesser extent than sentenced custody. In 2003-04, there was an average of 19 young persons on remand on any given day in Nova Scotia compared to 2002-03 when there was on average 22 young persons on remand. Furthermore, on any given day in 2003-04, there were about 808 young persons on probation. Compared to 2002-03, probation counts were down 8% (or 67 young persons).

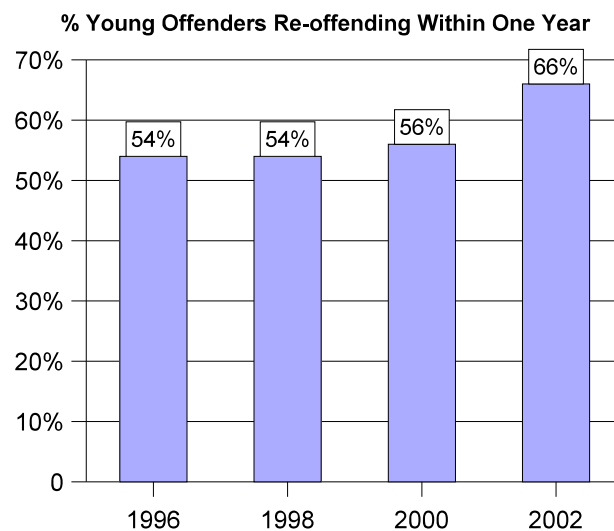
Custody

The number of young people in sentenced custody decreased by 46% since the introduction of the *YCJA*. On average, 57 young persons were in sentenced custody on any given day in Nova Scotia in 2003-04. This includes 12 young persons in secure custody and 45 in open custody.

In contrast, during the previous year, about 105 young persons, on average, were in sentenced custody on any given day, 20 in secure custody and 85 in open custody. Not surprisingly, the youth incarceration rate has also dropped in Nova Scotia during this time period from a rate of 17 per 10,000 youth in 2002-03 to a rate of 10 per 10,000 youth in 2003-04.

Recidivism rates

The percentage of incarcerated young persons who are convicted of a criminal offence within one year of release is one of the key indicators of recidivism among young persons. This statistic is derived from a follow-up of young persons incarcerated in youth correctional facilities to see if they have subsequently been convicted of a criminal offence. Data is collected approximately two years after the young person is released from a correctional facility. For a 2002 group of young offenders, 66% re-offended within one year of release from the correctional facility, according to a study conducted by the



Source: Policy, Planning and Research, DOJ April, 2005.

¹² Note, these figures are less a reflection of actual conviction rates and more of a reflection of the administration process in Nova Scotia. In Nova Scotia, public prosecutors have confirmed they will sometimes lay a charge initially and then reassess the case. This may sometimes lead to a withdrawal of the initial charge and the laying of a new charge. It's also important to note that cases referred to the Restorative Justice Program by the Crown or the courts will have had a charge laid. These charges are subsequently withdrawn or dismissed once the youth has successfully completed the program, thus impacting on the percentage of cases being withdrawn or dismissed in Nova Scotia.

¹³ Remand custody includes all persons who have not yet been sentenced but who are being held in custody while awaiting trial or sentencing.

Department of Justice (DOJ). This level of re-offending represents an increase compared to the preceding time period. Further analysis of data relating to the young offender population in terms of seriousness of prior criminal history and average length of sentence is needed to explain why the increase is happening.

A draft study on the Restorative Justice Program by criminologist Don Clairmont reports that roughly 31% of youth who went through the program for the first time in 2002 ended up with a subsequent criminal conviction within a two-year period ending December 31, 2004.

5. Why is it happening?

This section provides a review of empirical literature that specifies risk and protective factors for youth crime, with particular emphasis on youth violent crime given the increase in Nova Scotia in youth violent offending. It is important to explore both risk and protective factors in any discussion of youth crime, since “effective prevention and intervention efforts to avert the onset of antisocial behaviour among children and adolescents rely to a large extent on an accurate understanding of its origins and course” (Smart et al, 2005: vi).

A preliminary review of the literature indicates that many precursors to youth violent, chronic or serious offending behaviour are found in early childhood and continue along developmental pathways (Loeber, 1996). Thus, it is important to look at the life course of offenders over time to study the risk factors that may explain onset, escalation, de-escalation and desistance in individuals’ delinquent and criminal careers. This review includes developmental theories of delinquent behaviour which seek to identify potential pathways for children and youth for becoming involved in antisocial behaviour. Longitudinal studies are key to the identification of pathways, risk factors and protective factors, and this review utilizes studies from a number of longitudinal studies being conducted around the world which are actively seeking answers to crime causality and protective factors which appear to minimize the incidence of delinquent behaviour.

Methodology

To identify risk and protective factors and successful interventions for youth crime (outlined later in this paper), various research methods were used.

- An electronic library search was conducted via Novanet. Keywords used included juvenile delinquency, risk factor, protective factor, resiliency, youth, crime, antisocial behaviour, gender, rural, urban, prevention, intervention and victimization. Authors known for their work in the area were also used to generate listings of further relevant research. Bibliographies of relevant studies were also used to identify additional studies.
- An Internet search was conducted using similar keywords as used in the Novanet search.
- Contact was made with the University of Ottawa’s Department of Criminology, and a phone interview took place with Dr. Kathryn Campbell who is editor of a recent book on youth justice in Canada.

It is important to note this section of the report should not be considered an exhaustive review of risk and protective factors for youth crime. Identifying risk factors for youth antisocial behaviour, including youth crime, is complex and requires an investigation into a broad array of academic disciplines, such as criminology, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, social work, education and economics. This report includes studies from various disciplines, but a focus was placed on criminological studies given the objective of the research. Nonetheless, given the similarity in findings in the studies reviewed, the scientific rigor employed in the studies, and the broad-based risk factors identified in the studies, it is reasonable to assume the risk and protective factors noted in this paper are, indeed, the most significant factors to examine for the purposes of this research report.

Similarly, the review of successful interventions for youth crime was not exhaustive, but a focus was made on identifying interventions which were evaluated with scientific rigor and found within criminological literature. Various recent books have been written on this area; thus, these authors' findings of best practices were relied upon for inclusion in this report.

Given the objective of the report, studies employing experimental and longitudinal research designs were considered most valuable. Experimental studies are the cadillacs of research design, as they are the most powerful in attempting to describe a causal relationship between an independent variable (e.g. recidivism) and a dependent variable (e.g. a particular intervention). There are very few experimental studies in criminal justice given the ethical issues surrounding choosing one offender over another for involvement in interventions. Therefore, there are very few experimental studies noted in this report.

However, there are several longitudinal studies being conducted around the world which follow the development of children over time, and this report focuses on those studies occurring in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark. Longitudinal studies are considered most relevant for identifying whether a risk factor is a predictor or possible cause of antisocial behaviour, as the risk factor can be measured before the antisocial behaviour occurs. Indeed, longitudinal data is essential if the research purpose is to measure social change. Other research design studies (e.g. cross-sectional designs) have also been identified as relevant for this report as, according to prominent researchers who reviewed the studies, they were conducted with scientific rigor and thus added considerable value to the area of risk and protective factors and/or successful interventions of youth crime.

Developmental theories of crime and delinquency

Developmental theories of crime and delinquency attempt to explain within-individual changes in offending over the life course of the individual. Developmental and life-course criminology, then, focuses on the development of offending and antisocial behaviour, risk factors at different ages, and the effects of life events on the course of development (Farrington, 2002). "The terms *trajectories* and *pathways* are used to describe these long-term patterns of social development in social institutions, including families, schools and occupations. Thus, a trajectory or pathway is an avenue of development over time, such as an occupational career or delinquency involvement. *Transitions* are short-term changes in social roles within long-term trajectories, such as dropping out of school, divorce, and desistance from delinquency" (Howell, 2003: 43).

As Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1996: 12) note, "In particular, a better understanding of individual differences in criminal careers can help to explain why some youths become involved in delinquency only marginally and others more deeply, and which groups of individuals start to desist in crime at which part of the life cycle."

Developmental theories became popular in the 1990s with large volumes of significant longitudinal research on offending from the United States, New Zealand and Canada being published at that time. Longitudinal studies continue to provide important advances in understanding crime causality and correlates. For instance, the Montreal Longitudinal-

Experimental study and the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth are research studies critical to our understanding of youth offending within the Canadian context.

Developmental theories which have made important contributions to our understanding of youth crime include Moffitt's Life-Course-Persistent and Adolescence-Limited Offenders (1993) and Loeber's Three-Pathways Model (1996).

Life-course-persistent and adolescence-limited offenders

Moffitt (1993) distinguishes between two groups of offenders: life-course-persistent offenders and adolescence-limited offenders. According to Moffitt, life-course-persistent offenders begin their offending in childhood and persist to adulthood while adolescence-limited offenders begin and desist offending in adolescence. Adolescence-limited offenders thus consist of most young offenders. Life-course-persistent offenders, on the other hand, constitute approximately 5-10% of young offenders.

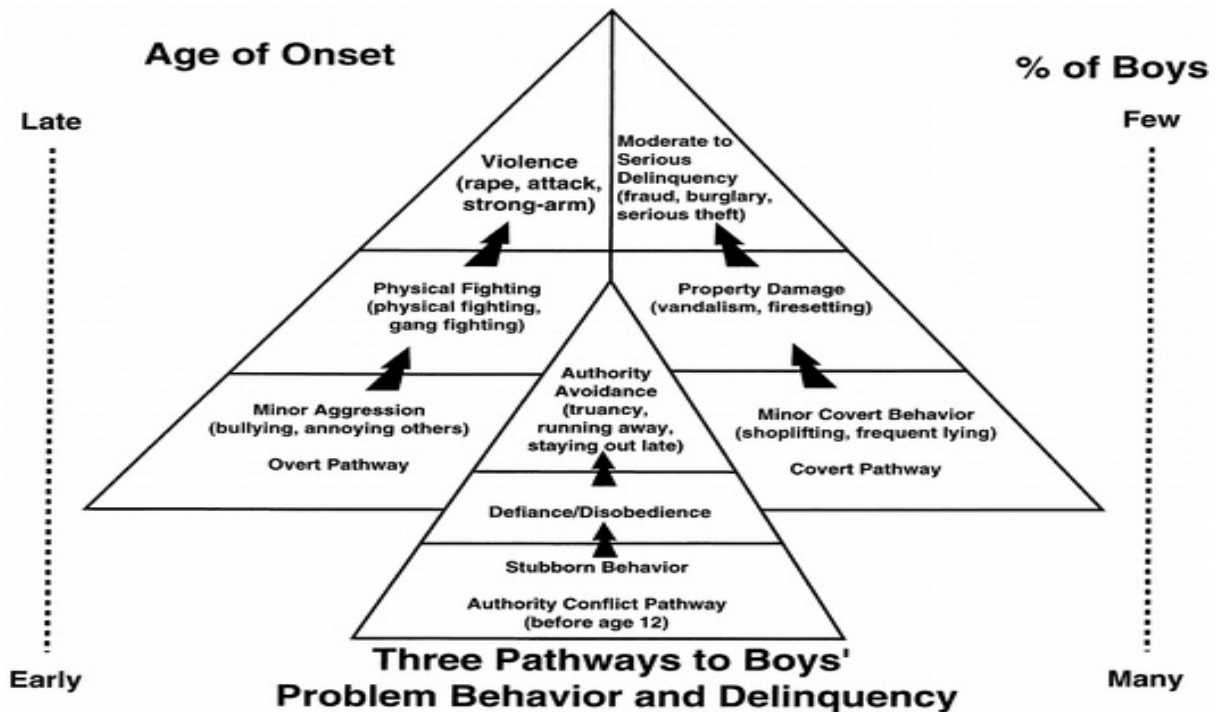
Moffitt suggests these different types of offenders are very different people. For life-course-persistent offenders, Moffitt (1993: 674) contends that "children's neuropsychological problems interact cumulatively with their criminogenic environments across development, culminating in a pathological personality." The adolescence-limited offender, on the other hand, "commits delinquencies only when it is socially beneficial and will abandon delinquent activities when pro-social acts are more rewarding" (Spratt et al, 2000). They do not have a history of childhood antisocial behaviour and demonstrate a lack of progression in offence seriousness as they age. Moffitt further suggests that the types of crimes committed by each group also differ. Adolescence-limited offenders tend to commit crimes "that symbolize adult privileges or that demonstrate autonomy from parental control: vandalism, public order offences...theft. Life-course-persistent offenders should spawn a wider variety of offences, including types of crimes committed by lone offenders...such as violence and fraud"(Moffitt, 1993: 695).

Howell (2003) notes that her theory on the etiology of life-course-persistent offenders has not become widely accepted. He notes that most children with neuropsychological deficits overcome them and do not become life-course-persistent offenders. He also points out that her theory does not distinguish between persistent or chronic nonviolent offenders and persistent violent offenders. He does, however, acknowledge the contribution Moffitt has made to the criminology field for introducing the concept of adolescence-limited offenders as it applies to the overwhelming proportion of youth referred to court. Spratt et al (2000) also note that the notion of having two different types of adolescent offenders helps explain how there can be continuity in offending with simultaneous significant declines in offending as youth get older.

Loeber's three-pathways model

Loeber (1996) studied data on 10- to 16-year-old boys collected in the Pittsburgh Youth Longitudinal Study and found that problem behaviours develop in an orderly sequence over time in three basic, but overlapping, pathways. He refers to a pathway as that portion of a developmental trajectory that an individual travels within a given time period (Howell, 2003).

The three pathways in the development of delinquency are: the authority conflict pathway, the covert pathway and the overt pathway. “The authority conflict pathway corresponds generally to predelinquent offences; the covert pathway is related to concealing and serious property offences; and the overt pathway corresponds to violent offences” (Howell, 2003: 51). Indeed, the model aims to describe which youth are at highest risk of becoming chronic offenders. It presumes that the worst cases engage in both overt and covert antisocial acts, and that while many youth engage in less serious forms of behaviour problems, only a minority of youth progress to the more serious behaviours (Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998).



The model shows an orderly progression over time from less serious to more serious offences in that earlier problem behaviours and delinquent acts become stepping stones for subsequent offences. The progressively narrowing width of the triangles illustrate the decreasing proportion of boys involved in particular problem behaviour, and the model also shows the general age of onset.

Howell (2003: 52) observes that “each of these pathways represents breakdowns in the developmental tasks relevant to pro-social development during childhood and adolescence:

- The overt pathway represents aggression as opposed to positive social problem solving.
- The covert pathway represents lying, vandalism and theft as opposed to honesty and respect for property.
- The authority conflict pathway represents conflict as opposed to respect to authority figures”.

It is important to note that Loeber (1996) found that among almost all the boys he studied, those who persisted in either the overt or the covert pathway had initially persisted in the authority

conflict pathway. Among the most chronic offenders, authority conflict generally occurs first, followed soon by overt disruptive behaviour and then by covert behaviour (Howell, 2003). Further, boys who advanced in all three pathways had the highest rates of both violent and nonviolent offences. There is also evidence to suggest that offenders do not abandon their earlier behaviours but, instead, add new types of offences to the current ones.

Loeber's pathways model has been empirically validated in four other research samples, including two longitudinal studies (ibid.). It should be noted that the model is based on a sample of boys and has not yet been tested with a population of female youth. Therefore, it is unknown whether the model can be applied to all youth. The model, however, has important implications for successful interventions which may be applicable to both boys and girls, since key developmental tasks such as nonaggressive interpersonal problem solving, honesty, respect for authority and respect for other people's property are critical for all youth.

The model also suggests that early signs of disruptive behaviour in children should not be dismissed, particularly since child delinquents tend to have criminal careers of greater duration than those of later onset delinquents (ibid.). But early intervention is complex, of course, given that most children who do show early disruptive behaviours do not persist in them.

Howell's unique pathway to girls' serious, violent and chronic offending

While acknowledging the dearth of risk factor studies specific to female youth, Howell (2003: 68) proposed five stepping stones for a subgroup of girls' pathway to serious, violent and chronic young offender careers based on existing research: *child physical and sexual abuse, mental health problems, running (or being thrown) away, youth gang membership, and detention/incarceration*. According to Howell, the combination of all these experiences may have greater negative impact on girls than on boys for developing a serious, violent and chronic young offender career.

Howell's pathway model is consistent with the feminist pathways approach to understanding female delinquency in that it, too, emphasizes childhood abuses as significant risks for subsequent delinquency (Belknap and Holsinger, 2006). Indeed, studies on delinquent girls and incarcerated women consistently report abuse victimizations much higher than the general population of women and girls (ibid.).

Howell's unique pathway has yet to be empirically tested. However, he notes that "recent research has shown that childhood victimization (sexual abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse) contributes to running away and mental health problems in adolescents, and these, in turn, contribute to delinquency involvement. Mental health problems, particularly depression, may be a key catalyst that accelerates girls' serious antisocial behaviour development. Running away as a means of escape from abuse in chaotic families often backfires. Because girls are more likely than boys to be arrested for running away, ironically, their juvenile justice system involvement may be a stepping stone to further violent victimization rather than a solution to their problems. Some girls turn to youth gangs for comfort and protection, but this may lead to further victimization, creating a vicious cycle. The importance and ordering of these stepping stones to serious, violent and chronic offender careers for females appear to be topics worthy of further research (2003: 71)."

RISK FACTORS

The recent focus on developmental and life-course criminology, along with a move toward a public health model of studying youth crime (Office of the Surgeon General, 2001), has led to an emphasis on identifying risk factors to understand the causes of delinquency and work toward its prevention. Risk factors are indicators of the pathway children and adolescents take toward youth offending behaviour. “Risk factors are those elements in an individual’s life that increase his or her vulnerability to negative developmental outcomes and also increase the probability of maintenance of a problem condition or digression to a more serious state” (Howell, 2003: 104).

Farrington (2000) refers to this recent move toward a public health model as the “risk factor paradigm”, the aim of which is to “identify the key risk factors for offending and tool prevention methods designed to counteract them...the main challenges for the paradigm are to determine which risk factors are causes, to establish what are protective factors, to identify the active ingredients of multiple component interventions, to evaluate the effectiveness of area-based intervention programs, and to assess the monetary costs and benefits of interventions” (Farrington, 2000: 1).

Of significant importance to the identification of risk factors for offending behaviour is the number and quality of past and current longitudinal studies following children and youth into adulthood, which provide a tremendous amount of empirical evidence to support established risk and protective factors. The risk factor paradigm has been advocated in most Western industrialized countries and the research emanating from longitudinal studies in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden and the Netherlands has resulted in an international body of knowledge in this area. The replicability of results across different countries provides strength to proposed theories of crime and delinquency.

As indicated earlier, a major challenge of the risk factor paradigm is to determine which risk factors are also causes of delinquency. It is difficult to empirically determine causes in any social science area given the complexity of and interaction between the individual and his/her environment. Unfortunately, criminological research has not yet produced a list of ‘causes’ of crime, and research is needed to bridge the gap between risk factor research and the more complex explanatory theories (Farrington, 2000). As such, this section will focus on those risk factors that empirically have been shown to be strongly associated with criminal offending behaviour. Prediction, of course, does not guarantee the incidence of criminal behaviour, but it does provide a means to reduce the *likelihood* of future criminal behaviour by designing empirically-based prevention strategies based on identified risk factors (Herrenkohl, T. et al, 2000).

Risk factor framework

Rarely is one risk factor associated with problem behaviour. “Explaining why specific behaviours occur is very difficult, because numerous factors are involved and social interactions shape behaviours and problems over time...Risk factors are often highly interrelated, occurring together or clustering to produce added risk. Risk factors function in a cumulative fashion; that is, the greater the number of risk factors, the greater the likelihood of a negative outcome”(Howell, 2003: 104).

There is also evidence that several problem behaviours share common risk factors. For instance, adolescent delinquency and violence cluster with other adolescent problems such as drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and school misbehaviour and drop out in that these behaviours share many of the same risk factors such as extreme economic deprivation, family conflict, and lack of commitment to school (ibid.). In essence, clustering of risk factors produces added risk.

Identifying which risk factors may cause youth offending behaviour for particular sets of youth at specific stages of their development may help programs target their efforts in a more efficient and cost-effective manner (Shader, 2000). “Research shows that risk and protective factors function as predictors of violence, crime and substance abuse at different points, as affected by risk factors in the respective spheres of influence. If risk-reduction efforts address risk and protective factors at or slightly before the developmental points at which they begin to predict later delinquency or violence, it is likely they will be effective” (Howell, 2003: 104).

Risk factors

Shader (2003: 1) notes that much of the research on risk factors has focused on predicting serious and violent offences but that “risk factors are relevant to all levels of delinquency.” An understanding of risk factors has resulted from research that has identified the major risk factor domains – **individual, family, school, peer group** and **community**. The domains are based on the different spheres of influence that affect a child’s behaviour. The effect on behaviour may also be different at different points in their development.

Risk factors by age group

Lipsey and Derzon (1998) were the first to organize risk factors (via a meta-analysis¹⁸ of longitudinal research) based on two subgroups of youth, based on age. They identified the main childhood (ages 6-11) predictors of serious or violent offences at ages 15-25. They also identified the main adolescent (ages 12-14) predictors of serious or violent offences at ages 15-25. According to their meta-analysis, “the best predictors differ for the two age groups, as certain risk factors have different degrees of influence at various developmental stages. In general, family influences are predominant early in life, followed by school factors then peer group influences” (Howell, 2003: 118). Box 1 summarizes their findings.

¹⁸This meta-analysis included 66 reports on 34 independent studies that measured serious and violent outcomes when the samples were ages 15-25 (behaviour peak).

