



Juvenile Detention for Colorado Truants: Exploring the Issues

Acknowledgements:

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The National Center for School Engagement

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The Trouble with Truancy

American society has been struggling with what to do with truant children for decades (Gavin, 1997). As unskilled jobs become a smaller proportion of the labor market, the problem of an inadequate education becomes more critical. Those without high school degrees are encountering an ever-narrower range of job possibilities, increasing the risk of unemployment and decreasing the wages of those who do find unskilled employment.

Truancy is one of the best predictors that a young person will drop out of high school before completing a degree. Truants demonstrate little emotional attachment to their schools. Excessive absences push students, many of whom find school difficult to begin with, way behind in their school work. As a result, they achieve poor grades, and often fail to earn credit for their classes, discouraging them from pursuing high school to completion.

Colorado law states that a child who has missed four days in one quarter or ten days in one school year due to unexcused absence is truant. Once a child meets this criteria, his or her school may file a truancy petition with the juvenile court. How soon that happens, and what steps a school takes prior to making a court filing, vary by school district and even by school. Strategies employed by different juvenile courts vary as well. Nonetheless, judicial districts around Colorado have begun to address the problem of truancy more seriously in recent years. Several districts have created a truancy docket within their juvenile courts, assigning one magistrate to handle all truancy cases on one day each week. Restructuring in favor of a specific truancy court has several benefits for schools as they consider whether to file a court case against a truant student. Of great

importance to overcommitted school staff, is the fact that the time they must spend waiting at court for a case to be heard is minimized. Furthermore, they are assured greater consistency in how youth will be sentenced, and know the magistrate will take each case they bring to court seriously. Some districts have initiated truancy reduction programs that provide alternatives to the traditional court process, increasing social worker involvement with truants and their families. (Heilbrunn, 2003; Heilbrunn and Seeley, 2003. For information on a set of such programs operating nationwide see Gonzales, Richards, and Seeley, 2002.)

Goals of this study

Despite the move toward consistency in sentencing *within* judicial districts, tremendous variation still exists *across* judicial districts in how truancy cases are handled. A point of debate is whether or not, and under what circumstances, a truant youth should be sentenced to spend time in juvenile detention. Colorado law states that no one may be sentenced to detention for truancy itself. Youth under 16 years of age may, however, be sentenced to detention for failure to obey a court order to attend school¹. For purposes of brevity, this paper uses the term “detention for truancy” to refer to “detention for violating a court order to attend school.” The debate hinges on whether detention should be reserved for young people who are found guilty of delinquent

¹ The sentencing process proceeds as follows. Schools make a number of attempts to address attendance problems on their own. Procedures for handling truancy are formulated by individual school districts, and may differ across districts. Policies used currently include letters and phone calls to parents (which are sometimes intercepted by the truant), meetings with school counselors, parents and the youth, and extra tutoring help. Some use School Attendance Review Boards, and, in a challenge to logic, others use suspension. Once a school files a court case for truancy, a court date is set. The juvenile judge or magistrate most likely issues a court order for the child to attend school. If the child’s attendance continues to be unsatisfactory, the child is sent back to court. On this second visit the magistrate has the legal option to sentence the youth to detention for violation of a court order. In practice, most youth make numerous court appearances before magistrates resort to a detention sentence.

behavior, as opposed to a less serious status offense such as truancy.² This report is intended to shed some light on the effects and costs of using detention for truancy.

Questions addressed include:

- Why, and under what circumstances, do magistrates and judges sentence youth to detention for truancy?
- What are the characteristics of the population detained for truancy?
- Do school attendance and achievement, as measured by absences and grades, improve following a detention sentence?
- How likely are detained truants to eventually obtain a high school degree or a GED?
- Does serving detention for truancy have an effect on youth's subsequent delinquent behavior?
- What are the financial costs of detention for truancy?

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² The term status offense refers to a behavior that is only illegal due to the age of the actor. For example, drinking, running away from home, and truancy are all status offences. Criminal behavior would include drug use, theft, and driving without a license.

Methodology

Since truancy-related detention admissions are heavily concentrated, we were able to limit our study to the four judicial districts that send the most youth to detention for contempt of a court order to attend school. Arapahoe 18, Denver 2, Jefferson 1 and Pueblo 10 are home to almost 95% of the population detained for truancy (See Appendix A). Seven data sources, described in Table 1, were used for this study.

Magistrates³ were interviewed to understand the process by which truant youth end up in detention. Discussion focused on the role magistrates believe detention plays among the youth who appear in their courts, and what they hope to accomplish by assigning detention. Since most truant youth are not sentenced to detention, even in these four districts, magistrates described the types of cases for which they are likely to use

Table 1 Data Used in this Study	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An anonymous record of detained Colorado truants by judicial and school district provided by the Division of Youth Corrections, coupled with descriptive data by school district from the Colorado Department of Education. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Names, addresses, and birth dates of 179 youth sent to detention for truancy between March 2001 and February 2002, along with their detention center, admission and release dates, and their school district. An attempt was made to include all these youth in the study. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with the juvenile magistrates who preside over the truancy courts in the four selected districts. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School records for 21 youth, before and after their detention sentence was served. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile justice records for 29 youth, before and after their detention sentence was served. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written surveys completed anonymously by 25 detained youth. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two focus groups with a total of 10 detained youth. 	

³ Although a judge presides over truancy court in Jefferson County, magistrates run the courts in the Denver, Arapahoe and Pueblo judicial districts. Judges are elected, while magistrates are appointed, and there are some differences in terms of their powers. However, for the sake of brevity this paper refers to the four as “magistrates.”

detention. Youth surveys and focus groups provide a means for understanding youth's experiences as they perceive them. The survey, available in its entirety in Appendix B, included demographic questions, and topics that focused on behavior and attitudes before and after detention. Youth were also asked whether they thought they were better or worse off as a result of having served time in detention, and how likely they thought they were to be sentenced to a further stay in detention.

The greatest methodological challenge of the study was getting youth participants. Study invitations were mailed to the 179 youth who served time in detention in our four selected judicial districts between March 2001 and February 2002. Fifty were returned as undeliverable. Sixty-four young people never responded to the invitation although their mailings were not returned. Thirty-five expressed some interest, but eventually decided not to participate. In the end, thirty youth – 17% of the original 179 – participated in some aspect of the study. These thirty constitute our sample, while the 179 make up the “universe” of truant youth.

Youth were able to participate at three levels. Minimum participation required that youth over 18 years of age, or their parent or guardian if under 18, sign permission forms granting us access to school and juvenile justice records for a three-year period during the school years of 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003. This bracket was chosen in order to have at least one year of school records prior to the earliest detention stay in our sample, and at least one year after the latest detention stay. Youth who submitted signed permission forms were invited to attend a focus group during which they completed a written questionnaire and answered questions about their school and detention experiences, and future educational goals. Youth who signed permission forms

but did not attend a focus group were given the option of completing the questionnaire at home

Judicial District	Universe	Total Participants	Juvenile Justice Data	School Data	Survey Data
Arapahoe	98	15	14	11	13
Denver	26	2	2	1	2
Jefferson	27	6	6	5	6
Pueblo	28	7	7	4	4
Total	179	30	29	21	25

and mailing it in. Stipends were paid in varying amounts depending on the level of participation. A total of \$35.00 was paid to each youth who signed forms, completed the questionnaire, and attended a focus group.

Who Are the Detained?

The Division of Youth Corrections provided a list of 179 youth who spent at least one day in juvenile detention for truancy between March 2001 and February 2002. Of these, the 18th Judicial District in Arapahoe County sent 98, or 55% of the total. The 10th Judicial District in Pueblo, the 1st Judicial District in Jefferson County, and the 2nd Judicial District in Denver sent almost equal numbers – 28, 27, and 26 respectively - to account for the other 45%.

Age at detention

Since juvenile records are confidential, only birth date and admit and release dates were available for the 179 youth. The average age at detention was 15.2 years, with a range of 12 years to 18 years. Averages by district varied only between 14.5 in Pueblo and 15.5 in Arapahoe. In each district, 15 was the most common age at which to be detained, most likely because once they turn 16 they are no longer required to attend school. Last-ditch efforts are made to keep 15-year-olds in school.

Length of stay in detention

Length of stay in detention during the sample timeframe varies from one day to 148 days, and is highly skewed. Half of the 179 young people spent six days or fewer in detention; but one was incarcerated for 61 days and another for 148 days, raising the average to 10.9. The most common length of stay was only three days. The bulk of the three-day sentences likely were served over weekends, with Friday admissions and Sunday releases. (Weekend sentences leave youth free to attend school during the week. However, they also leave these particular youth free to skip school during the week. Youth in detention Monday through Friday attend mandatory schooling at the detention centers, but those who are there only on weekends are not schooled.) Maximum sentences varied between 35 days in Pueblo and 148 days in Jefferson County. Table 3 shows that 43% of the youth spent three days or less in detention, while about ¼ remained longer than 10 days. Note that these lengths of stay apply only to detention sentences served between March 1, 2001 and February 28 2002. Some of these youth spent additional time in detention before or after the study period.

Judicial District	Number of Youth Detained	Age at Detention				Length of Stay			
		Average	Min.	Max.	Mode	Average	Min.	Max.	Mode
Jefferson	27	14.6	13	17	15	14.4	3	148	4
Pueblo	28	14.5	12	16	15	9.9	2	35	3
Arapahoe	98	15.5	14	18	15	10.6	1	56	3
Denver	26	15.2	14	17	15	9.3	2	54	3
Total	179	15.2	14	18	15	10.9	1	148	3

Length of Stay in Days	Number of Youth	Percent of Sample	Cumulative Percent
1-3	66	36.9	36.9
4-6	35	19.6	56.4
7-9	25	14.0	70.4
10-19	28	15.6	86.0
20-29	6	3.4	89.4
30-39	9	5.0	94.4
40-49	6	3.4	97.8
50-59	3	1.7	99.4
60+	1	0.6	100.0

(Note that the first rows show data in increments of three days, while subsequent categories include 10-day spreads.)

How Representative is Our Sample?

It is encouraging that in terms of age, geographic distribution, and length of detention stay respondents are fairly comparable to the universe. The exception is that Denver youth are under-represented in the respondent pool (See Table 5). Many truant come from low-income families, and several of the phone numbers listed in the juvenile records were for residential hotels that house a highly transient population. All the families using hotel numbers had moved by the time of the study. It is plausible that the population of Denver is the most mobile, making participants there more difficult to find.

District	Sample Size			Age at Detention	
	Number in Sample	Sample Percent	Universe Percent	Sample Age	Universe Age
Arapahoe	15	50.0	54.7	15.5	15.5
Pueblo	7	23.3	15.6	14.1	14.5
Jefferson	6	20.0	15.1	14.3	14.6
Denver	2	6.7	14.5	14.5	15.2
Total	30	100	100	14.9	15.2

The average age of the respondents matches closely that of the universe (Table 5). Length of stay was also similar (Table 6), with the vast majority of stays clustered in the three-or-fewer-days category.

Although there is no evidence that the youth who responded to the study invitation are substantively different from the universe, such a small percentage of them participated

Length of Stay in Days	Sample Number	Sample Percent	Universe Percent
1-3	16	53.3	42.5
4-6	7	23.3	20.7
7-9	3	10.0	12.8
10-19	1	3.3	12.3
20-29	3	10.0	2.8
30+	0	0.0	5.6

(Note that the first rows show data in increments of three days, while subsequent categories include 10-day spreads.)

that we cannot assume they are representative of the larger group. We were unable to locate the children of the most transient families so the respondent pool likely excludes the lowest income truants. On the other hand, once families were contacted, the stipend would have been a greater incentive for lower income families. As a result, this research should be viewed as more qualitative than quantitative, and more exploratory than definitive.

Who Are the Respondents?

Table 7 shows the gender and ethnic composition of the 30 respondents. They were split evenly between male and female. Half was white, one quarter was Hispanic, one sixth was black, two individuals were of mixed race. One listed no racial information.