Box 1: Predictors of Violent or Serious Delinquency by Age Group

Results:

Predictors at age 6-11 (in order of strength):

Predictors at ages 12-14

Rank 1 Group

- ▶ general offences
- ▶ substance use

- social ties
- antisocial peers

Rank 2 Group

- ▶ gender (male)
- ▶ family socioeconomic status
- ▶ antisocial parents

- general offenses

Rank 3 Group

- ▶ aggression
- ▶ ethnicity

- aggression
- school attitude/performance
- psychological condition
- parent-child relations
- gender (male)
- physical violence

Rank 4 Group

- ▶ psychological condition
- ▶ parent-child relations
- ▶ social ties
- ▶ problem behaviour
- ▶ school attitude/performance
- ▶ medical/physical characteristics
- ▶ IQ
- ▶ Other family characteristics

- antisocial parents
- person crimes
- problem behaviour
- IQ

Rank 5 Group

- ▶ broken home
- ▶ abusive parents
- ▶ antisocial peers

- broken home
- family socioeconomic status
- abusive parents
- other family characteristics
- substance use
- ethnicity

Adapted from: Hawkins et al, 2000

The researchers concluded that:

- “The best predictors of violent or serious delinquency differ according to age group. A juvenile offence at ages 6-11 is the strongest predictor of subsequent violent or serious delinquency, even if the offence did not involve violence. For the age 12-14 group, a juvenile offence is the second most powerful predictor of future violence. Substance abuse is among the best predictors of future violence for children ages 6-11 but one of the poorest predictors for children ages 12-14.
- The two strongest predictors of subsequent violence for the 12-14 age group - the lack of social ties and involvement with antisocial peers - have to do with interpersonal relations. The same predictors, however, are relatively weak for the 6-11 age group.
- Relatively fixed personal characteristics (male gender) and low socioeconomic status are the second- and third-rank predictors of subsequent violence for the 6-11 age group. The age 12-14 group has a heavier representation of behavioural predictors of subsequent violence.
- Broken homes and abusive parents are among the poorest predictors of subsequent violence for both age groups.
- The significance of antisocial peers and substance abuse is reversed in the two age groups. Whereas having antisocial peers is a strong predictor for the age 12-14 group, it is a weak predictor for the age 6-11 group” (Hawkins et al, 2000: 6).

Similarly, Loeber et al (2003) also developed a list of approximate developmental ordering of risk factors associated with disruptive and delinquent behaviour. This was based on findings by the *Study Group on Very Young Offenders* formed by the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (See Box 2.)

Box 2: Approximate Developmental Ordering of Risk Factors Associated With Disruptive and Delinquent Behaviour

Risk Factors Emerging During Pregnancy and From Infancy Onward

Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnancy and delivery complications Neurological insult Exposure to neurotoxins after birth Difficult temperament Hyperactivity/impulsivity/attention problems Low intelligence Male gender
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maternal smoking/alcohol consumption/drug use during pregnancy Teenage mother High turnover of caretakers Poorly educated parent Maternal depression Parental substance abuse/antisocial or criminal behaviour Poor parent-child communication Poverty/low socioeconomic status Serious marital discord Large family size

Risk Factors Emerging from the Toddler Years Onward

Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggressive/disruptive behaviour Persistent lying Risk taking and sensation seeking Lack of guilt, lack of empathy
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harsh and/or erratic discipline practices Maltreatment or neglect
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Television violence

Risk Factors Emerging From Midchildhood Onward

Child	Stealing and general delinquency Early onset of other disruptive behaviours Early onset of substance abuse and sexual activity Depressed mood Withdrawn behaviour Positive attitude toward problem behaviour Victimization and exposure to violence
Family	Poor parental supervision
School	Poor academic achievement Repeating grades(s) Truancy Negative attitude toward school Poorly organized and functioning schools
Peer	Peer rejection Association with deviant peers/siblings
Community	Residence in a disadvantaged neighbourhood Residence in a disorganized neighbourhood Availability of weapons

Risk Factors Emerging From Mid Adolescence Onward

Child	Weapon carrying Drug dealing Unemployment
School	School drop out
Peer	Gang membership

Risk factors for adolescent violence

Following the release of the Lipsey-Derzon meta-analysis, the United States Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP's) Study Group on Serious and Violent Offenders (Study Group) brought 22 researchers together for two years to analyze current research on risk and protective factors and the development of serious and violent juvenile offending careers. The resulting report was published by Hawkins et al (2000). The studies (from prospective longitudinal designs) examined by the Study Group included Lipsey and Derzon's (1998) bibliography, research reports provided by the Study Group members, and analyses of the Seattle

Social Development Project longitudinal data set. It should be noted that several of the study samples were male only, but the majority of the studies included both male and female subjects. However, as the incidence and prevalence of delinquency is significantly higher among males, the number of females in the study samples were small. Therefore, generalization of these findings to females remains questionable.

The main adolescent violence predictors that Hawkins et al (2000) identify are as follows:

Box 3: Risk Factors for Adolescent Violence (Hawkins et al, 2000)	
<p><i>Individual factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy and delivery complications • Low resting heart rate • Internalizing disorders • Hyperactivity, concentration problems, restlessness and risk taking • Aggressiveness • Early initiation of violent behaviour • Involvement in other forms of antisocial behaviour • Beliefs and attitudes favourable to deviant or antisocial behaviour 	<p><i>Family factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental criminality • Child maltreatment • Poor family management practices • Low levels of parental involvement • Poor family bonding and family conflict • Parental attitudes favourable to substance abuse and violence • Parent-child separation
<p><i>School factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic failure • Low bonding to school • Truancy and dropping out of school • Parent-child separation 	<p><i>Peer-related factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delinquent siblings • Delinquent peers • Gang membership
<p><i>Community and Neighbourhood factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Community disorganization • Availability of drugs and firearms • Neighbourhood adults involved in crime • Exposure to violence and racial prejudice. 	

The following provides detail on each risk factor in terms of what is known about its predictive strength. Risk factors which consistently predict later violence are bolded for emphasis.

Individual risk factors:

- given conflicting evidence, more research is needed on pregnancy and delivery complications and low resting heart rate risk factors before they can be used to identify

youth at risk for violent behaviour; however, the associations between these factors and later violent behaviour that were found suggest that interventions that seek to provide greater prenatal care to mothers at risk for pregnancy and delivery complications should be evaluated for possible effects in preventing violent behaviour in children (Hawkins et al, 2000).

- internalizing disorders (nervousness/withdrawal, worrying, anxiety) had a very weak relationship to future violence;
- **hyperactivity, concentration problems, restlessness, risk taking and aggression consistently predicts future violence for boys; research results for females are less consistent;**
- **early initiation of violent behaviour, involvement in other forms of antisocial behaviour, and beliefs and attitudes favourable to deviant or antisocial behaviour predicted later violence for males; research results for females are less consistent.**

Family risk factors:

- inconsistent findings exist regarding the contribution of parental criminality to child behaviour;
- physically abused or neglected children are more likely than others to commit violent crimes later in life;
- **family management practices, such as failure to set clear expectations for children's behaviour, poor monitoring and supervision, and severe and inconsistent discipline, consistently predict later delinquency and substance abuse;**
- low levels of parental involvement, exposure to high levels of marital and family conflict and disruptions in parent-child relationships appear to predict later violent behaviour in children;
- more research is required on the relationship between later violent behaviour and family bonding, parental attitudes favourable to violence and residential mobility.

School factors:

- **poor academic achievement has consistently predicted later delinquency;**
- low bonding/attachment to school has been found to predict later delinquency in some studies, but not in others (this may be a result of the indicators of school commitment used in the studies); however, school attachment is generally accepted to be a protective factor against crime;
- truancy and dropping out of school and high rates of school delinquency have been found to predict later violence;
- more research is needed on frequent school transitions to determine the strength of its prediction for future violence.

Peer-related factors:

- **being a gang member and having delinquent peers are both strong predictors of future violence;** having delinquent peers during adolescence has a greater influence on later violence than earlier in the child's development;
- having delinquent siblings in adolescence appears to have a stronger negative influence than earlier in the child's development;

Community/neighbourhood factors:

- **being raised in poverty has been found to be a strong predictor of crime and violence;**
- community disorganization (presence of crime, drug selling, gangs, poor housing) was a better predictor of violence than low attachment to a neighbourhood;
- availability of drugs and firearms predicted greater variety in violent behaviour at age 18 (one study);
- more research is needed on the relationship between crime and violence and neighbourhood adults involved in crime;
- **exposure to violence in the home and elsewhere increases a child's risk for involvement in violent behaviour later in life.**

In summary, the predictors of adolescent violence identified by this research team are found within the domains of the individual, family, school, peer and community/neighbourhood.

According to this study, the strongest risk factors appear to be (in order of domain):

- early childhood aggressiveness (particularly for boys);
- early initiation of violent behaviour/antisocial behaviour (e.g. substance abuse);
- poor family management practices (e.g. inconsistent and/or punitive discipline, poor monitoring, no clear expectations for children's behaviour);
- poor academic achievement;
- association with a delinquent peer group;
- gang member;
- raised in poverty; low socioeconomic status;
- exposure to/victim of violence.

The factors identified above are also malleable or changeable, and as indicated earlier, rarely is one risk factor associated with problem behaviour, and the probability of delinquency or violence increases with the number of risk factors present. Thus, multicomponent prevention interventions appear to be required to significantly reduce risk for violent behaviour.

It is also important to assess the relative strength of a risk factor(s) to predict later crime and violence by age group in order to design effective and timely interventions. In the Seattle Social Development Project, Herrenkohl and colleagues (2000)¹⁹ investigated the power of certain risk factors seen at ages 10, 14, and 16 to predict violent behaviour by the age of 18. More than 17 percent of youth committed a violent act by age 18, and 80 percent of those youth were expected to do so based on significant predictors seen at age 10. Eighty-four percent were expected to do so based on the significant predictors seen at age 16. The following is a summary of findings from this study by domain as reported by Hawkins et al (2000: 6):

Individual:

- “hyperactivity” or attention deficits at age 10, 14 or 16 doubled the risk of violent behaviour at age 18;

¹⁹The Seattle Social Development Project is a prospective longitudinal study involving youths followed since 1985.

- sensation seeking and involvement in drug selling at ages 14 and 16 more than tripled the risk of involvement in violence.

Family:

- parental attitudes favourable to violence when subjects were age 10 more than doubled the risk that subjects would engage in violence at age 18;
- poor family management practices and family conflict when subjects were age 10 were not significant predictors of later violence. However, poor family management practices when subjects were age 14 doubled the risk for later involvement in violence;
- parental criminality when subjects were age 14 (not assessed at age 10) more than doubled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18;
- when subjects were age 16, parental criminality, poor family management, family conflict, and residential mobility at least doubled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

School:

- low academic performance at ages 10, 14 and 16 predicted an increased risk for involvement in violence at age 18;
- behaviour problems at school (as rated by teachers) when subjects were age 10 significantly predicted involvement in violence at age 18;
- low commitment to schooling, low educational aspirations, and multiple school transitions at ages 14 and 16 predicted a significantly increased risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

Peers:

- having delinquent friends at ages 10, 14 and 16 predicted an increased risk for later involvement in violence;
- gang membership at age 14 more than tripled the risk for involvement in violence at 18;
- gang membership when subjects were age 16 more than quadrupled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

Community and neighbourhood:

- community disorganization, the availability of drugs, and knowing adults involved in criminal activities at ages 14 and 16 all were associated with an increased risk for later involvement with violence.

The authors found that several risk factors predicted violence from more than one developmental point. That is, *hyperactivity, low academic performance, peer delinquency, and availability of drugs in the neighbourhood* predicted violence from ages 10, 14 and 16 years. Further, youths exposed to multiple risks were markedly more likely than others to engage in later violence.

The authors of the study further concluded that the odds for violence of youths exposed to more than five risk factors compared to the odds for violence of youths exposed to fewer than two risk factors at each age were seven times greater at age 10 years, 10 times greater at age 14 years, and nearly 11 times greater at age 16 years. These findings are comparable to the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development whereby Farrington (1997) found that “the percentage of youth

convicted for violent crimes increased from only 3 percent for those with no risk factors to 31 percent for those with four risk factors (low family income, large family size, low nonverbal IQ, at ages 8-19, and poor parental childrearing behaviour)” (ibid.:7).

While the Herrenkohl study (2000) confirmed various risk factors for violence, the overall accuracy in predicting youths who would go on to commit violent acts was limited. While relatively few individuals predicted to be violent failed to engage in violence at age 18 years, *13-18% of the individuals in the sample predicted to be nonviolent engaged in later violence.*

“The errors in prediction reported in this study suggest that there may be reason to focus preventive interventions on groups or populations exposed to multiple risks, rather than limiting prevention efforts to only those youths meeting a given risk profile. In this way, those who may be excluded from intervention programs based on individual risk assessments, but who engage in later violence, would likely be included” (ibid.: 184).

In essence, the Herrenkohl study underscores the importance of determining the predictive strength of specific risk factors at certain points in an individual’s life, particularly for intervention/prevention purposes. Also, the finding that hyperactivity, low academic performance and peer delinquency were predictors of violence from ages 10, 14, and 16 years is consistent with Hawkins et al (2000) conclusion that these factors consistently predict future violent offending. The Herrenkohl study also confirms that the existence of multiple risks increases the likelihood of future violent behaviour but it also warns that risk factors may help predict future violence, but does not guarantee its occurrence. Nor does the nonexistence of risk factors in any given individual guarantee protection against violence given that 18% of the individuals in the sample predicted to be nonviolent later engaged in violence. Indeed, the risk factor paradigm is not exact science, but it has provided substantial gains in getting closer to understanding the causes of crime and violence.

Childhood risk factors for child delinquency and later violent juvenile offending

An area which has received considerable attention in the last few years is the prevalence and development of childhood delinquency. As indicated earlier in this review, “child delinquents tend to have longer offending careers than juveniles who become delinquent at a later age; as a result, these children will constitute a disproportionate threat to public safety and property” (Snyder, 2003). Thus, there is a significant need to identify risk and protective factors of child delinquency in order to develop interventions to prevent child delinquency from escalating into chronic criminality.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in Washington, D.C. formed a Study Group on Very Young Offenders, consisting of 39 experts on child delinquency and child psychopathology. In their analyses of existing data on the area, Wasserman et al (2003) identified several risk factors specific to children 12 years of age and under. Most of these risk factors are identical to those identified by Hawkins et al (2000) for adolescent youth, but there is *a clear emphasis on individual factors and family factors* given the developmental stages for children. As the child grows and becomes integrated into society, new risk factors related to school, peer influences and the community have a greater impact on the individual’s behaviour.

The risk factors are categorized into four domains - individual, family, peer, school/community.

Box 4: Childhood Risk Factors for Child Delinquency and Later Violent Juvenile Offending	
<p>Individual factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early antisocial behaviour • Emotional factors such as high behavioural activation (high sensation seeking, impulsivity, hyperactivity, predatory aggression) and low behavioural inhibition (low fearfulness, anxiety, timidity, shyness) • Poor cognitive development • Low intelligence • Hyperactivity 	<p>Family factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting • Maltreatment • Family violence • Divorce • Parental psychopathology • Familial antisocial behaviours • Teenage parenthood • Family structure • Large family size
<p>Peer factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association with deviant peers • Peer rejection 	<p>School and community factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to bond to school • Poor academic performance • Low academic aspirations • Living in a poor family • Neighbourhood disadvantage • Disorganized neighbourhoods • Concentration of delinquent peer groups • Access to weapons

Several of the risk factors listed above are detailed below.

Individual factors:

According to Wasserman et al (2003:2), early antisocial behaviour tends to be the best predictor of early-onset delinquency. Such antisocial behaviours generally include various forms of oppositional rule violation and aggression such as theft, physical fighting and vandalism. Indeed, “early aggression appears to be the most significant social behaviour characteristic to predict delinquent behaviour before age 13” (ibid.). While most toddlers exhibit anger and physical aggression (e.g. the terrible twos), most outgrow such early problem behaviour. Those who do not outgrow such behaviour are at increased risk of becoming child delinquents.

Emotional factors also appear to contribute to later antisocial behaviours. Developmentally, by the end of the third year of life, children can express a wide range of emotions, including anger, pride, shame and guilt. Parents, teachers and peers influence children’s socialization of emotional expression and help them learn to manage negative emotions constructively (ibid.:3). Therefore, how children learn to manage their emotions impacts on their risk for delinquency. Other

emotional factors, such as daring, impulsive and risk-taking behaviour have been shown to predict later delinquency. However, as noted by Wasserman et al (2003:3), “more studies are needed to determine whether emotional characteristics in childhood are causes or simply correlates of later antisocial behaviour”.

Healthy cognitive development of children appears to be an important factor in helping children learn social rules and control their social behaviour in early childhood. The Study Group considered cognitive development in terms of language development, social cognition, academic achievement, and neuropsychological function. They concluded that “poor cognitive development and behaviour problems during early childhood could explain the association between academic achievement and delinquency” (ibid.:4). They noted that many studies have shown that delinquents’ verbal IQ tend to be lower than their nonverbal IQs, and that delinquents also have lower mean global IQs and lower school achievement rates compared with nondelinquents. The Study Group also notes that neurological deficits present at birth can also contribute to serious behaviour problems by affecting an infant’s temperament and later control of behaviours, such as language, aggression, oppositional behaviour, attention and hyperactivity.

Further, longitudinal and clinical studies have shown that hyperactive children are more likely to be involved in later delinquency. As indicated earlier, risk factors do not operate in isolation, so a hyperactive child, coupled with aggression and impulsivity, increase the risk of later delinquent behaviour.

Family factors:

The Study Group found that parenting practices, such as inadequate child-rearing practices, are among the strongest predictors of early antisocial behaviour. This is consistent with the risk factors for adolescent violence in the previous section. According to the Study Group, “compared with families in which the children do not have conduct problems, families of young children with conduct problems have been found to be eight times more likely to engage in conflicts involving discipline, to engage in half as many positive interactions, and, often unintentionally, to reinforce negative child behaviour” (Wasserman et al, 2003:5).

Home conflict, child maltreatment (particularly physical abuse and neglect), large family size and parental antisocial history are also strongly associated with early-onset delinquency. For instance, witnessing family violence has been linked to increased child behaviour problems, especially for boys and younger children (ibid.). According to the Study Group, witnessing family violence and being a victim of the battering often co-occur, and this situation is known to affect children’s adjustment more than twice as much as witnessing family violence alone.

However, in relation to child maltreatment, Thornberry et al (2004), relying on data from the Rochester longitudinal study, found that subjects who were maltreated (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, neglect) during childhood only *were not* at significantly greater risk for delinquency (53.8 percent) than those who were never maltreated (49.6 percent). Subjects maltreated during adolescence, however, were at significantly greater risk. The delinquency level for those persistently maltreated in both childhood and adolescence was the highest (71.4 percent).

This finding calls into question whether childhood-only maltreatment is a risk factor for delinquency. As this is one study, further examination into this relationship is warranted.

Parental psychopathology (e.g. antisocial personality disorder) has also been linked to conduct problems in boys. Specifically, one longitudinal study found the association between delinquency and parental anxiety or depression was stronger in younger than in older children.

Teenage parenthood has also been found to strongly predict adolescent offending, but much of this effect may emanate from the mother's antisocial behaviour and involvement with antisocial partners/peers (ibid.). Further, children in single-mother households are at increased risk of poor behavioural outcome, even when controlling for income level.

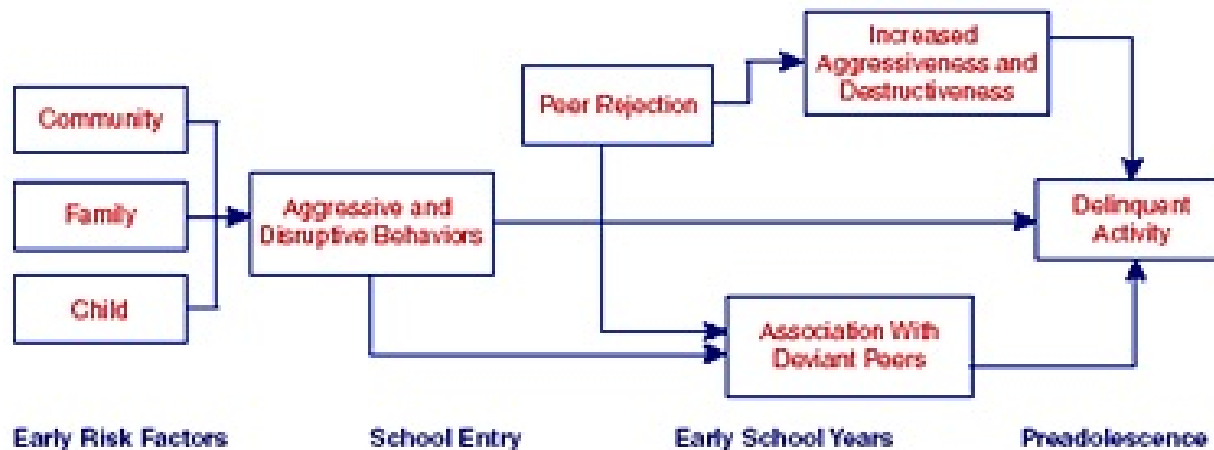
Peer factors:

The influence of peers on children usually occurs later than individual and family influences. It has been widely accepted that deviant peer associations contribute to juvenile offending (e.g. Fergusson et al (2002)). Indeed, this association was considered a strong predictor of adolescent violence by Hawkins et al (2000) as noted in the previous section. According to the Study Group, however, "the unresolved question is whether deviant peers model and reinforce antisocial behaviours or whether the association with deviant peers is simply another manifestation of a child's predisposition to delinquency. In other words, do 'birds of a feather flock together' or does 'bad company corrupt?'" (Wasserman et al, 2003:6). Further, the Study Group found that deviant peers serve to influence nondelinquents to become delinquent, and influence juveniles who already have some history of delinquent behaviour to increase the severity or frequency of their offending (e.g. gang membership).

Also, recent studies have shown that children who are rejected by peers are at significantly greater risk for later chronic antisocial behaviours than children who are not rejected (Coie and Miller-Johnson, 2001).