Gender	Number
Male	14
Female	16
Race	
White	14
Hispanic	8
Black	5
Mixed/White	2
Unknown	1

Truants as delinquents

Respondents spent far more days in detention than those served during the sampling timeframe. Although some young people had been to detention prior to the study period, most of the additional detention days were served subsequent to that period. For most of these youth, a brief detention stay for truancy was not adequate to “scare them straight.” Of the 29 youth for whom juvenile records were available:

- 17 had not been in detention prior to the study period, but 12 had.
- Those 12 had a total of 31 detention stays prior to the study period, averaging 16 days each, some for truancy and some for other offenses.
- Only 9 youth had no detention stays after the study period.
- After the study period, 20 youth had an average of 4 detention stays during which they spent an average of 91.5 days in detention.
- 13 youth spent time in a non-residential correctional program, most likely on an ankle monitor. They averaged 93 days each in such programs.
- 5 youth had no detention stays either prior or subsequent to the study period. 4 additional youth served no detention prior to the study period, and only one brief stay afterwards.
- The total cost of detention served by these youth at the time data were collected amounted to \$273,700. This figure uses the average daily cost of \$135.43 as provided by the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice. A few participants were serving extended detention or jail sentences at the time of this study, so total costs are still increasing as of this writing.
- Ankle monitoring for these youth cost \$7,236, assuming a cost of \$6 per day.

A link between truancy and delinquent activity is frequently assumed to exist, but little data are available to back up that assertion. Most research looks at the delinquent

population and discovers that they were frequently truant⁴. This study provides a rare look at a truant population, and asks about delinquency.

Juvenile justice records indicated that half the young people in our study had been arrested on criminal charges, in addition to truancy. Charges ranged from underage drinking – a status offense like truancy – to motor vehicle theft, felony assault and felony burglary. Three had faced drug charges. These numbers represent the low-end estimate of actual criminal activity since they

1	aggravated motor vehicle felony
1	assault
1	assault felony
2	assault misdemeanor
3	drugs
1	escape
1	false identity
2	felony burglary
1	felony theft
1	misdemeanor theft
2	motor vehicle theft
2	probation violations
1	runaway
1	theft misdemeanor
2	trespassing, tampering & criminal mischief
2	underage drinking
But 15 youth had no charges other than truancy or contempt of court in their records.	

measure only those incidents in which the youth were *caught*. In the survey completed anonymously by 25 of the study participants, eleven reported having had trouble with the police more than five times; five said they had had trouble 3 to 5 times; eight reported trouble once or twice. Only one reported that he had never had trouble with the police.

The survey also showed a link between substance use, theft, and carrying weapons. Seven youth indicated they take drugs or drink “almost every day” while two more do it at least once a week. Twelve, however, replied “hardly ever or never” to the substance use question. Notably, all the seven youth with frequent (more than once a

⁴ For recent studies linking school problems to delinquency see Baker et al., 2001; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001; Blum, Beuhring and Rinehart, 2000; Huizinga, et al., 2000; Loeber and Farrington, 2000; Loeber and Farrington, 1998; Fritsch, Caeti, and Taylor, 1999; Hill et al., 1999; Welsh, Jenkins, and Harris, 1999; Kelley et al., 1997. Huizinga, et al. and Huizinga, Loeber and Thornberry, 1994 report the results of the Denver Youth Survey, of particular interest to Colorado policy makers.

week) substance use reported having “taken something that does not belong to me or my family” either “3 to 5 times” or “more than 5 times.” In contrast, only two of the twelve who reported “hardly ever or never” taking drugs or drinking had stolen things that often. Seven youth reported that they skipped school in order to take drugs. Of greatest concern is the fact that 12 of the young people – almost half – reported having “carried a gun or other weapon” at least once. Whether the weapons are intended for offensive or defensive purposes, the statistic is indicative of a high potential for violence in these young people’s lives. Six admitted to having carried a weapon “more than 5 times,” and five of those six had stolen more than five times.

Truants as victims

The extent of delinquent behavior among this group is much less surprising when one considers the startling proportion who have also been victims. Juvenile justice records include data on out-of-home placements by child welfare, both in facilities and in foster care, and some records indicate that the children have been victims of abuse. Many of these young people have experienced tremendous difficulties in their home lives, and do not have positive role models at home. Although this is certainly not true for *all* the youth in our study, the problems are more pervasive than anyone would like, and the true extent of parental abuse and irresponsibility is probably underreported.

Table 9 shows that 12 of the 29 youth for whom we have juvenile records were placed out of the home by child welfare for an average of almost one year each. Stays ranged from 19 days to over 3 years. As shown in Table 10, comments were included in

the files of 14 youth⁵. Nine reported “abuse/neglect,” three stated “sexual abuse,” one listed “physical abuse,” and one said “abandonment.” Some children were victims of more than one of these abuses. Parental mental health was listed as a concern on three records, and two indicated that parents had problems with alcohol and drug abuse.

Placement	Number of Youth	Average Days	Longest Sentence in Days
Total out of home placements by child welfare	12	322	1,233
Foster Care (subset of above)	5	170	249

Number Of Youth	Characteristic
14	Total Number With Any Comments
9	Abuse/Neglect
3	Sexual Abuse
1	Physical Neglect
1	Abandonment
3	Parental Mental Health
2	Parental Alcohol/Drug Abuse
9	Child Emotional/Behavioral Concerns

⁵ We do not know why no comments appeared on the other files. Certainly, it could be because no special comments were warranted. However, it could also be due to sketchy reporting in data fields that are not mandatory, or to data loss during a switch to a new data management system.

The Denver tally

Early in 2003, Magistrate Furman of Denver made an informal tally of issues faced by the children he saw in one day of truancy court.