The following figure depicts the development of early offending behaviour and peer influences:

Figure 1



Source: J.D. Coie and S. Miller-Johnson, 2001. "Peer factors and interventions", in *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*, edited by R. Loeber and D.P. Farrington. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. pp. 191-209.

School factors:

Poor academic performance consistently predicts later delinquency. Indeed, in a meta-analysis of over 100 studies which examined the relationship between poor academic performance and delinquency, Maguin and Loeber (1996) found that poor academic performance is related to the prevalence, onset, frequency and seriousness of delinquency. Loeber et al found that in young children ages 8 to 11, academic performance has been related to serious later delinquency (Wasserman et al, 2003). Wasserman et al (2003:8) further state that even when individual intelligence and attention problems are taken into account, academic performance remains a predictor of delinquency.

Low academic aspirations and weak bonds to school also place children at greater risk for delinquency. It is reasonable to assume that those who perform poorly at school are at greater risk for developing low academic aspirations and weak bonds to school; thus, these risk factors may be interdependent. Further, suspension and expulsion do not appear to reduce undesirable behaviour, and both are linked to increased delinquent behaviour (Shader, 2003).

Community factors:

The Study Group found that childhood exposure to family poverty places these children at significantly greater risk of delinquency. Unorganized and/or disadvantaged neighbourhoods (neighbourhoods with weak formal and informal social controls, residential instability, weak integration) often expose children to norms favouring crime and antisocial behaviour. They have

an increased likelihood for weak social control networks which contributes to the development and persistence of antisocial behaviour among children, and later delinquency as adolescents.

Risk factors for female delinquency

As indicated earlier, many of the studies on risk factors for juvenile delinquency have used male samples. According to some, this is because the incidence and prevalence of delinquency is much higher among males than females; thus, researchers can easily draw very large samples for accurate statistical analysis (Howell, 2003). Since most studies have focused on male samples, there are substantial limitations in applying the results of these studies to females. Indeed, it has been contended that “much of what we can currently conclude about serious, violent and chronic juvenile offenders may apply only to males” (ibid.:117).

In an effort to address the gaps in understanding female delinquency, a major study on the causes and correlates of girls’ delinquency is currently underway in the United States. Funded by the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the study consists of a multi-disciplinary group of researchers and practitioners (Girls’ Study Group) which convened to study patterns, causes and correlates in female delinquency, and identify effective strategies to reduce female involvement in delinquency. Over 1600 pieces of literature were reviewed by the group. While the results will be published in 2006 by the OJJDP, preliminary results were released at a meeting of the American Society of Criminology in Toronto on November 16, 2005.

(http://girlsstudygroup.rti.org/docs/2005_ASC_C&C.ppt.pdf).

The group confirmed that girls and boys experience many of the same risk factors but that girls and boys differ in sensitivity to and rate of exposure to these factors. According to this study, the following risk and protective factors appear to be particularly gender sensitive:

- early puberty;
- depression and anxiety;
- witnessing family violence;
- cross-gender peer influence;
- responsiveness to religion;
- attachment and bonding to school;
- neighbourhood disadvantage.

The group further found that the following risk and protective factors, though associated with delinquency, do not differ for girls and boys:

- family dynamics
 - structure and stability
 - supervision and control
 - family criminality
 - family violence;
- school involvement;
- availability of community-based alternatives to detention.

The Girls’ Study Group utilized the 5 domain (individual, family, school, peer and community) model in their research. They made the following conclusions:

Individual and biological factors:

- girls may be more susceptible to psychological dysfunction as a response to traumatic events;
- early puberty may be related to risk for behaviour problems, including delinquency, in both boys and girls, but the relationship appears stronger for girls;
- early puberty, especially for girls in high-poverty neighbourhoods, links girls to older, sometimes delinquent males.

Family influences:

- maltreatment and sexual assault;
- supervision and control;
- family involvement in prostitution and drugs.

Peer dynamics:

- girls have fewer delinquent peer associations;
- girls are more influenced by the delinquency of romantic partners.

Neighbourhood dynamics:

- there are many studies on neighbourhoods but few on gender related effects;
- structural disadvantage affects crime rates of both girls and boys;
- girls are less exposed to community violence;
- relocation to more affluent neighbourhoods lowered girls' delinquency more than boys' delinquency.

Religion:

- religion has a modest negative effect on delinquency, especially minor delinquency;
- the effect of religion on delinquency may be stronger among females than males;
- faith-based organizations may aid in the effort to control female delinquency.

Schools:

- school success has a slightly stronger protective effect for boys, though it depends on the type of delinquency;
- students' perception of the fairness and clarity of the rules and enforcement has a protective effect on both genders, but more so for boys than girls;
- bonding to school is a stronger protective factor for girls.

While detailed analysis on these findings has not yet been published, the preliminary results are important to any discussion of prevention/intervention efforts in that they speak to the need for gender-specific programming or initiatives based on how risks are gendered.

For instance, the Girls' Study Group concluded that girls are more likely to be influenced by delinquent romantic partners and that early puberty may also lead to associations with older, often delinquent boyfriends. This finding was also noted in a Canadian study where girls were often initiated into law breaking by older boyfriends, while boys appeared to be initiated more often by family members (fathers and older siblings) (Artz et al, 2005:296). This gendered difference in

motivators for offending behaviour must be reflected in attempts to prevent or minimize such behaviour.

Artz et al (2005:297) also report on several factors that contribute to girls' delinquency and aggression:

- problematic family dynamics and parental relationships, especially when these involve parental and sibling conflict and violence, parental rejection, low parental support, parental separation, and difficult mother-daughter interactions that result in low maternal attachment;
- gender-based oppression and abuse, especially the sexual objectification and sexual abuse of females, and the acceptance of patriarchal control and the need to attract the male gaze and male approbation;
- mental health and personality factors, including depression, low self-esteem, conduct disorder, suicidal ideation and suicidal behaviour, and atypical physiological responses to stress;
- school difficulties, including low achievement, low school attachment, and dropping out of school;
- the alleviation of boredom and attention seeking grounded in a need to be noticed, included, stimulated and valued;
- the abuse of and chronic use of alcohol and drugs by the parents of delinquent and aggressive girls and by the girls themselves;
- connections to delinquent peers, especially older males; and
- negative self-representations, particularly the belief that others see them in negative ways.

It is also important to mention here that studies have shown that a substantial proportion of female delinquents report a history of sexual and physical abuse (e.g. Artz et al, 2005; Booker Loper, 2000). Indeed, both Howell (2003) and feminist criminology emphasize abuse as a significant factor in the pathway to female delinquency. A recent study by Belknap and Holsinger (2006) found that delinquent females reported higher rates of verbal, physical and sexual abuse than delinquent boys, and that half of the youth believed the abuse was related to their subsequent offending. Girls were significantly more likely than boys to report this.

While the Girls' Study Group found little difference in risk for boys and girls in relation to family violence, a closer look at the group's findings, when available, in regard to victimization is required to explain this finding. They did find, however, that girls may be more susceptible to psychological dysfunction as a response to traumatic events. Thus, being a victim of child abuse may negatively impact the psychological functioning of girls, leading to a host of outcomes such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and aggression.

Further, in a recent Canadian study, Fitzgerald (2003) found that males and females were affected differently by experiences of victimization. While there was a higher level of victimization among males, female victims had a higher likelihood for offending. In fact, when compared with males who experienced the greatest level of victimization, females who experienced the greatest level of victimization had an over 90% chance of committing a violent act compared to males with a 79% chance. Thus, it is clear that female victimization, and perhaps abuse in particular, is a risk factor that must be considered in any discussion of risk factors for female youth, and is particularly important for appropriate prevention/intervention initiatives for girls.

While a history of abuse is often seen to be focal to girls' engaging in offending behaviour, it is important to acknowledge that no single factor can predict such behaviour. As indicated earlier in this report, many individual, family, peer, school and community factors contribute to delinquency, but some factors may be stronger for some individuals at certain points in their life course.

It is also important to note that within-sex differences also exist in that female delinquents are not a homogeneous group. Pathways to delinquency and crime for both girls and boys emerge in psychological and sociocultural contexts where individuals experience different strains and stresses. Most importantly, "since no single pathway to delinquency and crime exists, our theories about delinquency and crime must provide explanations that adequately consider multifaceted human experiences and must be able to accurately reflect the within- and between-group differences in females and males and in different cultural and ethnic groups" (Artz et al, 2005: 306).

Protective Factors

The risk factor paradigm also includes the identification of protective factors. While the definition of protective factors varies by researcher/study (Farrington, 2000), they are generally meant to denote factors which are associated with a decreased probability of delinquency/violence. Generally, if risk factors can be decreased and protective factors enhanced by intervention action, then the likelihood of delinquency/violence should be reduced.

It is also generally accepted that the absence of protective factors while being exposed to risk domains places the individual in significant risk for later persistent serious offending. Indeed, “problem behaviours normally develop in individuals who have a preponderance of risk factors over protective factors” (Howell, 2003:109).

The identification of protective factors are also associated with studies on resiliency. Resiliency refers to the ability to survive adverse conditions, or overcoming the odds. As such, these studies focus on children who are deemed at considerable risk but avoid significant involvement in delinquency. Therefore, researchers and practitioners are interested in knowing what protective factors serve to immunize high-risk children/youth against risk and increase their resilience.

Research on protective factors has been slower to develop than research on risk factors. However, there is significant research emerging on protective factors given the numerous longitudinal studies occurring around the world and the focus on developmental and life course criminology. For instance, Durlak (see *ibid.*:107) suggests that the following factors may be the most important protective factors against delinquency and other problem behaviours:

- self-efficacy;
- a good parent-child relationship;
- social support from helping parents, peers and teachers.

Similarly, Hawkins, in a 1999 study (see *ibid.*), identified comparable protective factors for delinquency, and they are incorporated in the proven effective Seattle social development model:

- positive bonding relationships with family members, teachers or other adults;
- healthy beliefs and clear standards, including clear expectations in family, school and neighbourhood that criminal behaviour is not acceptable;
- opportunities for pro-social involvement in family, school and community;
- competencies or skills.

Other authors have provided lists of empirically supported protective factors (eg. Howell, 2003; Smart et al, 2003 Shader, 2000). For instance, Howell (2003) provides a list which is derived mainly from two sources as noted below. It is important to note here that several of these factors were identified using male samples only (indicated by **). Therefore, while generalization to female youth is unknown from an empirical standpoint, these factors may serve to enhance the positive development of any youth.

Box 5: Research-Supported Protective Factors Against Delinquency and Other Problem Behaviours

Individual

- High IQ (antisocial behaviour)*
- Intolerant attitude toward deviance (violence, problem behaviour)*
- Positive social orientation (antisocial behaviour)*
- High accountability (persistent serious delinquency)**
- Ability to feel guilt (persistent serious delinquency)**
- Trustworthiness (persistent serious delinquency)**

Family

- Good relationships with parents (persistent serious delinquency)**
- Good family communication (persistent serious delinquency)**

School

- Positive commitment to school (violence, problem behaviour)*
- Strong school motivation (persistent serious delinquency)**
- Academic achievement (persistent serious delinquency)**
- Positive attitude toward school (persistent serious delinquency)**

Peer Group

- Nondelinquent friends (persistent serious delinquency)**

Community

- Nondisadvantaged neighbourhood (persistent serious delinquency)**
- Low neighbourhood crime (persistent serious delinquency)**

Note: The kinds of delinquent behaviours (or general antisocial behaviours) against which the researched factors provide protection are shown in parentheses.

* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001)

** Stouthamer-Loeber, Loeber, Wei, Farrington, and Wikstrom (2002). The sample in this research consisted of boys only.

A specific protective factor that has been given particular attention by researchers and practitioners is school attachment. Several researchers have reported on the protective influence of school attachment (e.g. Smart et al, 2005; Henrich et al, 2005; Smart et al, 2003; Howell, 2003; Smith et al, 1995).

A recent Canadian study (Spratt et al, 2000) explored school attachment as a potential protective factor for high-risk children. The researchers also used the risk factors of aggression and delinquent peers as variables to determine how school attachment affects youth's involvement in offending behaviour. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, these researchers found that:

Boys - property offences:

- boys who were not attached to school were committing more property offences than boys attached to school;
- school attachment appeared to decrease property offences for boys with zero, two or three risk factors;
- boys at highest risk (three or more risk factors) show the largest decrease in property offences when they have a high attachment to school.

Girls - property offences:

- girls with more risk factors and girls with low school attachment commit more property crimes;
- school attachment appeared to have little effect on property offending for girls with zero, one or two risks;
- girls at highest risk (three or more risk factors) show the largest decrease in property offences when they have a high attachment to school.

The study also investigated the relationship between early-onset aggression, school attachment and offending behaviour. Findings indicated that school attachment decreased property offences equally among the early-aggressive and not early-aggressive children. It also showed that early-aggressive children and children with low school attachment were committing more violent crimes. For the early-aggressive children, a substantial decrease in violent behaviour was seen when they were highly attached to school.

Further, school attachment decreased property crime equally among the early-aggressive and not early-aggressive children. Thus, it seems that school attachment protects early-aggressive children from violence, but not from property offending.

School attachment also decreased violent offences for children with zero, one or two risk factors, but the highest decrease was found in children with three or more risk factors. School attachment acted as a protective factor against the influence of delinquent peers: those with delinquent peers but are attached to school were no more likely to be involved in property offending than those without delinquent peers. This protective effect, however, was limited to those who were not early-onset aggressive children.

These findings have significant implications for the timing of prevention initiatives in that initiatives to promote school attachment must occur as early as childhood, particularly for early-aggressive children. It also shows that early aggressiveness can be 'altered' in that children who have early-onset aggression can be protected from engaging in future violence by having an attachment to school. Such results are encouraging.

Other studies have confirmed the importance of school attachment in preventing high-risk youth from engaging in delinquency and violence. For instance, Smith et al (1995), in their analysis of data from the Rochester Youth Development Study, found significant protective factors for delinquency and drug use, including commitment to school, attachment to teachers, and expectations of going to college. YMCA Canada (Munson-Benson, 2004) also promotes school

attachment, a caring school climate, parent involvement in schooling, achievement motivation, and school engagement as among the most important developmental assets children need to succeed. Interestingly, Zahn (2005) concluded that bonding to school is a stronger protective factor for girls than boys.

Indeed, the influence of school should not be surprising since children spend approximately 20% of their waking hours each year in school (Spratt et al, 2000). As indicated by the researchers, the findings also confirm the results of many studies on school zero-tolerance policies (suspension or expulsion for ‘problem’ children) in that these policies are counterproductive and often lead to further delinquency and violence (ibid.; Howell, 2003). Zero-tolerance policies will be discussed further in the next section on interventions.

Studies also note the importance of pro-social peers in preventing the development of persistent adolescent antisocial behaviour (eg. Smart et al, 2003; Smith et al, 1995). For instance, Smart et al (2003), in their analysis of the large longitudinal study of the Australian Temperament Project, found that “the only characteristic that consistently differentiated the *antisocial* group from the *resilient* group was their tendency to associate more frequently with peers who engaged in antisocial acts.” Further, as noted by Howell (2003), a study of the Denver Youth Survey revealed that among the most salient protective factors was having conventional friends and not having delinquent friends.

As indicated earlier, many of the studies on protective factors used male samples only. It will be important to examine the upcoming results of the United States Department of Justice funded study on girls’ delinquency, as an important part of the study’s mandate is the identification of protective factors for girls. This research will help fill significant gaps in understanding the pathways to girls’ delinquency, protective factors and appropriate gender-specific interventions.

Summary - Risk and Protective Factors by Domain

In an attempt to summarize the above sections on risk and protective factors, the following table (Box 6) was developed. It is primarily a collection of risk and protective factors identified above by domain and, in the case of risk factors, by age group. The age of onset of protective factors is generally unknown, with a few exceptions. More research is required to pinpoint when the protective factor has the greatest influence.

It is important to reiterate that several risk factors appear to be consistently and strongly related to delinquency:

- raised in poverty;
- neighbourhood crime/disadvantage;
- exposure to/victim of violence;
- early childhood aggression;
- hyperactivity/impulsivity;
- association with deviant peers/siblings/parents;

- early initiation of violent behaviour and involvement in other forms of antisocial behaviour (e.g. substance use);
- poor family management practices;
- poor academic achievement;
- member of a gang;
- being male.

This list of risk factors is not meant to minimize the effects of other risk factors identified in this review. No one risk factor will guarantee offending behaviour. Indeed, risk factors have a cumulative effect in that the more risk factors present, the likelihood of delinquency and violence increases. Therefore, an individual having other risk factors may demonstrate delinquent or violent behaviour, as well. The purpose of the above list is to show that certain risk factors appear more often as a strong risk factor in studies which explore the causes and correlates of crime.

Likewise, it is also important to note that certain factors may have significant influence in protecting children and youth from engaging in a lifestyle of antisocial behaviour. Again, this is not to say that the other protective factors identified in this review have less influence on children/youth. In many cases, these factors require further empirical examination to test their strength. Factors which consistently appear to have a strong influence include:

- school attachment and performance;
- association with conventional, pro-social peers;
- attachment to family;
- schools and communities that emphasize positive social norms;
- good family management practices;
- warm, supportive relationships and bonding with adults;
- opportunities to become involved in positive activities;
- recognition and support for participating in positive activities;
- cognitive, social and emotional competence;
- nondisadvantaged/low crime neighbourhood;
- being female.

Box 6: Risk and Protective Factors, by Domain

Risk Factor				Protective Factor			
Domain	Early Onset (ages 6-11 or earlier)	Late Onset (ages 12-14)	Age of onset unknown	Domain	Early Onset (ages 6-11 or earlier)	Late Onset (ages 12-14)	Age of onset unknown
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General offenses • Substance use • Being male • Aggression • Hyperactivity/attention deficit • Problem (antisocial) behaviour • Exposure to television violence • Medical, physical problems • Low IQ • Antisocial attitudes, beliefs • Dishonesty • Psychological condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General offenses • Restlessness • Difficulty concentrating • Risk taking/sensation seeking • Aggression • Being male • Physical violence • Antisocial attitudes, beliefs • Crimes against persons • Problem (antisocial) behaviour • Low IQ • Substance use • Psychological condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intolerant attitude toward deviance • Cognitive, social and emotional competence • Social skills • Self-efficacy • Above average IQ • Being female • Positive social orientation • Perceived sanctions for transgressions • Good coping style • Self-related cognitions • Moral beliefs • Internal locus of control • Easy temperament • Attachment to family • Empathy • Ability to feel guilt • High accountability • Trustworthiness • Values • Problem solving • Optimism 	Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low socioeconomic status/poverty • Antisocial parents • Poor parent-child relationship • Harsh, lax, or inconsistent discipline • Broken home • Separation from parents • Abusive parents/maltreatment • Neglect • Large family size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor parent-child relationship • Harsh or lax discipline • Poor monitoring, supervision • Low parental involvement • Antisocial parents • Broken home • Low socioeconomic status/poverty • Abusive parents/maltreatment • Family conflict • Delinquent siblings • Large family size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm, supportive relationships and bonding with parents or other adults • Good family communication • Opportunity and recognition for pro-social involvement • Parents' positive evaluation of peers • Parental monitoring • Family harmony • Secure, stable family • Strong family norms and morality • More than two years between siblings • Small family size • Responsibility for chores or required helpfulness

Domain	Early Onset (ages 6-11 or earlier)	Late Onset (ages 12-14)	Age of onset unknown
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor attitude, performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor attitude, performance • Academic failure • School norms re: violence • Low bonding to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitude/commitment to school • Sense of belonging/attachment • Strong school motivation • Recognition for involvement in conventional activities • School achievement/ recognition for achievement • Positive school climate/pro-social school norms • Responsibility and required helpfulness
Peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak social ties • Antisocial peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak social ties • Antisocial, delinquent peers • Peer rejection • Gang membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends who engage in conventional, pro-social behavior
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial prejudice (age of onset unclear) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood crime/violence, drugs • Neighbourhood disorganization • Access to weapons • Racial prejudice (age of onset unclear) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-disadvantaged neighbourhood • Low neighbourhood crime • Access to support services • Community networking • Attachment to the community • Participation in church or other community groups • Community/cultural norms against violence • Strong cultural identity and ethnic pride
<p>Source: Adapted from Farrington (1998); Hawkins et al (2000); Office of the Surgeon General (2001); Shader (2003); Wasserman et al (2003); Loeber et al (2003); Smart et al (2003); Howell (2003).</p>			

6. Jurisdictional review of interventions/prevention practices – lessons learned

The previous section identified risk factors that have been empirically determined to increase the likelihood of delinquent or violent behaviour. Indeed, the risk factor paradigm has evolved into a scientific approach to the prevention of delinquency that is research based, data driven and outcome focused (Howell, 2003). Hence, this approach has led to effective prevention programming based on empirically-based knowledge.

It is well known from the research that multiple rather than single risk factors place children at risk of becoming persistent, serious and/or violent offenders. To be effective, then, interventions must target multiple problems in a variety of settings, and a combination of interventions may be more effective than a single method (Farrington, 1996).

Developmental theory suggests the feasibility of linking a continuum of prevention programs to infant, child and adolescent stages of development (Howell, 2003). This is particularly important since research has confirmed that those who engage in antisocial or criminal behaviour at an early age are more likely to become serious or violent offenders. This makes the need for early intervention for children at risk extremely critical to help prevent the development of chronic criminal careers.

Developmental theory also speaks to the connection between stages of development and domains (individual, the family, school, peers and community) having greatest influence on an individual's behaviour. "As children grow older, additional sets of risk factors are added to earlier ones - poor school performance and school drop out, gang involvement, drugs, a poor local environment - so different preventive strategies are needed to target those new risk factors, as well as the use of approaches adapted to children's ages and interests" (Shaw, 2001:20). For instance, Shaw (2001) provides an illustration of how certain preventive interventions can be introduced in each domain for the subsequent reduction of certain risk factors.

Major Types of Preventive Strategies and Risk Factors Reduced by Domain

Source: Shaw (2001)

Domain	Preventive Measures	Risk factors reduced
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parenting programs • family support • preschool education • foster parent training and supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve parental supervision • reduce early school problems • improve academic skills • improve family and youth relationships
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school organizational change • whole school anti-bullying • harassment, racism, sexism, anti-drug curriculum • mediation/conflict resolution training • family-school links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve school climate • reduce truancy, disruptive behaviour • increase commitment and bonds • reduce bullying behaviour • reduce antisocial attitudes and behaviours, drug use • improve conflict resolution skills, reduce escalation of conflict • improve parental/school support and skills/reduce behaviour problems
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth groups, centres, sports and recreation • summer holiday programs • outreach youth workers • youth action groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce risky behaviours, increase skills, bonds • reduce antisocial behaviour • provide support to at-risk youth • reduce local disorder, crime
Early Adolescence and Peer Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mentoring and education for at-risk youth • drug education projects • after-school programs, homework clubs • gang prevention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve general abilities to function and develop good school, relations and leisure • reduce drug use • improve school attainment, reduce unsupervised leisure time • reduce risks of gang recruitment and offending, victimization
Later Adolescence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stay-in-school incentives • work skills training • teen-parent programs • peer support programs • youth foyers and housing projects • wraparound projects for youths leaving care, custody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce drop out and unemployment • improve skills and qualifications • improve child caring abilities, and education/work prospects • reduce isolation, homelessness • reduce risk of homelessness, crime and victimization • prevent homelessness, victimization, (re-offending)

Catalano et al, (1999) concluded that implementing family, school and community interventions is the best way to prevent children from developing into serious, violent juvenile offenders. They state that “programs similar in philosophy to public health approaches (i.e. those that both address

risk factors and introduce protective factors) are the most promising prevention and early intervention programs for serious, violent juvenile offenders.”

Given the growth in the empirical-based identification of risk factors, there has been a corresponding increase in the need for evaluating delinquency prevention and intervention programs to measure effectiveness. There has been considerable evaluation work conducted in the United States. Other countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom, are beginning to make some headway.

Despite the growing number of evaluations, Howell (2003:179) states that researchers have not yet conducted comprehensive evaluations (e.g. meta-analyses²⁰) of delinquency prevention programs, and, therefore, there is an absence of knowledge of the general principles of effective delinquency-prevention programs. As Jamieson and Hart (2003:2) note, “in Canada, as in many places throughout the world, information about which interventions work, the conditions that contribute to success or failure, and the transferability of interventions from one situation to another is only in the early stages of development...the ‘gold’ standard of empirically-proven solutions is still far afield.” As an alternative, researchers often list examples of effective and/or promising interventions which may be replicated by jurisdictions seeking to address delinquency or crime issues in their community.

For instance, the following sources provide lists of crime-prevention programs which they have determined to be effective and/or best practices. Most of the programs cited in this paper were taken from these sources. Many of those deemed ‘best practice’ may not have been evaluated but are considered promising because of the multiple components contained within the intervention that seek to address multiple risk factors.

- *Compendium of Promising Crime Prevention Practices in Canada* (June 2003)
Developed by the Caledon Institute in Social Policy, in partnership with the National Crime Prevention Strategy, this compendium provides an overview of key strategies, practices, resources and tools that are supported via federal, provincial and territorial crime prevention initiatives across Canada.
<http://www.caledonist.org/PDF/553820452.pdf>
- *Investing in Youth: International Approaches to Preventing Crime and Victimization* (2001), International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC)
This report was written by ICPC for the Canadian National Crime Prevention Centre as part of its strategy to promote crime prevention through social development and draws on promising strategies and programs that have been developed around the world.
http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org/publications/pub_7_2.pdf

²⁰A meta analysis uses statistical methods to combine the results from a number of previous experiments or studies examining the same question, in an attempt to summarize the totality of evidence relating to a particular issue.
Source: <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/cochrane/overview/definitions.htm>

- Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC)*
 This Canadian federal department is responsible for the development and implementation of the Canadian Crime Prevention Strategy which places a focus on identifying and addressing risk factors for crime and victimization. Its goal is to develop community-based responses to crime, with a particular emphasis on children and youth, Aboriginal people and women. It also established the National Crime Prevention Centre and the funding programs put emphasis on results, accountability and evidence-based strategies. The website provides results of evaluations on several crime prevention through social development programs which have been implemented across Canada.
https://www.psepc.gc.ca/res/cp/ev/ev-en.asp?lang_update=1
- Worldwide Best Practice in Crime Prevention (1997)*, International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC)
 This report cites 100 examples of international interventions considered best practice for crime prevention.
http://www.crime_prevention_intl.org/publications/pub_107_1.pdf
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)* in Washington, D.C.
 This office provides some of the most up-to-date research on risk factors and effective interventions. There are several publications on this area, many of which were used in the development of this paper.
<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/>
- Strengthening Families Program Matrix (1999)*
 This resource is funded by the OJJDP and provides a listing of effective family-based interventions by type of intervention and by target age.
http://www.strengtheningfamilies.org/html/programs_1999/matrix_1999.html
- Preventing and Reducing Juvenile Delinquency: A Comprehensive Framework (2003)*
 Written by James C. Howell, a renowned researcher in the field of criminology, this book provides an excellent overview of risk and protective factors, as well as effective prevention and early intervention approaches. It also lists effective rehabilitation programs for juvenile offenders, as well as programs which have been proven ineffective in reducing/preventing delinquency or crime.
- Reducing Offending: An assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour (1998)*
 This Home Office research study contains a chapter by John Graham entitled “What works in preventing criminality?” It reviews known risk factors and lists initiatives considered most effective in preventing criminality.
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/hors187.pdf>

While there are no specific principles of effective delinquency-prevention programs per se, there are some lessons that have been learned which can guide program development (Shaw, 2001; Wasserman, 2000).

- the earlier the intervention, the more effective it is;
- treatment that lasts a relatively long time is more effective and long lasting than short interventions;
- interventions starting before adolescence are more effective;
- programs targeting multiple problems (e.g. lawbreaking, substance abuse, abuse, academic problems, family problems) are more effective than those dealing with only one risk factor;
- single-focus interventions are unlikely to be effective because antisocial behaviour emerges from a complex array of risk factors;
- programs involving the family will be more effective than those that do not;
- programs that identify and refer for treatment children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) or other disorders will have more powerful, long-range results than those that do not;
- interventions that are successful with specific groups of youth may not transfer to a universal setting where fewer youth exhibit similar problems;
- interventions must have a theoretical basis and be clearly and concretely described so that they can be systematically evaluated and replicated;
- researchers must consider the child's development and larger context, regardless of the chronological age or risk factors involved;
- interventions must be appropriate to gender; ethnic and cultural background; levels of risk; and specific needs of children and youth;
- interventions must be implemented by properly-trained staff.

The appropriate timing of interventions has been given considerable attention by researchers. As indicated earlier, early intervention is critical to prevent child delinquency from escalating into chronic criminality given that child delinquents between the ages of 7-12 have a two- to threefold greater risk of becoming serious, violent and chronic offenders. "By intervening early, young children will be less likely to succumb to the accumulating risks that arise later in childhood and adolescence and less likely to incur the negative social and personal consequences of several years of disruptive and delinquent behaviours" (Wasserman et al, 2003).

Similarly, Loeber et al (2003:9) state that "Most juvenile justice, child welfare, and school resources currently focus on adolescent juvenile offenders and problem children whose behaviours are already persistent or on education and behaviour management programs for youth in middle and high schools rather than on children in elementary schools or preschools. Interventions usually seek to remediate disruptive behaviour, child delinquency, and serious and violent offending after these behaviours have emerged."

The study group concluded that prevention is a better approach. Of all known interventions to reduce juvenile delinquency, preventive interventions that focus on child delinquency will probably take the largest "bite" out of crime. Specifically, these efforts should be directed first at

the prevention of persistent disruptive behaviour in children in general; second, at the prevention of child delinquency, particularly among disruptive children; and third, at the prevention of serious and violent juvenile offending, particularly among child delinquents. “The earlier the better” is a key theme in establishing interventions to prevent child delinquency.

Given the facts that the incidence and prevalence of violent and serious delinquency peak during adolescence and early adulthood and decline quickly thereafter, are more frequent among males than females, and that a large proportion of the offences during the peak years are committed by a small number of offenders, the concept of early intervention is very attractive. “Applied to the relatively small number of prospective serious offenders prior to the years of peak offending, effective intervention could potentially prevent some significant portion of the problem behaviour and associated social damage that would otherwise appear during their adolescence and early adulthood” (Wasserman et al, 2003).

The above findings in relation to interventions should be taken into account when examining the next section. The next section describes particular programs cited in the literature as being effective and/or having most promise as they focus on reducing risk factors and increasing protection at the same time. They are also based on developmental stages of children and youth, as well as domains having greatest influence on behaviour at particular developmental stages. Most of these programs have been evaluated, and an effort was made to include Canadian evaluations, where possible.

EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE/PROMISING INTERVENTIONS

The following interventions are examples of interventions found in the research to be effective (evaluated with scientific rigour) and/or have been considered by experts to show promise in preventing crime due to the program components utilized. This is not an exhaustive list of effective programs, but they are commonly cited in the literature and thus were appropriate for inclusion in this paper.

Also, focus was placed on including Canadian programs which have been evaluated and/or been deemed as showing promise so as to provide a Canadian context. Most of these Canadian programs were located on the PSEPC website of evaluated crime prevention programs as noted above.

Each intervention noted focuses on addressing a variety of risk factors and risk factor domains (individual, family, peer, school and community). The interventions are found in broad areas of family-based interventions, school-based interventions, peer group-based initiatives, and community-based interventions (see Farrington, 1996; Graham, 1998; Shaw, 2001; and Howell, 2003). The family-based interventions include home visitation programs, preschool intellectual enrichment programs, family therapy, parenting education programs, and cognitive and social skills training. School-based interventions include school organizational change, anti-bullying initiatives, and family-school partnerships.

These programs focus on developmental stages of children and youth; for example, some programs are tailored to the prenatal-infancy stage while others are focused on early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence stages. The emphasis on developmental stages is important in that, as previously discussed, risk factors are also ordered on the basis of an individual's developmental stage. For instance, individual and family domains are thought to have more influence on a child's behaviour; and as the individual ages, school, peers and community have increasing influence.

Family-based initiatives

Existing evidence suggests that family-based prevention programs are effective in reducing offending (Farrington and Welsh, 2003). These programs aim to reduce the risk factors of poor parent-child relationships, harsh/lax/inconsistent discipline, low parental involvement, abuse, family conflict and increase protective factors such as good health, attachment to family, parental monitoring and problem solving.

Home visitation programs

It appears that programs designed to promote healthy children can reduce crime. Several evaluations have been conducted on home visitation programs. While such programs are different in terms of target population, service provided and service providers, they have similar goals of healthy child development and the prevention of child abuse. The results of evaluations from three such programs follow:

- *Nurse Home Visitation Program*

Researchers utilized a randomized trial research design in evaluating the Nurse Home Visitation Program (Olds et al, 1998) in which nurses in a semi-rural community in New York visit mothers, beginning during pregnancy and continuing through the child's second birthday, to improve pregnancy outcomes, to promote children's health and development, and to strengthen families' economic self-sufficiency.

The results of the evaluation revealed that the program benefits the neediest families but provides little benefit for the broader population. Long-term follow-up of families in New York indicates that nurse-visited mothers were less likely to abuse or neglect their children. By the time the children were age 15, the children had fewer arrests and convictions, smoked and drank less, and had fewer sexual partners.

“The positive effects of the program on child abuse and injuries to children were most pronounced among mothers who, at registration, had the lowest psychological resources (defined as high levels of poor mental health symptoms, limited intellectual functioning, and little belief in their ability to control their own lives)” (ibid.:5). Indeed, the evaluators concluded that the use of nurses as home visitors was key to program success and that services need to be targeted to high-risk families.

It is important to note that delinquency prevention expert Farrington (1996) has reported that such visitation programs are among the most helpful methods of preventing youth crime. He notes that

studies suggest that this intervention can lead to a reduction in child abuse by parents as well as a longer-term reduction in delinquency among the children concerned.

- *The Hawaii Healthy Start Program*

This program was touted by the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) as among the 100 worldwide best practices for crime prevention (International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 1997). The Healthy Start program began in 1985 and has been replicated in the United States, Canada, and the Philippines. The aim of this program is to provide home visitations by trained workers to screen, identify, and work with at-risk families of newborns (no previous births) to prevent abuse and promote child development. According to the ICPC, rates of child abuse and neglect among high-risk families enrolled between 1987-1991 were 62% lower than rates among high-risk families who were not offered the service.

An evaluation of this program (Duggan et al, 1999) was undertaken in recent years in which researchers evaluated the program over a three-year period. Results were published at the end of two years, where researchers concluded that mothers in this program after two years of service reported better linkage with pediatric medical care, improved parenting efficacy, decreased parenting stress, more use of nonviolent discipline, and decreased injury due to partner violence in the home, compared with a control group. However, no overall benefits were noted on child development, the child's home learning environment, parent-child interaction, well child health care, pediatric health care use for illness or injury, child maltreatment or maternal life skills, social support, or substance use.

- *Healthy Families (Canada)*

Healthy Families is based on the Healthy Families America program. Several projects were implemented across Canada, with funding under the Crime Prevention Investment Fund of the National Crime Prevention Strategy.

Healthy Families is similar to Hawaii's Healthy Start program. It was implemented in five sites across Canada: three sites in Edmonton, Alberta; one site in Whitehorse, Yukon; and one site in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Each site targeted parents with children ages 0-6 years who were considered at high risk for future criminal behaviour and victimization. The Yukon site focused primarily on aboriginal children.

The projects consisted of an intensive home visitation program to provide parents with the support they needed for healthy child development. The home visits were conducted by family support workers where they utilized the modeling of good parenting practices and setting and monitoring of goals. The aim of the project was to reduce multiple risk factors associated with antisocial behaviour, delinquency and crime, such as child abuse/neglect, poor parenting skills, exposure to domestic violence and parental criminality.

An independent evaluator examined all five sites but was able to utilize a quasi-experimental design (used a nontreatment comparison group) for the Charlottetown site only. The evaluator found that:

- the projects worked best with younger, first-time parents;

- four of five sites demonstrated improvements in family functioning;
- parents viewed their experience as favourable across all sites;
- 30% difference in child welfare involvement between participant families and comparison group families.

While the evaluators noted that more rigorous evaluations of the Canadian Healthy Families model are required before firm conclusions could be drawn on its general effectiveness, it does provide important information on what elements seem to be successful, and thus programs can be modified to enhance effectiveness.

- *Strong Families, Strong Children (Canada)*

This program operated from 2000-2003 in Moncton, New Brunswick and the evaluation was funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre. The program targeted children between the ages of 5 and 12 who showed significant risk factors associated with crime and victimization, including socioeconomic deprivation, poor school performance, and antisocial tendencies (PSEPC, 2006). Priority was given to children engaged in behaviour that would result in criminal charges if they were of the age of criminal responsibility. The program's core service was a family in-home support program combined with a family nurturing program for parents and children, a parent support group, social skills training, family resource library, respite care, and the Family Fun Times program.

A control group of Head Start²¹ families was utilized in the evaluation.

The evaluators found positive changes for both child and parent participants. Parents showed greater confidence about their abilities to address concerns and cope with parenting issues. Child participants showed decreased tendencies toward inattention, anxiety, anger, impulsiveness and aggression, as well as increased levels of happiness and daily functioning when solving everyday problems.

Preschool intellectual enrichment programs

Programs that are designed to stimulate or enrich thinking and reasoning ability in young children facilitate positive social problem solving and school success.

- *High/Scope Perry PreSchool Program*

This is a landmark, long-term study of the effects of high quality early care and education on low-income three and four year olds in a disadvantaged African American community. Essentially a Head Start program, the children in the study were randomly assigned either to receive the High/Scope Perry Preschool program or to receive no comparable program and were then tracked throughout their lives to age 40. The curriculum encouraged children to plan, implement and

²¹Headstart is a program for preschool children three to five years of age in low-income families. Its aim is to prepare children for success in school through an early learning program.

review their play activities. In addition, well-trained teachers visited children's families as part of the program to discuss their child's development.

A follow-up of former participants at age 27 found that they were less likely to have been arrested than the control group of similar children and more likely to have completed their secondary education, to have reasonably well-paid jobs and to own their homes (Farrington, 1996).

A further follow-up at age 40 (Schweinhart, 2005) was recently completed, and again, the results revealed education, economic and crime prevention gains among the participants. Among the study's major findings in the crime prevention area:

- The group who received high quality early education had significantly fewer arrests than the non-program group (36% vs. 55% arrested five times or more); and
 - Significantly fewer members of the group who received high quality early care than the non-program group were ever arrested for violent crimes (32% vs. 48%), property crimes (36% vs. 58%), or drug crimes (14% vs. 34%).

This program substantially reinforces the case for early interventions in disadvantaged populations given the participants' success in social and economic life.

- *Chicago Child-Parent Center*

This program serves children in Chicago's poorest neighbourhoods. It provides comprehensive education, family and health services and includes half-day preschool, half and full-day kindergarten, and school-age services in linked elementary schools at ages 6-9 years.

In a 15-year follow-up study of the program's effectiveness across 25 sites, children who did not receive the program were 70% more likely than participants to have been arrested for a violent crime by age 18 (Reynolds and Robertson, 2001).

In addition, children who participated in the preschool intervention for one or two years had a higher rate of high school completion; more years of completed education; and lower rates of juvenile arrest, violent arrests and school drop out. Both preschool and school-age participation were significantly associated with lower rates of grade retention and special education services. The effects of preschool participation on educational attainment were greater for boys than girls, especially in reducing school drop-out rates. Relative to less extensive participation, children with extended program participation from preschool through second or third grade also experienced lower rates of grade retention and special education.

Findings from this study confirmed that participation in an established early childhood intervention for low-income children was associated with better educational and social outcomes up to age 20 years. These findings are among the strongest evidence that established programs administered through public schools can promote children's long-term success (ibid.).

Family therapy

A review by Sherman (1997), as discussed in Graham (1998), of family therapy programs showed moderately positive results. Four of the programs reviewed were based in clinics and targeted the parents of children aged between 7 and 12. Seven other programs were home based involving parents of children between the ages of three and five. "All programs delivered various forms of parent training, counselling and therapy, and, in some cases, children were also the subjects of behavioural interventions. With one qualified exception...all the evaluations showed reductions in antisocial behaviour, conduct disorders and/or improvements in parenting" (Graham, 1998:11).

Similarly, Shaw (2001) notes an evaluation in Sweden that found positive results in that two years after the family therapy intervention for youths already in trouble with the law, youths in the program had a 30% lower rate of recidivism than those in a control group.

One type of therapy gaining recent attention is multisystemic therapy (MST). This approach specifically targets serious adolescent juvenile offenders. It combines family therapy, parent management techniques and problem-focused interventions in peer and school settings in an intensive family preservation treatment program (Wasserman et al, 2000). Wasserman et al (2000) reviewed several evaluations of this intervention and concluded that it has been found to increase family cohesiveness, increase the adaptability and support of families of serious juvenile offenders, and decrease father-mother and father-child conflict. "Treated adolescents were less likely to be rearrested and spent fewer days incarcerated than adolescents in the control group...overall recidivism for those completing multisystemic therapy was 22 percent; for those competing individual therapy, the rate was 71 percent" (ibid.:8). Drop-out rates were lower among those receiving multisystemic therapy as opposed to individual therapy.

Welsh and Farrington (2003) also found positive results. In their meta-analysis of family-based crime prevention interventions, they concluded that the most effective program, based on effect sizes, was MST. However, the authors caution that the large effect size for MST was driven largely by the fact the result was based on only two of six evaluations which had significant effects.

On the other hand, a four-year randomized study of MST for four southern Ontario communities was recently completed whose results were less than encouraging (Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System of the London Family Court Clinic, 200). About 200 families (the program targeted serious young offenders and their families) received MST between 1997 and 2001. This program was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the National Crime Prevention Centre funded the evaluation. A comparison group consisted of about 200 families who received usual services available through the local youth justice and social service systems. Group assignment was random so the two groups were considered equivalent from the outset of the program. Thus, any post-intervention differences could be attributed to MST.

The evaluators used multiple indicators of outcomes which focused on criminal behaviour such as conviction rates and length of custody sentences. Interim results indicated that no treatment effect could be identified. A final report has not yet been published, but at least at the point of the

interim evaluation, the National Crime Prevention Centre would not recommend the adoption of MST in Canada.

Parenting education programs

Parenting education programs encourage parents to notice what their children are doing, to praise good behaviour, to state house rules clearly, and to make rewards and punishments contingent on children's behaviour (Farrington, 1996).

For example, Webster-Stratton (1998) developed a comprehensive and successful training program for parents of Head Start children that includes a focus on social skills and pro-social development. The PARTNERS program supplemented Head Start programs by providing training to parents and teachers to promote consistency from home to school (Wasserman et al, 2000:5). "Parents receiving training were more positive, less critical, and used less physical discipline than parents not receiving training. Seventy-one percent of parents in the experimental group showed a decrease in critical statements compared with 29 percent of parents in the control group. Children in the experimental group were more compliant and pro-social and displayed less negative behaviour than those in the control group. Also, most eligible parents signed up for the program, and participant satisfaction was high" (ibid.).

Farrington and Welsh (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of family-based crime prevention programs, including behavioural parent training. These programs were generally delivered in guided group meetings of parents. Ten programs met the criteria for the review. Nine of the ten programs reported that children who received parent training had fewer behavioural problems subsequently than control children.