Although not intended to be part of this study, he shared his results (See Table 11). Almost half of the 40 cases heard that day had prior referrals to the Denver Department of Human Services, and about 30% were what the court calls BCOP cases, or Beyond Control of Parent. Four children were victims of parental neglect, and five of abandonment, which includes cases of parental

Issue	Cases
Domestic Violence	1
Child neglect	(4 total)
Medical	1
Lice	1
Special education needs unattended to	1
Poor supervision	1
Abandonment	(5 total)
Parent incarceration	3
Parent left child	2
Death of parent	1
Parent/guardian alcohol/substance use	3
Parent/guardian with health issues	2
Parent/guardian with mental health issues	1
Runaway/beyond control of parent	12
Child with serious mental health concerns	2
Child alcohol/substance use	5
School defiance	4
Gang involvement	1
On probation	2
Hickeys	2
Prior referrals to DDHS	18
Truancy only	3
Total cases heard	40

Source: Magistrate David Furman

incarceration. Some children were dealing with multiple problems, so the number of cases sums to more than 40. Only three cases involved no major, identifiable issue other than truancy.

Truants' emotional state

Several questions on the survey were designed to measure respondents' emotional state. Respondents were asked to assess, on a five-point scale, how often they felt sad or

lonely. Options were “never or almost never,” “some of the time,” “about half the time,” “most of the time,” or “always or almost always.” Responses were scored from one to five, with the most positive response – “never or almost never” – earning 5 points. The average score was 3.48 – not an overwhelmingly happy figure since a score of 3 only indicates being happy half the time. Respondents were also asked how often they felt good about their future, and were given the same set of response choices. Five points were given to the most positive response, in this case “always or almost always.” Again, responses were mixed, with an average score of only 3.36.

Under What Circumstances Do Magistrates Assign

Detention for Truants?

Most juvenile magistrates do not, as a rule, assign truant youth to detention. Those who do, assign it in a minority of cases. The four juvenile magistrates in the sample districts – those who most often impose detention – shared their rationale as to when, and under what circumstances, it is appropriate to send truants to juvenile detention. All four agreed that detention is a last resort when everything else has failed.

The court process

Court processes differ slightly across the four districts, but all involve multiple court visits. Generally, a petition hearing, or advisement, is a young person’s first visit to court under a new truancy case. If the youth pleads guilty to the charge of truancy, as most do, the magistrate generally issues a court order for the child to attend school. Once issued, that court order is good until the child is 16 years of age. If the youth denies the charges, a trial is held to determine guilt or innocence. A review may be scheduled

automatically, or may be held at the magistrate's discretion, depending on the judicial district. If a youth continues to be truant after a court order has been issued, a contempt hearing is held. At this point, the magistrate has the option of imposing a detention sentence. However, several reviews or contempt hearings are often held for the same student before detention is actually assigned. Detention center guards are always on hand during juvenile court; when a magistrate announces a detention sentence, the youth is handcuffed, led out of court, and delivered to the detention facility.

Most truants are NOT sent to detention

In different words, the four magistrates described similar reasons for sentencing truants to detention, or not. Specifically, magistrates explained that they do not send to detention those who are showing improvement, but will instead schedule another review. Age also plays a role. At 16 years of age, Colorado students can legally drop out of school, regardless of how few high school credits they have earned. Thus, when a 15-year-old is sent to truancy court, magistrates view it as their last chance to impact the child's behavior. Most of the sentences are of high school age youth, but some middle school children are also sent. Although magistrates reported being leery of sending a child to detention if they view the problem as residing with the parent, it is evident that many of the study participants did, in fact, have severely problematic home lives.

All four truancy court magistrates reported they use a detention sentence only as a last resort. Their sentencing options differ slightly, however, and they reported differing degrees of satisfaction with their choices. Magistrates frequently assign community service prior to assigning detention. They can impose curfews, require parents to accompany their children to school, suspend drivers' licenses, and in other ways be

creative in devising sentences that have no obvious cost attached to them. Ankle monitoring⁶ is the most intensive alternative to detention, but it is only available if there is a means to pay for it.

The magistrates all mentioned Senate Bill 94 funds – money earmarked for less expensive alternatives to detention with the specific goal of reducing the numbers of detained juveniles. In Denver and Pueblo, magistrates generally place truants on an ankle-monitor paid for by SB94 before actually making them spend time in detention. Technically however, a child must first be sentenced to detention – only then can he or she be put on a SB94 funded ankle monitor, *instead* of actually going to detention.

Although every Colorado judicial district receives SB94 money, each has imposed its own rules as to how the funds may be used. SB94 money does not cover ankle monitors for truants in Jefferson or Arapahoe Counties. Ankle monitoring is available in Jefferson County, but at \$6 per day most of the families cannot afford the accumulated cost, so the presiding judge does not assign it. (Note the cost comparison: \$6 per day for an ankle monitor, versus \$135 for detention.) The Arapahoe magistrate said, “We don’t have ankle monitors. There is no designated funding for truancy alternatives to detention. SB94 is for delinquency. We get some from the back door. Now that it’s been cut 35%, we won’t get any now.”

Some truants DO get detention

Magistrates spoke of four general reasons for assigning truants to detention: to deal with defiance, to scare them straight, to keep them safe, and most of all to access

⁶ By means of an electronic bracelet attached to the ankle, youths’ locations are tracked. If they go out of bounds, staff members know they have violated program regulations. Sometimes, however, young people cut off the monitors, making themselves good candidates for detention.

resources on behalf of the youth. Occasionally a youth expresses open defiance, both toward school and toward the court. “The kids who get sentenced to detention are so defiant, what else are you going to do?” said one magistrate. Using almost exactly the same words, another said, “It’s more the defiant kids that may not be committing crimes but are still behavior issues. ... When we’ve done everything else, what else can we do?”

Sometimes detention is assigned to young people in order to “get their attention” as one magistrate put it. “I’ll sentence 45 days to detention, and the GAL (guardian ad litem) knows to bring it back in a week for reconsideration.” Another said, “There are some kids who cry and plead with the SB94 people to get them out of detention. Those kids you have to get out fast, because if they stay there a week they figure out is isn’t so bad.” Expressing a similar sentiment, another said, “Some [kids] are really scared of detention and we try to keep it that way. It can be horrific if it’s overcrowded, but it’s not so bad if it isn’t and they get in a good pod⁷ and they go to school while they’re there.” .