Farrington and Welsh (2003) also reviewed school-based parenting programs which target a wide range of risk factors for delinquency, such as poor parenting, undesirable behavioural and social-cognitive functioning, and poor attachment to the family and school. Two Canadian studies were among those reviewed with positive findings. In Toronto, Pepler et al (1995) found that a combined home-school skills training and parent training program led to a decrease in externalizing behavioural problems of the experimental group, while Tremblay et al (1995) in the Montreal Longitudinal-Experimental Study found that six years after the intervention (included home-based parent training and school-based social skills training), the program group showed lower rates of self-reported delinquency. The participants in this program were elementary school children identified as high risk for antisocial behaviour.

Hawkins et al (1999), in their longitudinal study of the Seattle Social Development Project, found positive results, as well. This project focused on elementary school children and included modified classroom teaching practices, parent training, child social skills training, and support for academic skills to increase the child's attachment to school and family. Substantial improvement was shown from immediate outcome to follow-up. This intervention trained parents to notice and reinforce their children's socially-desirable behaviour in a program called "Catch them Being Good". At immediate outcome after six years of intervention, treatment effects on delinquency and academic achievement varied by gender; no effect on delinquency was found for girls, but a

desirable effect was found for boys. After the six-year follow-up period, the full intervention group admitted less violence, less alcohol abuse, and fewer sexual partners than the controls.

While there are some promising results on early parent training, a recent systematic review²² by Odette Bernazzani and Richard Tremblay of the University of Montreal of seven randomized controlled experiments revealed mixed results on the effectiveness of parent training in preventing child behaviour problems. Three studies reported beneficial effects (e.g. Scott et al, 2001), while one of the three reported some harmful effects. However, the one study that did measure delinquency showed beneficial effects on this outcome (Welsh and Farrington, 2005).

It is worthy to note that Wasserman et al (2000:2) caution that such interventions may not be suitable for all youth. According to these researchers, “families are less likely to benefit from these programs if the parents have limited economic and personal resources, psychiatric problems, little social support, or serious marital conflict. Also, if the training focuses solely within the home, the lessons may not be generalized to other environments, such as the school.” Thus, providing appropriate interventions with appropriate target groups is one key to achieving effectiveness.

In addition, Graham (1998:12) adds that “the most promising approaches combine parent training with other strategies, such as social and problem-solving skills for the parent’s children and proactive classroom management and peer-related strategies for older children.” This coincides with Farrington’s contention that multi-modal interventions for children and youth have a stronger influence on their behaviour.

For instance, Howell (2003) notes that parent training combined with early child care has proved to be effective early intervention for children ages 2-6. He notes that four programs, in particular, have been widely recognized for their effectiveness in reducing antisocial behaviour and delinquency. These programs include the above noted High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Syracuse University Family Development Research Program, the Yale Child Welfare Project and the Houston Parent Child Development Center (ibid.:181). All four programs served urban, low-income families.

Cognitive and social skills training

Children who lack cognitive and social skills tend to be aggressive, have poorer problem-solving abilities, and have less empathy than their peers (Wasserman et al, 2000). These are risk factors to delinquency and later offending behaviour. Cognitive and social skills training teaches children to stop and think before acting, to consider the consequences of antisocial behaviour, to understand other people’s feelings, and to solve interpersonal problems by negotiation rather than aggression (Farrington, 1996). This training is often school-based.

²²A systematic review uses rigorous methods for locating, appraising and synthesising evidence from evaluation studies. It has explicit objectives, explicit criteria for inclusion or exclusion of studies, wide-ranging methods of searching for studies that are designed to reduce bias, and it is reported with the same level of detail that characterizes high-quality reports of original research (Welsh and Farrington, 2003).

“In a systematic review of the effects on antisocial behaviour (including delinquency) of child social skills or social competence training undertaken by Friedrich Lösel and Andreas Beelmann, 55 studies with 89 separate experimental control group comparisons are included. All of the studies were randomized controlled experiments. A meta-analysis finds that almost half of the comparisons revealed positive results, ranging from small to large effect sizes, in favour of children who received the treatment, while fewer than one out of 10 revealed negative results...The most effective social skills training programs used a cognitive-behavioural approach and were implemented with older children (13 years and over) and higher risk groups, who were already exhibiting some behavioural problems” (Welsh and Farrington, 2005:344).

Wasserman et al (2000:3) and Howell (2003) note an example of effective cognitive and social skills training in *The Interpersonal Cognitive Problem-Solving Curriculum* program. This program focuses on children and uses games ranging from simple word concepts to strategies for finding solutions to interpersonal problems, and for thinking consequentially and learning to empathize. Children in this program become less aggressive, more socially appropriate, and better able to solve problems.

School-based interventions

Academic failure, low academic aspirations, and weak attachment to school are considered risk factors for delinquency and serious offending. Negative peer influences initiated/maintained at school also increase the likelihood of delinquent or offending behaviour. It is also well established that academic achievement and attachment to school have been shown to be protective factors against delinquency and crime.

Research on schools shows that “schools which are characterized by high quality classroom management, good leadership and organization and where children feel emotionally as well as educationally supported, are those which are best placed to protect their pupils from engaging in criminal behaviour” (Graham, 1998:13). Similarly, Burns et al (2003:8) emphasize that good schools are a fundamental component in preventing delinquency. They state that “from the perspective of preventing child delinquency, good schools are schools with explicit, consistent and contingent (and fairly applied) expectations for behaviour. Good schools use interactive and cooperative methods of instruction that actively involve students in their own learning. Good schools empower parents to support the learning process and to practice more effective child management skills. Good schools offer elementary and middle school children curriculums that promote the development of social and emotional competencies and the development of norms against violence, aggression and offending. Schools that do these things promote academic attainment and reduce the risk for antisocial behaviour among their students.”

Furthermore, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the United States convened a Study Group of experts in the area of intervention and determined that “several approaches to school interventions have yielded positive results. These approaches include classroom and schoolwide behaviour management programs; social competence promotion curriculums; conflict resolution and violence prevention curriculums; bullying prevention efforts;

and multicomponent classroom-based programs that help teachers and parents manage, socialize, and educate students and improve their cognitive, social and emotional competencies” (Burns et al, 2003:6). Loeber et al (2003) recommend that such interventions should be integrated with community interventions, such as after school recreation programs, mentoring programs, and comprehensive community interventions.

Similarly, Skiba and Peterson (2000) recommend a number of areas that should be included in a school’s plan for preventing and responding to youth aggression and violence:

- conflict resolution/social instruction;
- classroom strategies for preventing and responding to disruptive behaviour;
- parent involvement;
- screening to identify students who are at risk for school failure;
- school and district-wide data systems;
- crisis and security planning;
- schoolwide discipline and behavioural planning;
- functional assessment and individualized behaviour plans.

Christle et al (2000:3) take a proactive and holistic approach to effective prevention, stating that “educators should proactively teach the academic and social skills necessary for success in school life.” They report certain characteristics of such models which can provide a context for youth to engage in appropriate behaviours rather than aggressive and violent behaviours:

- including all youth in school and community programs;
- providing a full continuum of educational opportunities;
- reinforcing appropriate behaviours across environments, people and contexts;
- promoting academic and social success;
- establishing partnerships that include shared responsibilities.

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (1998) emphasize the need to take into account the four major stages of the school years when implementing interventions: early childhood (ages 2-5), middle childhood (ages 6-11), early adolescence (ages 12-14), and middle adolescence (ages 15-18). According to the Center, in each of these stages, there are key developmental tasks to be mastered which relate to key violence-related tasks:

- early childhood: a key stage in the development of aggressive violent behaviours; the development of self-regulation appears to be important and is causally linked to other processes that lead to aggressive-violent behaviour; caregiver to child ratios and the quality of these adult/child interactions are key environmental influences in the development of self-regulation;
- middle childhood: key tasks include the development of children’s normative beliefs about aggression and the development of children’s interpersonal negotiation skills; school contextual factors that can influence development are interpersonal relations with peers and classmates, teachers’ perceptions of children’s aggression, and the probability of exposure to antisocial youth;

- early adolescence: a key task is the development of a stable peer group; whether that peer group is primarily pro-social or antisocial in orientation significantly affects the probability of aggressive and violent behaviour; important school-based organizational influences include the practice of changing classes with their home room class and being instructed in a smaller, more personalized classroom;
- middle adolescence: a key task is the formation and consolidation of an identity, including a personal identity and racial ethnic identity; an ecological violence prevention approach may help reduce violence by promoting overall social competence and providing hope for improving children's competencies in other developmental areas.

Taking into account the above, three main school-based approaches to preventing antisocial behaviour and crime in children and youth are highlighted in the literature and are further detailed below: school organizational change initiatives, anti-bullying strategies, and family/school partnerships.

School organizational change

Programs which seek school organizational change operate on the premise that by altering the organization of schools, delinquency and associated problems of drop out, disruptive behaviour and truancy could be prevented (Graham, 1998:13).

Shaw (2001:22) notes that such projects have been established since the 1980s and many have shown that "when classroom management, school organization and leadership are improved, there are reductions in school drop out, truancy and offending, and improvements in educational attainment." Shaw (2001) further notes that these projects are usually targeted toward schools in deprived areas and with youth who have poor educational skills and motivation.

Examples of interventions which established school organizational change follow:

- *PATHE (Positive Action Through Holistic Education)*
This project was a comprehensive school organization initiative for secondary school students in Charleston Co, South Carolina (see Graham, 1998; Catalano et al, 1999; Shaw, 2001). The project was initiated in four high and four middle schools in predominantly black, inner city areas. The program included six components: teams of teachers, school staff, students and community members who planned and implemented school improvement programs; curriculum and discipline policies that were continually reviewed and revised, involved students and provided ongoing inservice teacher training in instructional and classroom management practices; academic innovations, such as study skills programs and cooperative learning; school climate innovations, such as expanded extracurricular activities and peer counselling; career-oriented innovations, including job skills and career exploration programs; and special academic and counselling services for low-achieving and disruptive students (Catalano, 1999).

Significant reductions in delinquency, drug use, suspensions and punishments were found for participants when compared to the control group. Students who received special academic and counselling services reported significantly higher grades and were less likely to skip a grade than

students who did not receive this service (ibid.). Furthermore, 76% of students in the experimental schools graduated, while only 42% in the control schools graduated (Shaw, 2001).

- *School Development Program*

In New Haven, CT, a school development program was established for elementary students which included parental involvement and a multidisciplinary mental health team (Catalano, 1999). Most of the students involved in the program were African American from low-income families. “The program included a social calendar that integrated arts and athletic programs into school activities; a parent program that supported academic and extracurricular activities; a multidisciplinary mental health team that helped staff manage student behaviour problems; and a team of school administrators, teachers, support staff and parents who oversaw program implementation” (ibid.: 3).

An evaluation of the program revealed that students who participated in the program performed significantly better in middle school than a comparison group of students from a nonintervention elementary school. Participants had significantly higher grades, academic achievement test scores and self-perceived social competence (ibid.).

- *Classroom management initiatives*

Classroom management practices appear to be particularly important in school reorganization initiatives. Classroom management can help teachers to communicate clear instructions and expectations, to notice and reward children for socially-desirable behaviour, and to be consistent in their use of discipline (Farrington, 1996).

An example of a successful classroom management program is Project CARE (Catalano et al, 1999). This project is based in Baltimore, MD, and it used classroom management techniques and cooperative learning to decrease delinquent behaviour among junior high students. It was led by a team of teachers, administrators, other school staff, as well as a parent volunteer group and a community support and advocacy program. Over a two-year period of intervention, students’ self-reports of delinquency decreased significantly. Teachers also reported significant improvements in classroom orderliness (ibid.).

Howell (2003:187) also notes the effectiveness of *The Program Development Evaluation (PDE)*, method in preventing delinquency and violence among children and adolescents. Teams made up of teachers, parents and school officials in middle schools work to improve school discipline and classroom management. It has been shown to significantly reduce classroom disruption, improve classroom organization and increase clarity of rules.

Catalano et al (1999) report the use of behavioural consultation methods as part of class management techniques in the prevention of delinquent behaviour. They note two comprehensive programs designed to reduce school vandalism which had positive effects. A one-year program in Los Angeles County elementary school used positive reinforcement for appropriate classroom behaviour and academic progress, matching academic materials to students’ skill level and educating school counselors and psychologists about behavioural consultation methods.

Vandalism costs and disruptive behaviour at the participating elementary schools decreased and on-task classroom behaviour increased.

A similar program was established for elementary and junior high students in Los Angeles County with similar results. Effects were maintained for several years following the intervention.

- *Gwich'in Outdoor Classroom - culture-based*

This Canadian project was a culture-based crime prevention program funded by the Crime Prevention Investment Fund of the National Crime Prevention Strategy from 1999-2004 (PSEPC, 2006). This project targeted Aboriginal children in the communities of Fort McPherson and Aklavik, North West Territories, aged 6-12 at risk of, or engaged in, the early cycles of criminal activity. Multiple risk factors associated with these children include: lack of attachment to school, high levels of early school leaving, lack of continuity of community role models, suicide, addictions, youth gangs, and lack of parental and community involvement with these children.

The program was composed of an outdoor camp, a morning breakfast program, and an in-school program involving elders, life skills and communications programming and traditional learning.

A comparison group in the Aklavik community was utilized for the evaluation.

Results of the evaluation revealed promising results. While it was generally more effective with boys than girls, the project successfully influenced the pro-social skill development of boys aged 6-9. A statistically significant difference in school achievement levels (reading, math and spelling) was found for both boys and girls intervention participants as compared to the comparison group. The morning program was found to positively influence school attendance (a 20% difference in monthly school attendance rates between the intervention and comparison schools). Further, 75% of students who performed below the average grade level in the comparison classroom outperformed their peers when being taught in the outdoor classroom in the development of cultural skills (ibid.).

- *Violence prevention curricula*

Howell (2003:184) notes that the best evidence regarding the effectiveness of a violence prevention curriculum in the classroom is the Second Step program. Designed for use in elementary grades 2 and 3, it uses 30 specific lessons to teach skills related to anger management, impulse control and empathy. It also promotes pro-social behaviour by increasing children's competence in peer interactions and friendships and teaches interpersonal conflict resolution skills to help them avoid and resolve interpersonal disputes (ibid.).

An evaluation of the program revealed increases in pro-social behaviour and empathy, interpersonal problem solving, anger management, and behavioural-social skills. It also found decreases in aggressive playground and lunchroom behaviour.

Howell (2003:187) also provides an example of an effective violence prevention curriculum for middle school students called *Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways* (RIPP). This curriculum teaches children about the nature and consequences of violence. It consists of 18 sessions over the

course of one semester, and adult role models teach sixth graders strategies for negotiating interpersonal conflicts nonviolently. Peer mediation, team-building activities, small group work and role playing are utilized. In an evaluation of the project, boys showed decreases in violent behaviour, suppression of anger, frequency of hitting teachers, and school suspensions. While girls did not show similar effects, they did improve in problem solving.

Whole school anti-bullying initiatives

School bullies are particularly at risk of becoming serious and violent offenders and are also more likely to raise children who become bullies themselves (Graham, 1998).

Anti-bullying initiatives in schools include implementing explicit rules that encourage children to report bullying incidents and offer help to the victims. Playground monitoring and supervision may also need to be improved. Programs in Norway and Britain have demonstrated success in reducing bullying (Farrington, 1996).

Farrington (1996), Graham (1998), Catalano (1999), and Shaw (2001) all speak to a Norwegian intervention targeting bullying. In Bergen, Norway, a whole school anti-bullying initiative has been implemented in 42 schools. The initiative introduced specific rules about bullying, added discussions of bullying into the curriculum, encouraged victims to report incidents of bullying, and introduced better playground supervision and monitoring. In addition, an information package was distributed to all families in Norway with school-aged children which detailed information about bullying and ways to combat it. It also distributed a booklet for school personnel to all Norwegian schools (grades 1 through 9). A video was also produced about bullying which was available at a highly-subsidized price.

“Results of this program were encouraging. Significantly fewer students - almost 50 percent less - reported being victims of bullies when surveyed 8 and 20 months after the program began. Students also reported significant decreases in their own delinquent behaviour (vandalism, theft and truancy) 8 and 20 months after the program started” (Catalano et al, 1999:3). The initiative saw reductions in bullying incidents on school grounds as well as marked reductions in antisocial behaviour and victimization outside school (Graham, 1998).

Canada has been very active in establishing anti-bullying programs as well. Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC, 2005) has recently produced a research report, *Bullying Prevention in Schools*, which includes a review of external information to understand the issue of bullying within a Canadian context; a review of promising practices from academic literature; as well as a review of school-based anti-bullying projects supported by the National Crime Prevention Centre over a five-year period between 1998 and 2003.

The report notes a Canadian study of 46 school-based bullying prevention initiatives which revealed that the top five successful programs had the following characteristics (PSEPC, 2005):

- intervened at three program levels (universal programs (general population), indicated programs (high-risk population), and selected programs (in-crisis population));
- addressed the attitudes, behaviours, and interpersonal and emotional skills of students;

- involved parents in the initiative; and
- involved the larger community.

“By encouraging the involvement of members outside the school community (such as criminal justice professionals, mental health workers), a comprehensive approach ensures that such individuals provide children and youth with consistent messages about how to respond to bullying” (ibid.).

While PSEPC, through the National Crime Prevention Centre, has funded several anti-bullying initiatives across provinces and territories, none have been evaluated with scientific rigor. While most projects reported at least partial success in their intervention, the evidence was based on post-intervention measures, such as participation rates, feedback from participants and teacher surveys. Evidence that these projects could reduce bullying behaviour in the long term requires additional investment in evaluation and sustained interventions (ibid.).

Family/school partnerships

Effective early intervention for many at-risk children requires improvements in parenting skills and the education of children, preferably sustained throughout childhood (Graham, 1998). Indeed, the two principal means of socialization and social control of children are families and schools. Thus, a strong and positive relationship between families and schools can have a significant impact on preventing and/or reducing aggressive and antisocial behaviour among children and youth.

Interventions noted in the research to have a positive evaluation include LIFT, FAST Track, and include:

- *LIFT (Linking Interests of Families)*

This program is based in Oregon and aims to prevent conduct disorders among children. It is provided to all children (not necessarily to those at risk), and focuses on encouraging pro-social behaviour while discouraging antisocial behaviour at home and at school through parent training, social skills classes for the children, playground behaviour strategies, and the installation of a school-to-home telephone line (Graham, 1998). According to Graham (1998), initial results report an immediate impact in terms of reducing aggressive and antisocial behaviour.

- *FAST Track*

This program is a United States multisite intervention with the goal of preventing the onset of behavioural and psychological problems in adolescents (Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2004). This family/school initiative has followed three cohorts of children (approximately 900 including control groups) from the time they entered the first grade in 1991, 1992 and 1993 respectively. Children were selected because of conduct problems in kindergarten and home. This is a longitudinal research intervention.

The elementary school phase of the prevention program addressed risk and protective factors for adolescent problems in six areas: parenting, the children’s problem solving and emotional coping

skills, peer relations, classroom atmosphere and curriculum, academic achievement, and home-school relations. Ten project workers work with the intervention-group children, their families and the schools in order to increase the number of protective factors in each of these areas and reduce the number of risk factors. This included parent training, bi-weekly home visits, social skills training, academic tutoring, and teacher-based classroom interventions to improve behavioural management.

A recent evaluation of the program has shown significant but modest influence on children's rates of social competence and social cognition problems, problems with involvement with deviant peers, and conduct problems in the home and community, compared with children in the control group (ibid.). Thus, the program had the effect of reducing children's likelihood of emerging as cases with problems in their social, peer or home functioning. "FAST Track is the first preventive intervention to provide comprehensive components throughout the 5-year elementary school period with a very high risk sample and has produced changes in at-risk children's social and behavioural functioning throughout that entire period of time" (ibid.: 659). Further evaluation will take place when the children reach adolescence to examine potential prevention of youths' serious antisocial behaviours.

- *Include*

This project is a national charity running 100 projects in the United Kingdom targeting high-risk adolescents to prevent truancy, school drop-outs or excluded teenagers aged 14-16. Its goal is to reintegrate them or provide further education, qualifications and work experience (Shaw, 2001) through a combination of school and home support, parent training, and social skills training for children. Workers provide continuing family support. Evaluation results showed average attendance rates of 80%, and 75% of the involved youth have gone on to further education, training or work (ibid.).

- *The Montreal Preventive Treatment Program*

Noted in Howell (2003:182), this program was an effective violence prevention program that incorporated school- and family-based components in an early intervention with boys who had displayed disruptive behaviour in kindergarten. The boys lived in low socioeconomic areas of Montreal. An evaluation of the program showed boys in the treatment group experienced decreases in aggressive behaviour, serious school adjustment problems, and minor delinquency.

Peer-based initiatives

Association with delinquent peers is a strong and consistent risk factor for delinquency and violence, particularly in adolescence. While influencing this is very difficult and there are very few examples of successful interventions (Graham, 1998), there are some strategies that have shown positive results.

Peer-influence strategies offer youth advice on how to resist pressure from friends to engage in antisocial behaviour ranging from underage drinking and smoking to drug abuse and other crimes.

The Seattle Social Development Project mentioned earlier has as one component a focus on parent management training to reduce elementary children's involvement with antisocial peers. The results were promising in that six years after program completion, program students reported a lower incidence of violent criminal behaviour, heavy drinking, sexual intercourse and pregnancy (Wasserman et al, 2000).

Graham (1998:15) discusses the South Baltimore Youth Centre project which provides a safe environment for at-risk youth to establish a life based on trust, mutual respect and cooperation. "Recruits form an extended family with youth workers who act as their mentors and advocates. Contracts are signed and peer pressure is used to exercise discipline and control. Members are taught to control their anger and confront their fears and, where possible, are offered job training linked to real jobs. Serious delinquent behaviour decreased by a third among those on the program, compared to a small increase in the control group, over a period of 19 months."