Two magistrates talked specifically about keeping young people safe from themselves. One said, “Those that get detention are those for whom all other options have failed, or those whose other behaviors are going to get them in more trouble – often drug use.” Later s/he said, “I’ll put them in there until they’re sober enough to know what’s happening, or even keep them alive. It’s treatment in and of itself.” It is unclear how safe youth in detention actually are from substance use, however. Several youth who completed their written surveys from within a facility wrote that they drank or took drugs almost every day. Nine of the ten youth in focus groups confirmed that drugs are

⁷ The detained population is divided into ‘pods’ or small groups for purposes of monitoring. Youth live, eat, and go to school with the other members of their pod.

readily available in detention, and one freely described how her friends had smuggled drugs to her.

Mostly, magistrates spoke of detention as a means to access resources for the youth, some of which come from SB94 funds. A magistrate said, “We almost always do something with a SB94 ankle monitor. Sometimes I use a 45-day sentence to max out SB94 resources. You have to sentence a kid to detention in order to access SB94, and that comes with a bunch of services. They might call every morning to wake a kid up. They might give him a ride to school. There are a number of ways to work the system, and if you don’t know them, you don’t get maximum benefits.” Another said he/she assigns detention if a child “...probably has a serious drug or alcohol problem and that’s the only way to get an assessment. Sometimes it’s the only way to get services.”

Magistrates all expressed dismay over the difficulty of getting social services such as substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment⁸ and family counseling for truant youth. One magistrate said, “We have many mental health cases. If we had more services we wouldn’t get to contempt. Most of our clients are very poor.” Another commented,

“We had a good evaluator from SB94 who could identify needs, but we couldn’t order [the assessment] and our parents can’t afford it. We can order social services to do a review, but they don’t always provide services. We can complain about Human Services, and I do, but they’re under-funded too, and they don’t have the resources.”

Yet another said, “We had to put great pressure on the Department of Human Services. We had to order them into cases. They have to make ‘Sophie’s choices’ all the time.”

⁸ For a summary of mental health needs among the juvenile population in Colorado, see Colorado Children’s Campaign, April 2002.

Although it was not a specific topic in the interviews, one magistrate hinted that the financial choices being made may not be cost effective. “Dependency and neglect cases are down, money for detention is down, money for ankle monitoring is down. They all shift to the detention docket for crimes. It just shifts.”

Heroics

The night was miserable – temperatures in the high 30s and drizzling. Well after the focus group began a 14-year-old boy entered, rain dripping from his windbreaker. After getting off work, he had ridden his bicycle for miles through city streets after dark in the rain in order to attend the focus group and collect his \$20. Afterwards, he borrowed my cell phone, called his mother, and gave her driving directions so that she could give him a ride home. I had done the same thing for her on the phone earlier that afternoon.

Did Outcomes Improve Following Detention?

What school records show

Academic data were difficult to collect. Most schools purge all but basic grade information at the end of each academic year. Schools, and even district records offices, were able to provide only scanty information about attendance, behavioral incidents, and even grades. However, three tentative conclusions stand out. First, school absences have obviously been interfering with these students’ academic accomplishment; most have earned such poor grades that they have accumulated few high school credits. Second, there is no evidence that detention improved either attendance or grades for any of the 30 participants. The third finding is a surprise; it appears that only three students dropped out upon turning 16, one of whom subsequently returned to school. The great mystery of this study is not why these youth have had such poor attendance, but, given their poor attendance and grades, why they are still in school at all.

No grade information was available on nine of the 30 participants. Of the 21 students for whom at least one grade was available, only eight had achieved at least one “C” average, and only three had earned at least one “B” average. Five were designated as special education students, yet there may be other such designations that we do not know about, and others still who *should* have the designation but do not.

One goal of this study was to be able to compare grades and attendance before and after the detention stay to see if either improved. Given the sparsity of academic data available, one cannot draw solid conclusions about the relationship between detention and academic accomplishment. Attendance data were available before and after detention for only six students. Of these, three improved their attendance, there was no difference for two more students, and the attendance of one youth worsened. The one participant whose attendance improved dramatically is a special education student who switched to a vocational program.

The before-and-after comparison yielded similar results regarding grades. Grade point averages were available from both periods for only ten youth, making these results inconclusive as well. In seven of the ten cases there was no improvement, one student’s grades worsened, and two students’ grades improved. Of these two, however, one improvement was short-lived, lasting for only one quarter before dropping again. The other student’s improvement followed her detention sentence, but also corresponded to a change in school⁹. Four additional students who had no grades available before the detention sentence had averages below a “C” afterwards. Even those low grades may represent improvement, but not the sort that can be expected to lead to better life chances

⁹ For a study of the effectiveness of alternative high schools such as the one this student transferred to, see Richards, 2004.

in the years ahead. If one assumes that both attendance and grades would have continued to worsen over time as students fall further behind, then these results underestimate the positive effect of detention. Although such a scenario is likely, it is still clear that detention was not a cure-all for anyone whose grades were reported in this study. Although the small sample prevents us from concluding that detention is ineffective to raise attendance and grades, this study provides no evidence that it does result in improvements.

Later in the story...

Although attendance and grades did not seem to improve immediately after detention, that is not to say that academics are over for all, or even most, study participants. Written questionnaires provided a more optimistic picture of academic outcomes. Five of the 30 youth who completed surveys indicated that they had either graduated from high school or earned a GED. One wrote in the margins “I graduated and will attend college in 2004!” Although only three survey completers were less than 16 years old, fourteen respondents indicated they were still in school between 9th and 12th grade, and two more were in un-graded programs. Thirteen respondents were in some sort of school despite being old enough to drop out legally. Only four of 25 respondents indicated they had dropped out. Although transcripts showed no particular

More Heroics

Sandra is a 16-year-old who has lived with her grandmother since her mother died, and who cares for her little brother and her new baby. After dropping out for a while, she enrolled her baby in the daycare program offered at her public high school, and took up her studies again last fall. Her transcript shows that attending school full time, and caring for her baby, Sandra earned a 4.0 GPA last semester.

improvements, it could be either that the data were too sparse or that improvements did not occur until long after the sampled detention sentence occurred.

On the written questionnaire, participants were asked to compare their pre-detention and their current school behavior. (See Appendix B for the complete survey.)

Fifteen participants said they were still in school and answered the questions (see Table

12). Based on a five-point scale, respondents reported at least some improvement in school attendance, study and homework habits, and the frequency with which they get

Table 12 Most respondents reported an improvement in school related behavior.	
Compared to before detention, respondents said...	Average score. 1 = change for the worse 3 = no change 5 = desirable change
I now go to school ...	4.3
I now study and do homework ...	3.9
I now get help with schoolwork from a tutor or teacher ...	3.4
I now like school ...	3.0
Now my grades are ...	4.1

help with homework. However, they did not report liking school any more than they used to. Of most importance, participants reported earning slightly better grades. Six reported they have much better grades, but two reported their grades are a little worse.

Table 13 Most respondents reported an improvement in attitudes and behavior.	
Compared to before detention, how likely are respondents to...	Average score. 1 = change for the worse 3 = no change 5 = desirable change
feel good about my future	3.9
talk to my parents	4.0
smoke, get drunk, and/or use drugs	3.7
get in a fistfight	4.2
graduate from high school	4.0
feel sad or lonely	3.5
get in trouble with the police	4.4
lose my temper	3.8

The survey also included a series of questions about attitudinal and behavioral changes since their detention experience (see Table 13).

Again, 1 indicates the *least* and 5 indicates the *most* desirable

response. Since it is doubtful that respondents, particularly given their young age, could tease out all the reasons behind changes in attitudes, the question was not phrased to ask

whether changes occurred specifically as a result of detention. Reported differences could be due to other factors including increased maturity gained over the two years since detention. On average, respondents reported an improvement in every area they were queried on. Averages hide the fact that for each question, a few respondents reported a worsening of their attitude or behavior; nonetheless, no one reported an across-the-board worsening of all situations.

Truants evaluate detention

Was it detention that caused these improvements? The survey asked respondents to think about whether they were better off in some way for having spent time in detention. The question was phrased, “Thinking honestly about my future, because of going to detention I am: much better off, a little better off, unaffected, a little worse off, or much worse off.” Results were mixed, although they tended slightly toward the positive. Ten said detention had no affect on them. Three said they were a little worse off, and another three said they were much worse off. But five said they were a little better off, and four said they were much better off. Those four reported having served much shorter than average sentences – 6.25 days as compared to an average of 32.4 days – probably because they improved their behavior quickly and thereby avoided long sentences.

This *may* mean that if detention is going to help, it will do so right away. On the other hand, one might argue that by definition truants do not understand what will be good for them in the long run. It is unclear whether they have the maturity or the hindsight needed to answer the question accurately; their views about the effect of detention could continue to change over time.

Table 14 compares the responses of youth to a number of survey questions according to whether they felt they were better off, unaffected, or worse off as a result of their detention sentence. Most of the scores are based on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 was assigned to the most desirable response. Several questions, marked with an asterisk, were based on a 1 to 4 scale. Because of the small number of youth in each category, these results must be viewed as exploratory; no definite conclusions regarding group differences should be drawn. Nonetheless, the pattern of responses is consistent enough to make the findings interesting and worthy of consideration.

The youth who feel they benefited from detention are on average one year older than those who feel they are worse off. This may reflect the fact that age brings maturity. Perhaps those who feel they suffered as a result of detention will change their minds as they mature. On the other hand, it may mean that sentencing older students to detention can be expected to have a more positive effect than sentencing younger ones. This interpretation would be consistent with the assumption that older children are better able to grasp the consequences of their behavior, and have more control over their own school attendance choices.

Those who feel they benefited from detention reported having spent only 18.3 days in detention, compared to 44.4 days for those who felt unaffected and 37.7 who felt worse off – a large difference consistent with their reports of having had fewer problems with the police, less frequent substance use, and fewer instances of theft. They are also more likely to feel good about their future. This finding may indicate that detention is more likely to benefit those whose overall behavior is not too serious.

Table 14			
Youth who feel they benefited from detention compared to those who feel they are worse off. Higher scores indicate more positive responses on a scale of 1 to 5.			
	9 Feel They Benefited	10 Were Unaffected	6 Feel They Are Worse Off
Average age	17.6	17	16.6
Number of days spent in detention	18.3	44.4	37.7
<i>Detention benefited kids with better behaviors.</i>			
Frequency up until now:			
I have had trouble with the police*	2.4	1.9	1.3
I take drugs or drink	3.9	3.6	2.8
I have taken something that does not belong to me*	2.9	2.5	2.2
I have carried a gun or other weapon*	3.3	2.5	3.3
I feel good about my future	3.9	3.3	2.7
I feel sad or lonely	3.4	3.7	3.2
<i>Benefiting and graduating go together.</i>			
Number who already graduated	3	2	0
Number still in school	5	5	6
Number who dropped out	1	3	0
<i>School related behavior is unexpected.</i>			
For those still in school, compared to before detention:			
I go to school	4.2	3.8	4.7
I study and do homework	3.8	3.8	4.0
I get help with schoolwork	3.6	3.0	3.7
I like school	3.2	2.5	3.2
I get better grades	4.0	3.8	4.3
I get along with my parents	4.2	3.9	3.3
* These scales were 1 to 4 only, where 4 was the most desirable response.			

The relationship between the effect of detention, school enrollment, and graduation is curious. Those who feel they benefited are more likely to have graduated, which is what we might expect. Three of the four dropouts feel unaffected by the detention experience, which also makes sense – they dropped out anyway. However, none of the youth who feel they are worse off as a result of detention have dropped out of school despite the fact that only one was under 16 at the time of survey participation. This fact is difficult to interpret. Do they feel pressured by detention and the truancy

court to remain in school until they get a degree, even though they do not want to be there? If that is the case, even though *the youth* may not feel they are better off, *society* would say they are much better off. An alternative explanation might be that they have always desired an education, but feel highly uncomfortable in their standard schools, a situation which detention cannot improve. Or perhaps, the finding is the anomalous result of a small sample size.