Research suggests that advice is most likely to be heeded by adolescents when given by specially trained, high-status peers rather than by parents or teachers (Farrington, 1996).

Community interventions

Several community interventions that target known risk factors and introduce protective factors to prevent antisocial behaviour have been shown to be effective (Catalano, 1999:4). Risk factors typically targeted are availability of weapons and drugs, community disorganization, and community attitudes favouring antisocial behaviour. Protective factors that community interventions seek to strengthen include social bonding, community attachment, and clear community norms against antisocial behaviour. These programs often focus on high-risk areas and populations.

A review of crime prevention programs by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Study Group concluded that comprehensive crime prevention strategies, including community interventions, that involve more than one entity (e.g. police and neighbourhoods), that take place in a variety of settings (e.g. home and school), and are maintained for several years have the potential to positively affect that population (ibid.). Several types of community interventions have been found to be promising in preventing antisocial behaviour and crime. These include comprehensive community interventions, mentoring and after school recreation programs.

Comprehensive community interventions

Comprehensive community interventions are risk-focused programs within a community that seek to address multiple risk factors in the community, schools, family and the media by establishing "a coordinated set of mutually reinforcing preventive interventions throughout the community" (Catalano et al, 1999:6). Such approaches are often part of a larger strategy for community capacity building. Catalano et al (1999) also note that there is a scarcity of evaluations completed in this area.

One often cited program is Communities That Care (CTC). This is a social development program devised by researchers at the University of Washington, Seattle, and according to Farrington (1996) is one of the most promising strategies to tackle risk factors and reduce antisocial behaviour as it is tailored to the specific needs of the community. This program involves community mobilization for the assessment of risk and protective factors in the community; implementation of effective (research-based) prevention plans to address the priority risk and protection factors; and detailed monitoring to ensure the program's progress and effectiveness can be evaluated (Catalano et al, 1999).

The program began in 1988 in the United States and was also established in the United Kingdom in 1998. A recent evaluation of three demonstration projects in the United Kingdom project was conducted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2004. After five years in operation, the evaluation revealed that for one project where CTC was implemented as intended, there was evidence that life for children in this community was improving and risk factors were on the decline (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2004:3). There were mixed results across projects, however. The evaluators did note that this is a long-term intervention and its influence may not show up until years later. They also noted that this intervention is very difficult to evaluate, given the multi-components and the difficulty in isolating impacts.

However, Howell (2003:192) reports that several studies have found positive outcomes in communities using the CTC approach, including: improved interagency collaboration; reduced duplication of services; coordinated allocation of resources; strategic targeting of prevention activities to priority risk and protective factors; increased use of research-based approaches with demonstrated effectiveness; and increased involvement of professionals, citizens and youth in community prevention activities.

Two keys to successful implementation appear to be: training of community representatives in science-based prevention and the development of a written action plan based on community studies of risk and protective factors (ibid.).

In essence, Howell (2003:192) contends that "prevention programs should address the highest priority risk factors to which youth in the community are exposed. Efforts to change a community to reduce risk and enhance protection need to be guided by analyses of both the most noxious risk factors and the existing strengths of the community. When a community takes this approach, it will move away from funding discrete, piecemeal programs that do not address the specific factors contributing to delinquency and violence in that community."

A recent initiative by the Home Office in Britain "The Prolific and other Priority Offenders program (PPO)" is targeted at the small group of offenders who are responsible for a large volume of crime (Dawson, 2005). The aim of the program is to give these offenders an intensive package of interventions. There are three complementary strands to the PPO program:

- Prevent and Deter (P&D). The aim here is to stop young people from engaging in offending behaviors and graduating to become the prolific offenders of the future.

- Catch and Convict (C&C). This part of the program aims to prevent prolific offenders from offending through apprehension and conviction, license enforcement, and by ensuring a swift return to the courts for those prolific offenders who continue to offend.
- Rehabilitate and Resettle (R&R). This part of the program aims to rehabilitate prolific offenders who are in custody or serving sentences in the community, through closer work between all relevant agencies and continued post-sentence support.

A six-month evaluation of this program has taken place (Dawson, 2005). Thus far, the evaluations have examined the Catch and Convict and Rehabilitate and Resettle strands of the program. In the first six months of the program, there was a ten percent reduction in recorded convictions. While encouraging, the final evaluation of the program will be out in September 2006 which will indicate whether these results were sustainable.

Mentoring

Mentoring programs have been developed very successfully, for example, in Canada, the United States and England. Mentoring programs are generally designed for children ages 6-18 and a significant proportion of them are from disadvantaged, single-parent households. Mentoring has also been found to be one of the most effective interventions with young offenders (Howell, 2003). "Mentoring adults serve as one of the 'lifelines' that can provide protection against risk factors in adolescence. Studies of resilient high-risk children show that those who do well almost invariably have had long-term relationships with caring adults outside the immediate family to provide support and guidance....Most high-risk children say they prefer informal and personal attachments to impersonal interactions with agencies" (Howell, 2003:186).

Perhaps the best known mentoring program is Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and evaluations have shown positive results in reducing drug use, alcohol use, and violence among participants. Improvements in family and peer relationships and academic achievement have also been achieved (Shaw, 2001).

The Dalston Youth Project in England has had significant results on education and training achievements and in reductions in arrests (Shaw, 2001). This intensive community-based project for disadvantaged youths helps youth back into education, training and work. Community volunteers work with the youths for one year, and it provides a special pre-college course and employment training. An evaluation showed that 73% of those who went through the first program were in college, training or employment, and arrests were reduced by 61%.

After school recreation programs

After school recreation programs address risk factors of alienation and association with delinquent or violent peers. They also introduce protective factors including skills for leisure activities and opportunities to become involved with pro-social youth and adults (Catalano et al, 1999).

An after school recreation program in Ottawa, Ontario was evaluated with positive results. This 32-month-long program provided structured afterschool courses to low-income children ages 5-15 in a public housing project. Courses were designed to improve students' skills in sports and in music, dance, scouting and other non-athletic areas. Once a skill level was reached, the children

were encouraged to participate in ongoing leagues in the community. “The number of arrests for juveniles participating in the program was significantly lower than the number of arrests for the same number of juveniles two years before the intervention and for the same number of juveniles in a different housing project. The number of security reports on juveniles in the program also declined significantly” (ibid.:7).

When the program ceased, positive changes in neighbourhood crime rates diminished significantly. This finding appears to support the opinion that interventions that last a relatively long time are more effective and long lasting than short interventions (Shaw, 2001).

A similar program was established in Ottawa from 1999-2003 and was recently evaluated through the National Crime Prevention Center (PSEPC, 2006). Project Early Intervention, a crime prevention through social development initiative, focused on high-risk children and youth ages 6-12 living in a high-needs social housing neighbourhood in Ottawa. It was initially managed by the Ottawa Police Youth Centre, and subsequently by the Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa. A life skills development program was offered, as well as a homework club, sports and recreation opportunities, and ongoing support. The evaluation found improvements in the levels of youths’ behaviour in terms of aggression/acting out, irresponsibility/inattentiveness, being socially withdrawn, and fearfulness/anxiety. The instruction of life skills was found to be a significant component of the program.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS – BEST PRACTICES

It is clear from the above that effective interventions focus on multiple risk factors, differing social contexts, developmental stages, and the influences on behaviour that are significant at each stage of development. Children at risk of criminal behaviour are also at risk of other problem behaviours, such as mental health problems and substance abuse. “Larger reductions in violence are more likely if preventive efforts include a combination of programs targeted to reduce salient risks and enhance protection across developmental stages and in multiple domains” (Howell and Hawkins, 2003:301).

This speaks to the need for integration among agencies to develop a comprehensive, consistent and coordinated program for children who have either committed delinquent acts or are at risk of delinquency. Indeed, “no single system – juvenile justice, education, mental health or child welfare – can reduce child delinquency on its own” (Burns et al, 2003:11). Further, “those who control social, health, legal and educational resources in a community, as well as service providers and citizens, should be guided by a shared understanding of the risk- and protection-focused approach to prevention, if well focused, well coordinated, and comprehensive risk reduction efforts are to be implemented” (Howell and Hawkins, 1998: 302).

Efforts to reduce serious delinquency and later violent offending should focus on children who exhibit persistent delinquent behavior in addition to child delinquents and serious young offenders (ibid.). Communities need to be involved in this effort by helping to target individualized interventions for those children and their families.

Community-wide youth crime prevention initiatives require a significant amount of coordination, collaboration and education to be effective. Factors in the community that put children and youth at most danger of developing criminal or violent behavior must be identified, and this provides the foundation for selecting and designing the most appropriate and empirical-based prevention interventions that address those risk factors evident in the community.

The Communities that Care project mentioned in the previous section provides a model for such community mobilization. This will help move communities away from funding discrete, piecemeal programs that do not address the specific factors contributing to violence in that community (Howell and Hawkins, 1998). They also promote community leaders and grassroots residents to take ownership of the efforts to change the profile of risk and protection in the community. “Without this ownership it is difficult for even the most potent intervention to be applied with sufficient vigor to change a neighbourhood” (ibid.: 301).

INEFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

The following interventions have been evaluated by experts in the field of crime prevention and have been found ineffective. Many still operate today, despite the empirical evidence which concludes they are ineffective. Some listed are youth justice programs whereby the intervention is in part/whole a disposition ordered by the court.

- **Boot camps**

Boot camps are modeled after military induction training camps and are based on a theory of deterrence in that future criminality will be averted if they are given this type of punishment. Research consistently finds that deterrence is generally not an effective means of preventing crime.

“In a systematic review of correctional boot camps by David Wilson and Doris MacKenzie, 32 studies with 43 separate experimental control group comparisons are included. The included studies were randomized controlled experiments and quasi-experiments. A meta-analysis finds no overall difference in recidivism between boot camp participants and their control group counterparts. However, some evidence is found for larger positive effects produced by boot camp programs that included a counselling component or had as a primary focus therapeutic programming instead of physical training and the like” (Welsh and Farrington, 2005:345).

- **Scared Straight**

Scared Straight programs originated in the late 1970s in response to a moral panic over juvenile delinquency in the United States (Howell, 2003). Based on the theory of deterrence, boys and girls were brought into prisons and subjected to shock therapy consisting of threats, intimidation, loud and angry bullying and persuasion. The idea of the program was to ‘scare’ children out of delinquency, to scare them straight. Current programs have softened somewhat, with an educational component about crime consequences.

“In a systematic review of Scared Straight (or prison tour programs) by Anthony Petrosino and his colleagues, nine studies are included, all of which were randomized controlled experiments. The review finds that not one of the interventions was effective in preventing juvenile offending by the treatment group as compared to the no-treatment control group and that a majority of interventions produced harmful results. A meta-analysis reveals that those juveniles who went through Scared Straight were more likely to engage in criminal activity compared to those juveniles who did not receive the program” (Welsh and Farrington, 2005:345). For instance, a meta-analysis by Lipsey (as cited in Howell, 2003) found, on average, that exposure to these programs increased recidivism about 12%. Given that deterrence is generally not an effective means of reducing crime, it is not surprising that this intervention is ineffective.

- **Zero-tolerance policies**

There is a growing abundance of literature on the efficacy of zero-tolerance policies used by school systems. Zero-tolerance policies reflect ‘get tough’ discipline methods that promote punishment for every infraction of codes of conduct for children and adolescents and are thus

based on the theory of punishment as a deterrence to future offending (Howell, 2003:131). As such, zero tolerance policies institutionalize criminal justice approaches to school discipline.

According to Howell, “zero tolerance policies are not effective because they call for immediate and severe punishment of every infraction of codes of conduct, school rules and laws, and such an approach is not realistic....rules need to be applied with some discretion... deterrence/punishment approaches in general are not effective.” In other words, the context of situations must be taken into account in appropriately addressing conflict in schools. Others argue that zero tolerance policies affect some groups more than others, particularly minority groups. As well, for some youth, zero tolerance adds another risk factor to lives that are already overburdened with risk factors (Casella, 2003). Many of these individuals do not have the support or resources to return to school after an expulsion. Thus, it can have a negative impact on drop-out rates, substance abuse and delinquency (Coalition for Juvenile Justice, 2001). It also teaches the entire school community that problems, including anger and frustration, are to be avoided rather than addressed by the whole in a productive, meaningful fashion (ibid.).

“The people on the receiving end of this are usually poorly educated, in poor health, and have had few opportunities to pull themselves out from deteriorating communities, broken-down schools, and shattered families...schools need a well-developed discipline policy, which should not only solve the problem of violence but also ensure that no student is derailed from her or his education or put in circumstances that increase the likelihood of criminality in the future. But this is where zero tolerance policy falls short” (ibid.:884). The author calls for violence prevention initiatives (e.g. mentoring, conflict resolution programs, etc.) and a comprehensive school discipline policy (e.g. restorative justice initiatives, discipline contracts, suspensions accompanied by academic work, tutoring or community/school service, etc.)

There is a lack of research in Canada and the United States addressing either the short- or long-term implications of schools adopting zero-tolerance methods (July, 2000). It is not clear whether such a policy has reduced youth violence other than by merely displacing the behavior.

- **D.A.R.E**

This educational program is offered throughout Canada and the United States in schools and led by police officers. Although well intentioned and extremely popular, evaluations have conclusively shown that this program is not effective in preventing or curbing substance abuse (Howell, 2003). For instance, a 10-year follow-up of sixth graders who had received D.A.R.E. was conducted, and in no case did the D.A.R.E. group have a more successful outcome than the comparison group (Lynam et al, 1999). Three other rigorous studies of this program have reached the same conclusion.

It is interesting that this program continues to persist as the most popular educational program for addressing substance abuse, despite its lack of effectiveness. Howell (2003) contends that the program is based on deterrence, and there is widespread mistaken belief that deterrence is effective in crime prevention. He also argues that ‘feel good’ programs engage public support, and thus politicians lean towards such programs, despite empirical evidence supporting their ineffectiveness. Lynam et al (1999) further argues that the popularity of the program may be

because they *appear* to work. Indeed, adults who support the program see that most children who go through the program do not engage in problematic drug use. What they do not realize is that most children, regardless of whether an intervention has taken place, do not partake in problematic drug use. It may be the case that adults perceive drug use is much more frequent than it actually is and thus attribute low frequency reports to the D.A.R.E. program.

Howell (2003) lists other juvenile justice programs that have been found to be ineffective in preventing/reducing delinquency or violence. These include:

- punishment without treatment and rehabilitation services (neither the certainty nor the severity of punishment decreases recidivism among most juveniles; deterrence is an ineffective form of crime prevention)
- large custodial facilities (e.g. impede treatment opportunities; security concerns tend to override treatment delivery)
- long terms of confinement (little effect on recidivism, particularly due to the negative influences of other delinquent youths; incarceration itself does not reduce recidivism)
- curfew laws
- general deterrent policies (e.g. 'three strikes and you're out' policy)
- punishment in adult prisons (youth confined in adult prisons are not only more likely to recidivate than youths in youth facilities, but are likely also to have increased recidivism rates and offence severity after released from prison)
- out-of-home placements (removing youth from their families, schools, neighbourhoods and communities for treatment)
- piecemeal solutions
- programs involving large groups of antisocial adolescents
- youth gang suppression without other interventions.

7. Programs and issues identified by provincial government officials and others involved in providing youth services

To help inform discussion on youth issues, Department of Justice research staff met with representatives of the Child and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC) to inform member departments of the proposed research initiative. CAYAC is an inter-departmental committee of senior officials that is intended to provide a focal point for the coordination of cross-departmental initiatives affecting children and youth. It was formed following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding among the Ministers of Education and Culture, Community Services, Health, Justice and Youth. A comprehensive review of the CAYAC model is now underway.

Justice research staff then met with staff in Community Services, Health, Education, the Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat and the Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection to explore programs and issues in more detail. In addition, staff attended a youth conference sponsored by the Department of Justice and CAYAC held in New Glasgow in February, 2006 to discuss issues facing children and youth and programming in place.

In undertaking this aspect of the research, it became clear that numerous efforts are underway to further understand and act on research relating to risk and protective factors. It also became clear that inter-agency collaboration is happening in many programming areas and that the focus of intervention is moving upstream. In fact, departments report that collaboration is 'the' way of doing business on issues of common concern.

CAYAC provided the following high-level overview of programs focusing on families and youth offered by departments represented on the committee. Efforts have been made to update the list of programs since the initial inventory was collected in 2002.

Department of Community Services

Child Welfare Services	
Child Protection Services	ensure children are safe from maltreatment
Child-In-Care Program	ensure children are raised in nurturing families placement settings which meet their needs
Foster Care Services	ensure availability of competent, capable, nurturing foster parents
Adoption Services	ensure availability of competent, capable, nurturing adoptive families
Residential Services	ensure children and youth receive safe nurturing guidance from competent and qualified youth care program staff in residential child caring facilities

Community Outreach Service	
Family Resource Centres	funding supports 36 centres in the delivery of services (primarily targeted for families with children under 6 years of age) considered at risk of poor outcomes, via provision of parent education, informal support, information and referral
Family Violence Initiative	to respond to victims and perpetrators of family violence, including funding to transition houses that provide emergency shelter and supports for women victims and their children and to men's intervention programs that provide counselling for male perpetrators and safety planning for women partners
Enhanced programs and community outreach	includes Early Language and Learning to promote language and cognition skills of children under 6 years of age; parent education grants to increase the quantity and comprehensiveness of program in the areas of parent education and support, and parent-child interaction programs; and child care information and support to provide care givers outside of regulated day care training in early childhood development and education
Prevention initiatives	to prevent child abuse and maltreatment; to promote healthy child and family development; and to develop a system of early childhood development programs and services. Includes resource materials to family resource centres, expert consultation, support for regional planning groups, coordination/provision of training/networking opportunities for regional/family resource centre staff. Funding for YMCA summer camping and funding to Boys and Girls Club to support the delivery of programs
Training Unit	to plan, develop and deliver training to staff and related stakeholders
Early Childhood Development Services	
Child Care Licensing and Standards	regulation and monitoring of child care services in accordance with the <i>Nova Scotia Day Care Act & Regulations</i> to ensure compliance
Supported Child Care	funding to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care facilities
Child Care Subsidy	Provision of subsidized child care to increase low income families' access to licensed child care through the provision of financial support
Early Intervention	home-based support and information for families with children (0-6) with a developmental disability to positively influence the child's developmental outcomes
Grant Funding	grants to child care centres and related facilities/associations to support costs related to quality early childhood programs
Early Childhood Education Training	to ensure a standard of early childhood education training in the province
Services for Persons with Disabilities	
Direct Family Support	funding to enable families to purchase respite services to care for a family member at home with a disability

Small Option Facilities for Children	a licensed option of support where care is provided to up to four children with disabilities. Trained staff are provided on a full-time basis through shift models
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Community Services reports providing a continuum of supports. Believing families and children need to be healthy citizens, it first focuses on the early years. The latest neurological research indicates that the first two years of life are most fundamental in a child's development, so it has placed a special focus on parent training and subsidies for child care where child welfare is involved, or placement in supported child care if children have developmental challenges. The department then offers, within child welfare family support, funding to cover such services as respite and counselling for children at high risk. With these supports, the children may not need to come into care. And finally, when there are significant risks that a child will be harmed due to neglect or abuse, child protection becomes involved and the full range of supports, either within the family, foster family or residential care, are provided to try and enable the child to return home. If this is not feasible or appropriate, then children are placed for adoption.

Department of Education

Adult Basic Education Advisory	offered to young adults offering advise and information about adult learning opportunities
Public School Programs	offering instructional programs for children and youth age 5 to 21 at the primary to grade 12 level. Also offers curriculum adaptations and individualized programming for children and youth with special learning needs
Adult High Schools	offering instructional programs for adults wishing to complete their high school certification
Correspondence studies	offering instructional programs via mail for individuals wishing to upgrade their academic certification
Comprehensive Guidance	offering educational, career, personal and school counselling to public school students
Resource Teacher Support	offering individual or small-group assistance to those experiencing learning difficulties or disabilities
School psychology services	offering psycho-educational assessment and recommendations regarding learning and behavioural difficulties
APSEA Funding	offering funds to educate students with special needs, such as the blind or visually impaired and/or the deaf or hard of hearing
General Educational Development	provides an opportunity for adults to write a series of tests that lead to the General Educational Development high school equivalency certificate
Student Assistance Counselling	offered to students applying for needs based assistance to fund post-secondary education
Student Assistance Processing	offered to students applying for needs based assistance to fund post-secondary education
Student Assistance Appeals	offers assistance applicants an opportunity to have funding decisions reviewed and/or exceptional circumstances considered

Department of Health

Addiction Services	
Addiction Treatment Services	provides addiction assessment and treatment services to youth throughout the province through school, community and clinic based programs in the nine (9) District Health Authorities
Choices	provides assessment and treatment services to youth for alcohol, substance or gambling abuse
HIV-Aids Prevention	provides harm-reduction strategies, education, information and prevention services to those at risk of exposure or exposed to HIV-Aids
Mental Health	
Mental Health Treatment	provides outpatient, day treatment, inpatient and residential mental health services to youth with an identified mental health problem
Mental Health Assessment and Treatment	provides outpatient, day treatment, inpatient and residential mental health services to youth with an identified mental health problem. Services delivered through nine (9) DHA's and the IWK Health Centre. There are over 50 Community Mental Health Clinics in the Province
Youth Navigator	provides youth involved with the formal mental health system at the IWK with advocacy, patient rights information, etc.
Family Help Program	(IWK and Cumberland DHA) Home based mentoring and coaching services in selected communities to address mild to moderate mental health concerns i.e.: parenting, behavior management, anxiety reduction, abdominal pain
Intensive Community Based Treatment Team	(IWK and Cape Breton DHA) Provides community based services to hard to serve children and youth with a focus on keeping children in their homes (as appropriate) and at school
Crisis Intervention Services	provides assessment, stabilization and treatment (inpatient, outpatient, etc.) as appropriate. This service is available in all DHAs and at the IWK
Tele-psychiatry and traveling psychiatry clinics	psychiatric services provided to rural areas, as requested, in Nova Scotia and P.E.I., where on site psychiatrists are not available or when a second opinion has been requested
Collaborative Initiatives	intergovernmental/interagency collaboration including, Departments of Community Services, Justice and Education to address needs of children and youth experiencing mental health issues
Depression Strategy for Children and Youth	provides information for early identification of depression in children/youth and provides information regarding coping strategies. Over 6,000 brochures requested and distributed. Information is being translated into French
Mental Health Specialty Services	
Specialty Mental Health Services	specialty mental health services are provided through networks that include the Districts and the IWK/Capital Health. Specialty services

	include: Eating Disorders, Forensic Mental Health Services, Early Psychosis, Sex Offender Treatment (Y & A) Neurodevelopmental disorders (Concurrent Disorders), and Dual Disorders-Mental Health and Addictions
Autism Treatment	developed an early intensive behavioural intervention treatment program (EIBI) for young children with autism and families. Services being implemented
Youth Forensic Mental Health Services	
Youth Forensic Mental Health Services	provides Mental Health Services to youth found either Not Criminally Responsible (NCR) or “Unfit”. Provides inpatient services at IWK and dual remand services with IWK. IWK also provides IRCS services to youth sentenced under IRCS
Clinical Services at Waterville Youth Centre	there is a multi-disciplinary treatment team consisting of psychiatry, psychology and social work on site in Waterville and is managed under the IWK Mental Health Program
Assessment and Treatment Services	provides mental health assessment and treatment services to incarcerated youth
Treatment for Sexual Aggression	provides mental health services to youth with an identified problem with sexual aggression but are not necessarily in conflict with the law

Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection (NSHPP)

Healthy Eating Nova Scotia Strategy	released in 2005, this strategy focuses on four priority areas: breastfeeding, children and youth, fruit and vegetable consumption, food security
NS School Food and Nutrition Policy	the purpose is to make healthy food choices the easiest choices for students (full implementation in Nova Scotia schools in 2006-2007)
Health Promoting Schools (HPS)	funding to support schools throughout the province in providing healthy eating and physical activity opportunities for their students
Youth Health Centres	approximately 37 youth health centres (YHCs) across Nova Scotia provide health education, health promotion, information and referral, follow-up and support, as well as some clinical services; the majority are located in schools
Youth Sexual Health Framework	provides rationale and strategic direction for a comprehensive approach to sexual health education, services, and support s for all youth throughout Nova Scotia
Active Kids, Healthy Kids Strategy	the purpose is to increase the number of children and youth who accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to high intensity physical activity on a daily basis

Sport Opportunities for Children and Youth in Nova Scotia	a collaborative partnership that offers, through school and community-based programs, structured and unstructured sporting activities aimed at decreasing current levels of physical inactivity in children
Sport Futures Leadership Program	aimed at decreasing current levels of physical inactivity by assisting provincial sport organizations to provide fun, safe and inclusive sport activities for children and youth
Physical Activity Children and Youth 2 Accelerometer Study	involves having a representative sample of Nova Scotian children and youth in grades 3, 7 and 11 wear a motion counter on their hip for seven days to assess current activity levels
Renewal of Tobacco Control Strategy	aimed at reducing smoking rates and the burden of tobacco-related illness will be renewed with elements of the strategy including taxation, legislation, treatment/cessation programs, community-based programming, youth smoking prevention initiatives, media awareness and evaluation
Tobacco Reduction Social Marketing Campaign	the public awareness campaign enters its fourth year. The target audience continues to be youth and young adults - where declines in smoking have been modest. In 2006 new creative ideas will be developed and will include an interactive website, print and television ads, ambient advertising and a documentary film
Tobacco Media Literacy Resource	in partnership with the Department of Education, developed <i>You Choose</i> , a tobacco media literacy resource for high schools. Public Health Services and Addiction Services in the district health authorities continued promotion of <i>Smoke-free For Life</i> , a tobacco prevention curriculum supplement for grades p-9 and <i>No More Butts</i> , a peer-led cessation program for high schools
<i>Tobacco Access Act</i> Enforcement	<i>Tobacco Access Act</i> is enforced issuing warnings for selling tobacco to persons under the age of 19 years
Injury Prevention in Schools	building injury prevention links with schools by focusing on how best to support the existing student curriculum, i.e. partnership with the departments of Health (EHS Trauma Program, TPW (Road Safety Advisory Committee) and Education around the Prevent Alcohol and Risk Related Trauma in Youth initiative (P.A.R.T.Y.), designed to educate teenagers (ages 15 and 16) about the consequences of risk and serious injury
Child Safety Link	funding to strengthen car seat/booster seat education, establish a network of car seat coalitions across the province and explore development of a loaner/donor program for car seat/booster seats.

Suicide Prevention Strategy	strategy being developed; NSHPP also continues its work with CMHA to support the development of community-based suicide prevention initiatives
Road Safety	partnering with TPW as part of the Road Safety Advisory Committee to put a road safety communications campaign together targeting impaired driving and speeding
Alcohol Strategy	the province is coordinating the development of a provincial Alcohol Strategy which is expected to be completed this year
Web-based Alcohol and Drug Education Curriculum Resources	working with Education to provide leadership in the development of web-based Alcohol and Other Drug Education Curriculum Resources for Grades 10 to 12 teachers and students
Targeted Education Programs on Risks of Gambling	early identification/intervention programs are planned in the near future
Rural Women and Youth Addiction Service	provides rural women and youth increased accessibility to prevention, early intervention, and treatment services in their communities
Addictions Prevention Curriculum Supplement	for grades 7-9 focusing on addictions prevention is being developed in partnership with the Department of Education
Problem Gambling Social Marketing Campaign	this campaign will be launched in 2006 with its key target audience being problem and at-risk gamblers aged 19-34 years
Nova Scotia Student Drug Use Survey	a standardized survey is administered in collaboration with the other Atlantic provinces to gather relevant monitoring data to evaluate the successes within the field of addictions-related health including goals, objectives, and strategies related to adolescent substance abuse, gambling, and associated behaviours
MomsandDads.ca - Parenting Social Marketing Campaign Chronic Disease Prevention	campaign targets parents of young children aged 0-12 years has been implemented. The goal is to motivate parents to begin to make changes to improve the health of their children. The issues of focus are healthy eating, physical activity, car seat/booster seat usage and secondhand smoke in the home. Key to preventing chronic disease is to establish healthy living habits in children. This social marketing campaign is one way to address this goal

Department of Justice

Correctional Safe and Secure Custody	safe and secure custody for incarcerated youth in the Nova Scotia Youth Facility
Correctional Reintegration/Rehabilitation Planning and Case Management	case planning for incarcerated youth to reintegrate the youth back into society
Correctional Investigative Reporting	investigative reports on the status of the youth
Correction Facility Substance Abuse Care	substance abuse treatment for incarcerated youth
Correctional Facility Leisure Activity Provision	engagement in leisure activities, such as canoeing, swimming, fitness, adventure, sports, summer camps, etc. for incarcerated youth
Correctional Facility Spiritual Support	spiritual support consultation for incarcerated youth
Correctional Facility Education	public school education lessons for incarcerated youth
Correctional Facility Life/Social Skills Development	life/social skill development lessons for incarcerated youth
Correctional Facility Employment Placement	employment placements/jobs for incarcerated youth
Community Supervision and Support	community oversight, support and monitoring, including intensive supervision and support for post-custody and deferred custody orders for supervised youth
Correctional Enforcement	enforcement of conditions on released youth
Options to Anger	entry level anger management program to clients of correctional services
CALM Program	mid level anger management program to clients of correctional services
Centre 24/7	an alternative, experiential-based alternative school curriculum to incarcerated and high-risk community youth
Restorative Justice	approved program of extrajudicial measures in Nova Scotia under the <i>Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)</i> and receives referrals for young persons between the ages of 12 and 17
Victim Services	reduce the harmful impact of crime on victims by providing direct services through four core programs (victim services, criminal injuries counselling, impact statement, and child victim/witness)
VOICES	program for girls in custody and community supervision delivered through Coverdale

Specific initiative identified through the course of this research

To supplement this high-level overview, a number of specific initiatives were identified and are outlined below. It is important to note this section of the report is not an exhaustive list of programs available but rather programs that were referenced through the course of this research project.

School-based initiatives

- **Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS)/ Code of Conduct** is a system-wide approach, being introduced across the province at a rate of 100 schools per year. There are clear behavioural expectations for all members of the school community. These expectations are understood and agreed to by everyone involved. Expectations are communicated clearly and reinforced throughout the school year. PEBS is based on research that supports a proactive approach, as well as the accurate collection of data to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and to guide future planning.
- **Reading Recovery** targets those Grade 1 students whose reading achievement levels are in the lowest 20%. The program includes one-on-one intervention with specialized training for teachers with province-wide implementation nearing completion. The program has been redeveloped for students whose first language is French and is now being developed for French Immersion programs. A website tracks the program's outcomes worldwide (RRCNA). The program has a goal of at least an 80% success rate.
- **Day Services for Youth Program** runs in the Western region and is intended for high-risk students for whom other documented interventions didn't work. Students are required to attend classes in a 'resource' room, and every Wednesday they go back to their school for full class participation. Parents are also involved. The program is funded by the Department of Education, and while Education is the lead, staff from the Department of Health (Mental Health Services), the Department of Community Services and the Department of Justice are involved in the initiative.
- **CARES (Children at Risk Experiencing Success)** is intended to provide support to selected students to enable them to participate more fully in school life. The primary focus of the program is enhancement of student self-esteem.
- **Alternative programming through the South Shore Regional School Board** includes: the Dayspring Elementary Day Program designed to be brief, intensive services that provides additional support to the child (ages 8-12 years) and his/her family. The child generally spends three days per week at a centre and the other days back at his/her 'home' school; the Middle Level Transition Program located at two centres with two staff members and resource personnel who support eight students ages 12-15; High School Alternate Programs where 32 students are supported by teachers, resource personnel and outside agencies at three sites; Skilled Trades Exploratory Program (STEP) where students have an opportunity to explore a number of trades during their first year and specialize during the second year; Transition Program at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)

for students who are short one or two credits can enroll in their program of choice at the NSCC campus in Bridgewater.

- **Central Region CAYAC, Youth Not in School Project** is an initiative to develop a resiliency profile of youth aged 12 to 16 years of age, who are not in school and those in the process of leaving school (suspensions/drifting away, etc.). The purpose of the initiative is to clearly identify how services provided to those youth are now linked and to identify gaps in deployment of those services.
- **Youth Pathways and Transition Program**, available in Halifax Regional School Board, supports junior and senior high school students who have been suspended from their home schools to continue with their academic work to obtain school credits.
- **BEST (Behaviour Education Support and Treatment)** is a school and home-based early intervention/prevention program intended to reduce the frequency and severity of disruptive behaviours at school and at home. The program is a partnership between the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, the local Mental Health Program and CAYAC.
- **Duke of Edinburgh Awards Program** is designed to encourage young people age 14-25 years to endeavour to be the best they can be. The awards program strives to help young people focus on social development and individual challenges in the areas of skill development, health and fitness, in caring for the environment, and in contributions to their community. The Duke of Edinburgh Awards began in Nova Scotia in 1972 and counts as high school elective credit in Nova Scotia.

Individual-based initiatives

- **Second Chance** is an entrepreneurship program for youth who have been in conflict with the law. Run by the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Education Development, the program is designed to redirect the energies and talents of participants into business endeavours by building their personal qualities, characteristics and attitudes through hands-on activities. The program is offered to young offenders selected after an extensive assessment process. Participants have the opportunity to develop personal, social and business skills as they run their businesses in the community.
- **Centre 24-7** is a unique youth program that helps young offenders get back on track. It operates on a semester basis similar to that of the local school system, providing academic course work, career development, anger management, experiential learning and life skills development. The centre is a community-based program located in Coldbrook for at-risk youth, including individuals from the community who have been identified as being at risk by the local school system or are on probation; as well as young persons incarcerated at the Nova Scotia Youth Facility. The underlying philosophy of the program is to take a holistic approach to dealing with at-risk youth by targeting educational and behavioural issues where remediation/rehabilitation is needed.

- **ASIST (Adolescent Support Interagency Service Team)** is a cooperative effort of Cumberland Mental Health Service, the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, Family and Children's Services of Cumberland County, the Department of Justice and local police and RCMP. The initiative provides coordinated programming for young people between the ages of 12 and 19 who are facing difficulties – from education and legal to housing and mental health. A clinical team with representatives from each agency meets monthly and is supported by an advisory committee. With youth/family consent, community workers such as therapists, social workers, probation officers and school principals can apply to ASIST for support. The team then deliberates on the best course of intervention, e.g. school re-entry plans, housing, residential treatment, recreation, etc.
- **Provincial Child and Youth Forensic Services** is a partnership between the Department of Health and the Department of Justice (Court Services) establishing the IWK Assessment Services as the single entry point for court-ordered assessments from youth justice courts throughout the province. The partnership also places all health services for youth within youth justice facilities under the clinical and administrative management of the IWK Health Centre. The range of services include clinical (mental health and primary health care); court-ordered assessments; forensic rehab; and NS Initiative for Sexually Aggressive Youth (NSISAY).

School-individual initiatives

- **Youth Health Centres:** Approximately 37 youth health centres (YHCs) across Nova Scotia provide health education, health promotion, information and referral, follow-up and support, as well as some clinical services to youths. The majority are located in schools.
- **Schools Associated with Police and Probation Services (SAPPS):** The program is a joint effort between Chignecto-Central Regional School Board, Celtic Family of Schools, Northumberland Family of Schools, Community Corrections (New Glasgow Office) and various policing agencies in Pictou County. It was developed to address the needs of students on probation to succeed in school rather than in the criminal justice system. The initiative encourages open lines of communication between and among probation, police and schools; monthly meetings to assess progress in school; regular academic progress reports provided to probation; regular meetings with parents; and curfew checks. The program relies on appropriate information sharing.

Family initiatives

- **Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECD)** is a five-year initiative led by the Department of Community Services and is intended to develop a comprehensive system for early learning and care for all children from birth to age 5. Components of the ECD initiative include: 1) promoting healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; 2) improving parenting and family supports; 3) strengthening early child development, learning and child care; and 4) strengthening community supports. In the first component (healthy pregnancy and birth), the Healthy Beginnings Program has been implemented across the province. Therefore, each family of every child born in Nova Scotia has the potential to be

screened to identify factors that may place a family at risk (violence/health/disabilities/ income/education/housing/parenting skills, etc.) and provide linkages to required supports.

- **Family Resource Centres:** Over 750 programs are offered at close to 40 family resource centres in Nova Scotia. These include: parent/care giver education; child care and children's programs; health education and care; household and nutrition; housing; youth programs; literacy; employment support and community economic development; other adult education and recreation programs; community development; education; leadership development; and advocacy.
- **Growing Together** operating in North side Victoria and North Dartmouth that provides early intervention services for children 0-6 and their families. It supplements existing programs to build the capacity of families and the community as a whole. The initiative was adapted from an inner-city model delivered in downtown Toronto.
- **Intensive Community-based Treatment Team Program** is based on a multi-systemic model. Work is done with families in their homes to mend hurt feelings and repair the damage done to their relationships. A clinical therapist and a case manager work under the philosophy “teach a family to fish” with the objective to help the family develop skills that will last a lifetime and help them repair their own relationships. A variety of tools are used including cognitive/behaviour therapy, marital therapy, and recreational activities. A clinical therapist helps with organization, treatment planning, clinical supervision, and manages interagency contacts, while the case manager participates in the assessment process, in-home treatment, and discharge planning. This program has confirmed the necessity of inter-agency communication and collaboration.

Individual-family initiatives

- **Enhanced Mental Health Services:** Led by the Department of Health, a core planning team developed an implementation strategy for two Intensive Community-based Treatment Teams (ICBTT) in Industrial Cape Breton and HRM and a provincial residential treatment program in 2002 for youth in early stages of severe mental illness. ICBTT provides programs to help build individual and family protective factors, including increasing involvement in volunteering, education, paid employment and parent training. The initiative is a coordinated approach to dealing with high-risk youth who have mental illness.
- **Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services** in Nova Scotia provides culturally- competent services with community healing a major focus. Services include: family violence prevention; 24-hour crises telephone service; housing; child protection; family conferencing circles (conflict resolution); youth mentor program; SOS help for parents; nurturing programs; anger and stress management; wilderness programs.

Community-based initiatives

- **Action for Neighbourhood Change** is a pilot learning initiative funded through several federal agencies that will promote local community-development activities in collaboration with local residents, not-for-profit agencies, and private and public sector partners. Spryfield is one of five communities selected to participate in the two-year initiative. Lead partners include United Way Canada and their local affiliates, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy, the National Film Board, and Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement. Part of ANC's mandate is to document activities, processes and outcomes and use that knowledge to improve the way Canadians address and manage complex, cross-cutting social issues like homelessness and community safety. The funding for community renewal projects in each city will be coordinated through the United Way and their local affiliates.
- **Working Together** is a pilot implemented in East Preston and Mulgrave Park in response to the lack of African Canadian youth being referred to restorative justice and unequal service delivery for these youths. There is a case worker in each office, full-time coordinators and trained volunteers. The program is based on an Afrocentric philosophy that provides alternative understanding from African Canadian youth points of view. The program is a holistic approach of body, mind and spirit that places youth at the centre of their experience and is inclusive of all people. Their experiences are validated, and, like restorative justice, this program aims to empower youth and appreciate their differences. Family supports, community influences, spirituality, education, culture, and socioeconomic status are all important for the model to work. It was noted that criminal justice employees who work with African Nova Scotian youth need extensive training. There is also a need for partnerships and community involvement in this process and for government to act on recommendations arising from the initiative.
- **Knowledge is Power** is a partnership between the Halifax Regional Police, the community (District Nine Citizens Association) and the public schools in North Dartmouth. Funded by the National Crime Prevention Strategy, the initiative provides crime prevention strategies aimed at the root of crime to effect community change collectively, and it provides strategies on life skills development, anti-bullying and tenants rights.

As noted earlier, the initiatives outlined above were identified through the course of research for this paper and are not an exhaustive list of programming available to families and youth at risk. For example, there is funding available for youth at risk to participate in community recreation initiatives, youth leadership programs, apprenticeship programs and leisure activities (fine arts, music) to name but a few of the additional supports available.

Community agencies/organizations throughout the province also deliver a range of services – from Phoenix Programs (emergency shelters, counselling) and Roots of Empathy (elementary school-based program) to anti-bullying campaigns and YM/YWs.

Common themes identified

Through the course of discussion with staff from departments identified earlier and through participation in a number of conferences/workshops, research staff also identified issues of common concern. Opinions obtained are grouped into a number of themes below. (Please note these themes only reflect feedback obtained by a relatively small number of staff and thus may not be reflective of all the issues nor should they be interpreted as the “key” themes.)

Inter-connectedness of risk and protective factors

- there is an intricate connection between areas such as employment, education, health and involvement in the justice system;
- at-risk youth are more likely to be unemployed, less likely to graduate from high school, and are at an increased risk for developing problems with drug and alcohol abuse.

Need for an integrated/horizontal approach to intervention

- there is a need for more collaboration among service providers, with reference made to “one-stop shopping” for youth to access services across the spectrum (health, education, justice, community services);
- some spoke about the need to improve transition among programs, to schools, between schools, and from school to community;
- some also spoke about the need for individualized program supports and alternative delivery systems;
- efforts should also be made to formalize partnerships that are already working and fully integrate services;
- in education, a whole-school approach is considered essential since no intervention will stand on its own;
- consideration should be given to school-based interagency services, e.g. through youth health centres and co-located services in schools, although issues were raised regarding those centres that are only open during school hours and typically are only accessible to those actively enrolled in school;
- the Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS)/Code of Conduct initiative described earlier in this paper was identified as an effective process for behavioural intervention in schools with stakeholder input and community involvement;
- there was reference to the need for better information sharing so that everyone can be made aware of all the services that are available; this is happening to a degree through CAYAC;
- with respect to information sharing, there was recognition of the limitations on disclosure of information.

Early intervention/community-based approaches seen as most effective

- relying on the justice system to address youth crime was not seen as the most efficient solution given the significant costs to house young offenders; youth who are housed in institutions also accumulate criminal records and end up with a stigma that is associated with having been incarcerated;
- obtaining funding for prevention initiatives (which cross many departments) was considered difficult given the vertical nature of government structures;

- in terms of intervention, it was felt that government agencies know who some of the families are now; reference was made to a study that cross-referenced clients in care with youth in trouble with the law and found common clients;
- there is recognition that initiatives have been moving “upstream” with a need to also engage day care workers who can identify families and children that need support;
- there is a need to work collaboratively with businesses to identify employment opportunities for youth.

Principles for effective intervention

In a session with CAYAC regional representatives, six principles for effective intervention that target violent/out-of-control youth were identified:

- intervention should be school based, with some programs located away from the school to accommodate those who are not attending school;
- school-based intervention requires a multi-disciplinary team to advise, coordinate and manage initiatives. At a minimum, the team should include the school, mental health, addictions, child protection and correctional services. Police, local recreation, restorative justice, parents and students should also be involved;
- the team should carefully assess local needs and local resources before intervening given the amount of resources already in place and to avoid reinventing the wheel;
- intervention needs to focus on all four domains – individual, family, school and community;
- specific programs should have a demonstrated impact on violence and be based on best practices;
- there needs to be realistic expectations about the impact on addressing youth violence.

Preventing problems before they occur

- reference was made to primary prevention, which refers to services and programs aimed at all members of society. Services and programs are designed to educate and promote the well being of families and individuals before problems occur, e.g. prenatal programs, Healthy Beginnings home-visiting program, parenting programs.