How Effective Does Detention Have to Be?

How often does detention need to change behavior in order to conclude that it is a valuable tool? In monetary terms, a study by the RAND Corporation shows that the average high school dropout costs over \$200,000 in current dollars in lost income tax revenue, increased social expenditures, and most distressingly, increased incarceration costs (Vernez, Krop and Rydell, 2000). Note that the cost of one high school dropout is not much less than the \$273,700 total detention center charges incurred by the entire participant group. Add to that the fact that in human terms, the difficulties many of these youth are setting themselves up to encounter are immeasurable. Although detention is expensive compared to other sentencing alternatives, it is still minimal compared to letting a child slip through the cracks and drop out of school. It is hard, therefore, to make a financial case against the use of detention for truancy. Detention is not too expensive an option. Of more concern is the fact that some youth believe they are worse off as a result of detention. Although magistrates use detention only for the youth they believe will benefit from it, they have little or no hard evidence describing the characteristics of those youth.

The magistrates interviewed for this study care deeply about the children they see in court, and believe in the value of what they do. One magistrate listed some successes. “We sent a girl to jail for 1 ½ weeks, and she got it. Now she and Dad are in therapy and her life is turned around. A mom said ‘thanks, I got my daughters back.’ Another mom went back to school after seeing her son go through this.” Yet even these successes may have had more to do with the services truancy court was able to access for the families than with the detention experience.

Is There a Deterrent Effect to Detention?

Another reason often cited for using detention for truant youth is its deterrent effect. The greatest effect of detention may be on other young people who, realizing that detention is a possibility, improve their school attendance in order to avoid it. One magistrate said, “The other reason [to use detention] is to try to affect other kids in court. It has more effect on other kids than on the kids who get sent. Those who get sent are so hardcore. I ask the kids who improve why, and they say they don’t want to go to [detention].” Ideally, we would have held focus groups and done surveys with a second set of youth who were sent to truancy court, but who subsequently improved their attendance to the point that detention was not needed. However, the limited resources made that second study prohibitive.

Instead, we attempted to quantitatively measure the deterrent effect of detention. Using school district data from the Colorado Department of Education, and the number of detentions by school district from the Division of Youth Corrections, we correlated

detentions per school district with attendance rates¹⁰. We hypothesized that a positive correlation – meaning the higher the number of detentions, the higher the attendance rate – would indicate a real deterrent effect. However, since most young people attend school regularly regardless of court policies, even a real effect may be too small to measure, so we assumed that the lack of a significant correlation would be inconclusive. The correlation was insignificant at $P = .004$, and showed no effect; therefore, the quantitative study was inconclusive.

The issue of deterrence was addressed in the focus groups. With one exception, all focus group participants had been told that they could be sent to detention for continued truancy. None said it made a difference in their behavior. Moreover, few said that spending time in detention made anything but a short-term difference in their school attendance. One girl said, “The day after I got out of detention I skipped school,” and she laughed. “It wasn’t that bad. You get three meals and it’s safe.”

Nonetheless, survey respondents want overwhelmingly to avoid future detention sentences, and are optimistic about their ability to do so. Twenty-one reported they would be “very unhappy” if they were sent back to detention or jail, and no one said they would be happy to go back. The survey also asked how respondents viewed their chances of being sent to detention or jail again. Fifteen indicated the chances were “very low,” and six more indicated “low.” Three thought they had a 50% chance of another sentence, while only one thought his chances were “very high.” This view is congruent

¹⁰ Unexcused absences could be the result of several factors other than court detention policies, such as the economic status of the student body, and the safety of the school environment, so we controlled for these factors. We also controlled for size of the school district by dividing the number of detentions per district by the number of middle and high schools in the district. We summed the number of detentions across three school years – 1999-2000 through 2001-2002 – to use a more representative number of detentions and maximize the probability of finding an effect.

with the fact that twenty of 25 respondents indicated they are now less likely to do something that could get them in trouble with the police than they were before detention.

Will their future behavior be good enough to keep them out of detention? Their optimism does not jibe with the fact that most of them have already had more than one detention stay, so there is no particular reason to believe that detention will suddenly end for the 21 respondents who believe more detention is unlikely. Nor is their optimism congruent with respondents' reports of current substance use, itself an illegal activity that could land them back in detention. Despite good intentions, these youth may not know how to stay out of trouble, and may not have the supervision they need to help them.

Conclusion

A colorful and poignant picture of 30 youth who spent time in detention for violating court orders to attend school has emerged from this study. Overwhelming evidence shows that truancy is by no means the only problem in the lives of these young people. A distressing number of these children have been the victims of abuse and have been temporarily removed from their homes by child welfare agencies. Many have been involved in criminal activities and have served multiple detention sentences for truancy and delinquency. A high proportion has substance abuse issues, and frequency of substance use seems to be associated with other delinquent activities.

Detention does not appear to have been an easy fix for any of the study participants. From the sparse school records collected, no one's attendance or grades improved markedly following detention. Most of the young people in this study served more detention time in the years following the study period. Therefore, when a

magistrate assigns a juvenile his or her first detention sentence, it is likely to be the first of several.

Nonetheless, according to self-reports of their own well-being, detention does appear to have had a positive effect on a minority of youth. Given the cost of high school failure – over \$200,000 per dropout – detention does not need to turn many children around to be cost effective. Yet, it is worrisome that some youth feel they are *worse* off as a result of detention. In the long run, they may be mistaken, but care needs to be taken to avoid doing more damage to these young people.

We do not yet know enough about the characteristics of youth who are likely to benefit from detention versus those who are not. This is an important area for further research so that judicial districts may make the best policy decisions, and juvenile judges may make the best sentencing choices. Preliminary evidence from this study indicates that youth whose other behaviors are less serious are most likely to be “scared straight” by a brief detention sentence. However, that begs the question of what to do with children whose behavior *is* serious.

There is an important point of agreement among magistrates who unambiguously cited a lack of mental health and social services available to truant youth as a major problem. They all feel that detention sentences could be avoided were more services available. Given that over \$270,000 have been spent so far on detention for this small group of children, a diversion of resources in favor of social services may be appropriate.