Engagement/connectedness key

- engagement was identified as a way to improve outcomes in all areas;
- there was recognition that getting youth engaged can be challenging – while courts can order treatment, it doesn’t guarantee that people want to be there or that they will benefit;
- concern was raised about the disengagement of youth and families from their communities with crime seen as a by-product;
- the school system needs to enhance curricula with cross-cultural relevance and increase the number of staff who are culturally competent.

Focus on positive behaviours

- there is a need to adopt models that encourage positive behaviour with most youth on track behaviourally, i.e. need to be humanistic and compassionate versus judgmental;
- concerns were raised regarding zero-tolerance policies in educational institutions that introduce a level of ‘criminality’ and result in alienation/disengagement;
- it is critical to recognize diversity and provide culturally-competent services.

Importance of family and community

- parent/child relationships are seen as critical, with a belief that children are always better off with parents providing that government can work to mitigate risks and foster positive child development;
- there is a need to apply the least-intrusive measures first;
- the importance of links to culture and community were also identified;
- it was noted that schools need to reach out to parents who may not have had a positive school experience;
- all service providers need to identify and understand cultural issues;
- there is also a need to look at how at-risk families can connect to the programs that are available. Access has been identified as an issue.

Clarification is needed on departmental roles/responsibilities and the connection between departments

- a number of ‘disconnects’ were identified, e.g. a large number of youth in placement through Community Services are suspended from school, raising issues around who is responsible for providing their education. In this regard, it should be noted that the Department of Education does provide funding for a number of teachers in non-school settings. Plans are nearing completion for enhancing this practice, specifically in residential facilities operated by the Department of Community Services;
- the introduction of the *YCJA* also resulted in an increasing reliance on community-based and volunteer services. It was noted that services aren’t available in some cases – children who break the law are not necessarily in need of “protection” services but justice interventions. There are also resource constraints associated with increased demands in the community;
- the system is dealing with a changing offender population with higher mental health needs, with only the most severe cases now at the Nova Scotia Youth Facility in Waterville;
- there was concern expressed for those youth with nonemergency mental health needs in terms of their access to service. There are often lengthy wait times for nonemergency situations;
- redundancies in the system were also identified, e.g. repeat requests for court-ordered assessments for the same person. Due to privacy concerns, clinical staff may repeat assessments unnecessarily;
- the need for more partnerships between departments in sharing information and delivering services was stressed.

Lack of certain services, especially for those between 16-19 in a number of areas:

- access to mental health services was raised as a significant issue – there was reference to youth health centres, many of which are located in schools, which have nurses or coordinators on hand who can facilitate/coordinate access to service providers and programs; however, services vary across the province and many at-risk youth, especially those not in school, have difficulty accessing services. The youth’s willingness to take advantage of available mental health services is often an issue, as is the difficulty of engaging youth;

- providing education to youth in out-of-school settings, e.g. inpatients at IWK was also identified as a challenging area;
- concerns were also raised regarding emergency housing given that none is available outside HRM;
- given that government may be the only potential support for many high-risk youth, consideration should be given to eliminating age barriers in legislation/programming to help older youth access programs and services.

Outdated legislation

- staff identified concerns around legislation, particularly relating to 16 to 19 year olds. The existing *Children and Family Services Act* provides that the Minister may provide voluntary services to those 16 and over who have not yet reached their 19th birthday and those aged 16 to 18 years are only eligible for supports under exceptional circumstances.

Difficulties reaching high-risk youth

- it was noted that many high-risk youth are not at school and may not have support systems in place in their families, the community, etc., so there is inherent difficulty reaching them; primary health providers were seen as the best link;
- transportation was also identified as a significant issue, especially in rural areas.

Recruiting and ongoing professional development for service providers

- there was concern expressed regarding an inability to recruit some professionals, e.g. psychologists. The problem is exacerbated in rural areas;
- it was felt that professional development for service providers must be built into programs with appropriate resourcing;
- more conferences are needed between agencies to share information;
- there is a need for service providers to be culturally competent when providing services to representatives of diverse communities in Nova Scotia;
- specific reference was made to the need to expand the Aboriginal court workers program.

Research to guide policy options

- there was reference to the need for evidence to make the right decisions – the power of research to inform policy options and implementing programs;
- there is also a need to look at triggers, e.g. why are kids skipping class? Predictable problems may well be preventable.

Proactively identify priorities and share costs

- there is a need to pro-actively identify youth priorities across government; to focus funding; and to share in the costs of providing priority services;
- there is a need to build on strengths and to focus on needs.

8. Interventions in the works

The following initiatives were identified through the course of this research study and are at various stages of development/implementation. Again, this is not an exhaustive list of interventions underway.

Department of Justice

- As noted earlier in this paper, the department is considering extending restorative justice to 10- and 11-year-olds through a Restorative Justice Program – Children Under Twelve In Conflict With The Law: Children under twelve years of age who commit harmful acts are not recognized under Canadian law, with national consensus via the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)* that formal accountability begins at age 12. However, children under 12 who cause harm need the opportunity to receive support, information and guidance in order to redirect them towards more pro-social behaviour. Police who respond to these matters have the option of referring the case to child welfare authorities, but it is important to understand that the child welfare authority's mandate is protection, and not all children who cause harm are necessarily in need of protection. In the absence of a provincial protocol, many of these children can potentially “fall through the cracks”, receiving no meaningful support or guidance. The initial focus of such a project would be on gathering data on the number and specific needs of children under twelve identified as being in conflict with the law. There would also be a collection of information on the issues presented by these children and their families, communities, as well as victims harmed by their actions. Additionally, government departments, community networks and partners would be engaged to determine their needs and level of engagement and also to understand the capacity of communities to sustain an “under twelve” program within Nova Scotia. This information will be used to establish a pilot project plan.
- The Department of Justice is also proposing a nonresidential attendance centre for youth in the Halifax area. These centres are used elsewhere as an alternative to incarceration for the majority of young offenders in conflict with the law, allowing them to remain in their own environments while simultaneously receiving access to services, including treatment for behavioural problems.
- A recent initiative is the establishment of a safer, stronger communities initiative led by the Departments of Justice and Community Services and with representatives from municipal agencies and law enforcement. An initial focus of the group is on communities experiencing high crime rates and significant socioeconomic challenges.

Departments of Health and Community Services

- The Departments of Health and Community Services sponsored a Youth-at-Risk Workshop in November, 2005, the purpose of which was to “conduct a multi-jurisdictional forum that begins to lay the groundwork for identifying issues related to youth at risk.” Participants included representatives from district health authorities, the Departments of Community Services, Education, Finance, Health and Justice, Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection, CAYAC, Treasury and Policy Board, and the IWK. The

objectives were: to establish a detailed profile of youth at risk; to identify the various services currently available to youth at risk; to identify the elements of an ideal system to serve youth at risk; to identify the gaps that exist between current services and an ideal system; to establish priorities for addressing identified gaps. Noted outcomes of any action included: reasonable services to better meet needs of youth at risk; safe, seamless transition to adulthood at the appropriate level of independence and self-sufficiency; better and improved communication strategy between and among all stakeholders; potential adjustment to legislation and policy.

The initial focus was on persons 16-19 who lack necessary or appropriate supports to successfully participate/function in their community and thus need intervention. Interventions were needed because of breakdowns at the individual, family, community and/or societal level. Upon further discussion, some felt the definition was too narrow since all youth could potentially be at risk.

Priorities identified by participants when planning programming for youth at risk included: there was overwhelming support for a broad-based strategy beginning with early prevention initiatives through to interventions for youth at risk; participants identified the need for leadership from across departments, with accountability and responsibility mechanisms; current gaps in services (beds) was also identified as a key priority; other suggested priorities for action included the need for culturally competent services; community-based approaches; one-stop service responses; best practice studies, etc. A project coordinator has been hired to further facilitate the work of this group.

Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat

- After extensive consultation, the Youth Secretariat has developed a draft strategy for government's consideration entitled "Employed Youth Engaged Society." The Youth Secretariat describes the strategy as follows: Employed Youth - Engaged Communities (EYES) for the Future Strategy: Youth, families, communities, employers and government have a responsibility to work together to ensure that our young people possess the skills, knowledge, competence and confidence necessary to participate to their full potential in the economy and in society. To this end, the Department of Education has developed a draft strategy to assist in addressing youth employment and skills development issues in Nova Scotia. Through this draft strategy, youth in Nova Scotia will be encouraged to stay and work in their communities, and youth from other parts of the world will be encouraged to come to Nova Scotia to live and work. This draft strategy includes research, education, development and dissemination of information, and programming in the four strategic areas of supportive families, engaged communities, ready and welcoming employers, and responsive education and training.

Department of Community Services

- A Child Welfare Redesign Project examined key areas of child welfare service delivery: on-call services that provide emergency response after hours; community services and children's aid society shared services, such as facilities and equipment; foster and adoption resources; and placement services for children in care.

- More than 100 people from the department and children's aid societies participated in several working groups to examine existing services and recommend improvements. Input was also received from the Federation of Foster Families of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Council for the Family, IWK Mental Health Services, Nova Scotia Home for Coloured Children, Chisholm Youth Services, Growing Together Dartmouth Family Centre, Dayspring Children's Centre, and many other organizations serving children and families.

Specific recommendations include removing the barriers that currently prevent foster and adoptive families from being available to children outside the jurisdiction of their particular agencies or government offices. This will help ensure the best match between children and families, leading to fewer moves and more permanent placements. Placement services will be reorganized to ensure a full range of residential services is available to meet each child's unique needs. These services include foster homes, group homes and programs for children with disabilities who are in the province's care. Support for families at home, including prevention, parenting programs and services to youth, will continue to be strengthened in partnership with community organizations. Implementation of the recommendations will begin over the next year.

9. General observations

Purpose of this paper

The Department of Justice offers this research paper to help inform work that is underway to develop a broad-based approach to intervention and crime prevention. The paper demonstrates there are many programs for families and youth and great cooperation between many agencies. Numerous efforts are also underway to further understand and act on research relating to risk and protective factors. Inter-agency collaboration is also happening in many programming areas and the focus of intervention is moving upstream to reach the causes of crime.

Two overall themes are clear:

- **Enforcement isn't enough**: If we are to reduce youth crime we must attack both crime and the causes of crime. The department recognizes the justice system alone cannot address youth crime; by the time the justice system is engaged, some harm – possibly serious, irreparable harm – has been done to both victim and perpetrator. So, partnerships are required among the many agencies, public and private, that work with youth and families;
- **What's missing is an overall strategy**: Collaboration, or lack of it, does not appear to be the problem. Some partnerships, such as CAYAC, are formal, while others are informal and particular to one aspect of youth. However, there is no comprehensive strategy in place linking various interventions and strategies across departments. It is therefore unclear how existing interventions and strategies relate back to risk and protection factors, which makes it difficult to identify gaps. Nor is there a comprehensive approach in place to measure, track and evaluate overall progress in achieving positive outcomes relating to children and youth.

The department's role

With respect to youth crime specifically, the department is pursuing a four-pronged approach:

- (1) **Legislative measures**: we continue to push for changes to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (Canada) to give our courts greater discretion to order “out-of-control youth” to be held in custody;
- (2) **Enforcement**: in partnership with law enforcement and the Public Prosecution Service, strengthen efforts to bring criminals to justice and to enforce court orders which release youth back to the community;
- (3) **Offender supervision and support**: updating programs for youth in custody and under community supervision; considering extending restorative justice to 10 and 11 year olds through a Restorative Justice Program for Children under age 12 in conflict with the law; and exploring a nonresidential attendance centre for youth in the Halifax area; and
- (4) **Crime prevention**: overall strategy to prevent youth from engaging in criminal activity and to provide them with hope and opportunity; working with other government departments, municipal governments, police and agencies to support early intervention initiatives as part

of a safer, stronger communities initiative led by the Departments of Justice and Community Services.

Additional ideas

The following ideas also arose while undertaking this study:

- Work through CAYAC to review the results of this research study and engage in policy discussions to help inform action;
- Establish an electronic clearing house for studies to ensure access to relevant research undertaken by various departments, which could help to inform intervention plans and programming;
- Encourage a culture of comprehensive program evaluation as well as develop a comprehensive inventory of program evaluations conducted on children and youth programming initiatives in Nova Scotia with a view to identifying best practices;
- Undertake research to understand the criminal careers of young adults in Nova Scotia. This would allow us to identify characteristics associated with youth who stop committing crimes versus those who continue committing crime and would help us improve diversion efforts;
- Undertake research to identify characteristics associated with those who have been successful in the restorative justice process and what services were considered most helpful to help improve diversion efforts;
- Develop a mental health profile of youth offenders to inform the development of programming and service;
- Pursue potential for the National Crime Prevention Centre to fund a study on self-reported delinquency for metro youth, which would enable us to get a better picture of risk/protective factors and opportunities for intervention;
- Undertake a comprehensive review of legislation governing youth programs and services;
- Exploring a role for the Department of Finance's Community Counts project in helping to track indicators associated with risk and protective factors;
- Research successful interventions that encourage school attachment given its importance as a risk factor;
- Establish an ongoing committee made up of policy advisors from socioeconomic departments to discuss emerging issues and policy options.

Appendix A:

How the youth justice system is operating under the *YCJA*

Since the introduction of the *YCJA*, the federal Department of Justice has produced an annual report on how the *YCJA* is operating. “The purpose of the annual statement is to report on how the youth justice system is operating under the *YCJA*; whether policy objectives of the *YCJA* are being achieved; and issues that need to be addressed. Ideally, reliable and comprehensive statistics would provide the foundation for the discussion in the Annual Statement. However, it will be some time before relatively comprehensive statistical information on the operation of the *YCJA* will be available from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS).”

The annual statement further notes that “There are limitations to the sources used for the annual statement and as a result the findings about how the youth justice system is operating under the *YCJA* should be treated cautiously. Although the findings included in the Annual Statement are preliminary, they are based on the most reliable information that could be collected about early implementation of the *YCJA*. This includes statistical data on activities at national and regional levels as well as the considered opinion, experience and observations of officials and professionals expert in youth justice and active in the field across the country. Though these findings may not necessarily be representative of the operation of the entire youth justice system, they do provide an early, tentative look at what is happening under the *YCJA* and an informed basis for further research and analysis.”

The report is organized according to the stages of the youth justice process. The findings for each stage are as follows:

I.	FRONT-END: CHARGES, USE OF COURT AND EXTRAJUDICIAL MEASURES
A.	Use of Charges
1.	The charge rate for youth decreased 16% between 2002 and 2003. The most significant annual decrease since 1977.
2.	There has been a significant reduction in the number of charges laid for less serious offences, but the rate of this reduction decreases as offences get more serious.
3.	The rate at which police laid charges for offences against the administration of justice declined slightly in 2003 from recent peaks but the 2003 figure is still significantly higher than rates for years before 1999.
B.	Extrajudicial Measures
1.	There has been an increase in the use of extrajudicial measures by police, and, preliminary indications are that they appear to be using the full range of measures set out in section 6.
2.	In jurisdictions that have crown caution programs or pre-charge screening, crown prosecutors appear to be using cautions and encouraging the use of extrajudicial measures by police.
3.	Net widening: while national figures reported by CCJS for 2003 do not indicate any significant increase in the number of youth being brought into the youth justice system, there have been instances where net widening appears to have occurred in the use of extrajudicial measures programs.
4.	There is not sufficient data yet available to determine the extent to which the use of extrajudicial measures, particularly extrajudicial sanctions, is proportionate to the seriousness

	of the offence.
5.	There is evidence that conditions are being attached to the use of some police referrals that are not consistent with the objectives of reform at the front end of the process.
II. PRE-TRIAL DETENTION	
A. Police Detention	
1.	It is unclear whether detention of youth by police has increased or decreased under the <i>YCJA</i> .
2.	Young persons who had previously breached a probation order or had three or more previous findings of guilt were significantly more likely to be detained by the police under the <i>YCJA</i> .
3.	There was no significant change in police detention of young persons charged with indictable offences against the person.
4.	There was no significant change under the <i>YCJA</i> in the types of release used by police.
5.	Compared to the baseline year of 1999-00, under the <i>YCJA</i> police were more likely to impose conditions on young persons who they released and the average number of conditions of release was significantly higher.
B. Detention at Bail Hearings	
1.	The number of admissions of young persons to detention decreased under the <i>YCJA</i> , although the proportion of young persons detained at bail hearings did not change significantly in the first six months of the <i>YCJA</i> .
2.	A smaller proportion of young persons charged with less serious offences against the person were detained under the <i>YCJA</i> , than under the <i>YOA</i> , although the difference was not statistically significant.
3.	A smaller proportion of young persons with a past breach of probation were detained under the <i>YCJA</i> than under the <i>YOA</i> , although the difference was not statistically significant.
4.	Under both the <i>YOA</i> and <i>YCJA</i> , young persons with three or more previous offences were much more likely to be detained than those with fewer or no previous offences.
5.	The average number of days detained did not change significantly under the <i>YCJA</i> .
C. Application of subsections 29(1) and (2)	
1.	Despite the prohibition on using detention for social welfare purposes (subsection 29(1)), pre-trial detention is still being used in several jurisdictions to address social welfare needs of young persons. In other jurisdictions, there has been compliance with the prohibition.
2.	The presumption against detention (subsection 29(2)) has had a significant impact, resulting in the release of many young persons who, under the <i>YOA</i> , would have been detained.
3.	Courts are interpreting the presumption against detention (subsection 29(2)) as overriding the reverse onus provisions of the <i>Criminal Code</i> .
D. Bail Conditions	
1.	The average number of court-imposed release conditions under the <i>YCJA</i> remained the same as under the <i>YOA</i> .
2.	There were no significant changes in the use of specific conditions of release.
III. SENTENCING	
A. Sentencing Options	
1.	Almost one-fifth of sentences under the <i>YCJA</i> included one or more of the following new sentencing options: reprimand, attendance centre order, intensive support and supervision order, and deferred custody and supervision order.
B. Custodial Sentences	
1.	The use of custodial sentences has decreased significantly under the <i>YCJA</i> .
2.	The use of custodial sentences has decreased for all major offence categories. In most offence

	categories, the decrease was statistically significant.
3.	Cases resulting in custodial sentences under the <i>YCJA</i> involved significantly more charges than custodial sentence cases under the <i>YOA</i> .
4.	Under the <i>YCJA</i> young persons with a record of previous offences were significantly less likely to receive custody than under the <i>YOA</i>
C.	Probation
1.	The use of probation decreased significantly under the <i>YCJA</i> .
2.	The length of probation orders remained the same but the number of conditions and the use of onerous conditions increased significantly under the <i>YCJA</i> .
3.	Sentences that include both custody and probation decreased significantly under the <i>YCJA</i> , but the percentage of young persons subject to a probation order after the completion of their custodial sentence remained about the same.
D.	Application of Sentencing Provisions of the <i>YCJA</i>
1.	It appears that the sentencing provisions of the <i>YCJA</i> have had a significant impact on sentencing decisions, particularly in relation to custody.
	a) A current conviction for a serious (indictable) offence and having a pattern of offending strongly predicted being sentenced to custody under the <i>YCJA</i> . This combination was a weak predictor of custody under the <i>YOA</i> .
	b) A current conviction for a bail violation did not predict being sentenced to custody under the <i>YCJA</i> . Under the <i>YOA</i> , this negative relationship between a bail conviction and custody did not exist.
	c) A current breach of probation conviction increased the likelihood of custody under the <i>YOA</i> but not under the <i>YCJA</i> .
	d) A current violent offence conviction predicted being sentenced to custody under both the <i>YOA</i> and the <i>YCJA</i> .
	e) Having social or psychological problems increased the likelihood of being sentenced to custody under the <i>YOA</i> but not under the <i>YCJA</i> .
E.	Other Issues
1.	Court decisions have differed on whether deterrence is a sentencing principle under the <i>YCJA</i> , but it appears that most courts have concluded that deterrence is not relevant to sentencing under the <i>YCJA</i> . The matter is before the Supreme Court of Canada.
2.	Risk assessments appear to be used at sentencing in some parts of the country. However, research raises serious doubt about their reliability and validity, and some court decisions have concluded that they are irrelevant to sentencing under the <i>YCJA</i> and potentially prejudicial to young persons being sentenced.
3.	Judges do not appear to be making extensive use of conferences at sentencing.

Appendix B: Some definitions

- Accused rate takes into account both youths formally charged by police and youths “cleared otherwise” in measuring youth criminal activity coming to the attention of police.
- Assault level 1: common assault, the least serious form of assault.
- Assault level 2: involves carrying, using or threatening to use a weapon against someone or causing someone bodily harm.
- Assault level 3: involves wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering the life of someone, continues to be a relatively rare occurrence amongst youth in this province.
- Census Metropolitan Area (CMA): a very large urban area (known as the urban core) together with adjacent urban and rural areas (known as urban and rural fringes) that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core. A CMA has an urban core population of at least 100,000, based on the previous census.
- Chronic offenders: the definition of chronic offender differs depending on the jurisdiction. In Canada, chronic offenders are defined as persons referred to court in relation to five or more criminal incidents.
- Offensive weapons: includes explosives, firearm usage, prohibited weapons, weapons possession, restricted weapons, trafficking, importing and exporting weapons and other.
- Protective factors: are generally meant to denote factors which are associated with a decreased probability of delinquency/violence. Generally, if risk factors can be decreased and protective factors enhanced by preventive action, then the likelihood of delinquency/violence should be reduced.
- Resiliency: refers to the ability to survive adverse conditions, or overcoming the odds.
- Risk factors: are indicators of the pathway children and adolescents take toward youth offending behaviour.
- Violent crime: includes a wide variety of behaviours, ranging in seriousness from common assault (which involves pushing, slapping, punching and face-to-face verbal threats) to robbery with a firearm.

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