In fact, one of the most common reasons that magistrates sentence youth to detention is in order to access services. As such, detention is often assigned not for its own sake, but as a back door method of getting help for youth. When what a judge *really*

wants is mental health treatment or help from a social worker, efficiency would certainly be served by making that possible without a circuitous and expensive route through a detention center.

The greatest surprise from this study is the fact that so many of these youth are still in school despite having turned sixteen. Yet, it is not clear *why* they are still in school. The finding could simply result from sample bias; perhaps youth who felt more successful academically were more likely to participate. At any rate, it does not appear that detention itself motivated these young people to consider their futures and improve their behavior. Nonetheless, some other aspect of the truancy courts or the services they order could be making a difference. Several other hypotheses are plausible as well. Perhaps the crisis of detention served as a louder wake-up call for parents than for their children and prompted better communication. Possibly, deep down these youth want an education, but something about their lives or their school has made getting one very difficult. Perhaps they simply need to mature, and time, rather than any particular intervention is needed. The question is a tantalizing one that highlights a need for further research.

In fairness to the truancy courts and the strong convictions of the magistrates interviewed, it is possible that this sample is simply not big enough to have picked up any cases of dramatic turnarounds following detention. The fact that these youth are still in school could be evidence of an impressive joint accomplishment by truancy court personnel and the service providers they access. Either way, the talents, admirable qualities, and untapped potential of these young people make them deserving of better answers than we currently have, and more services than are currently funded.

Appendix A: Detention Admissions by Judicial District

Judicial District And Associated Counties	Total Number of Detention Admissions between FY 99- 00 and 01-02*	Cumulative Percent of Statewide Admissions
18 - Arapahoe	418	56.7
2 - Denver	100	70.3
1 - Jefferson	100	83.9
10 - Pueblo	80	94.7
11 - Chafee, Custer, Freemont, Park	10	96.1
20 - Boulder	7	97.0
16 - Bent, Crowley, Otero	5	97.7
19 - Weld	5	98.4
12 - Alamosa, Conejos, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache	4	98.9
17 - Adams	4	99.5
15 - Cheyenne, Kiowa	2	99.7
6 - Archuleta, La Plata, San Juan	1	99.9
4 - El Paso	1	100.0
3 - Las Animas	0	
5 - Eagle, Clear Creek, Lake, Summit	0	
7 - Delta, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel	0	
8 - Jackson, Larimer	0	
9 - Garfield, Rio Blanco	0	
13 - Kit Carson, Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, Yuma	0	
14 - Moffat, Routt	0	
21 - Mesa	0	
22 - Dolores, Montezuma	0	

* FY 01-02 data are estimated.

Appendix B: School Attendance Questionnaire

School Attendance Questionnaire (Colorado Foundation for Families and Children) Thanks for filling this out honestly!

I. This section asks for some background about you.

- I am male female.
- I am _____ years old.
- I am now in: **(Check one.)**

<input type="checkbox"/> 6 th grade	<input type="checkbox"/> 11 th grade
<input type="checkbox"/> 7 th grade	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 th grade
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 th grade	<input type="checkbox"/> I am in an un-graded school program
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 th grade	<input type="checkbox"/> I dropped out of school
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 th grade	<input type="checkbox"/> I graduated from high school (or GED)
- How do you describe yourself? **(Check as many as you want.)**

<input type="checkbox"/> White/Caucasian	<input type="checkbox"/> Native American
<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino(a)	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
- Not counting other kids, I live with my: **(Check all that apply.)**

<input type="checkbox"/> Mother	<input type="checkbox"/> Stepfather
<input type="checkbox"/> Father	<input type="checkbox"/> Grandparent
<input type="checkbox"/> Stepmother	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: List

- Have any of the adults that you live with, or used to live with, been convicted of a crime?
 Yes No Unsure
- Have any of the young people you live with been to detention or jail?
 Yes No Unsure



II. Please think about when you went to detention for skipping school.

8. I served about _____ days in detention for skipping school.
(write in number)

9. I served about _____ days on an ankle monitor or other alternative to detention.
(write in number)

10. I didn't go to school because:

Choose up to three reasons:

_____ It was too hard

_____ I didn't like my teachers

_____ I didn't like the other kids

_____ I was busy working

_____ I had to take care of my
brother, sister, grandparent,
etc.

_____ I was sick and didn't have a doctor

_____ It's a waste of time

_____ Trouble with transportation

_____ Nobody cared if I went

_____ Other (write in) _____

Circle the best answer.

11. Compared to going to school, detention was:

Much better

A little better

About the same

A little worse

Much worse

12. Thinking honestly about my future, because of going to detention I am:

Much
better off

A little
better off

Not
affected

A little
worse off

Much
worse off



III. Circle the best answer.



13. I have had trouble with the police:
 More than 5 times 3 to 5 times Once or twice Never
14. I take drugs or drink:
 Almost every day A few times a week About once a week About once a month Hardly ever or never
15. I have taken something that does not belong to me or to my family:
 More than 5 times 3 to 5 times Once or twice Never
16. I have carried a gun or other weapon:
 More than 5 times 3 to 5 times Once or twice Never
17. I feel good about my future:
 Almost always Most of the time About half the time Once in a while Almost never
18. I feel sad or lonely:
 Almost always Most of the time About half the time Once in a while Almost never
19. I think the chances that I will be sent to detention (or jail) again some time are:
 Very high High 50% Low Very low
20. If I am sent to detention (or jail) again I will:
 Be very unhappy Be a little unhappy Not care Be a little happy Be very happy



IV. This section is about what you do now, compared to the months before you went to detention.

Circle the best answer.

Compared to before I went to detention...

21. ... I now go to school:

Much more often A little more often Just as often A little less often Much less often

I am not in school



22. ... I now study and do homework:

Much more often A little more often Just as often A little less often Much less often

I am not in school

23. ... I now get help with schoolwork from a tutor or teacher:

Much more often A little more often Just as often A little less often Much less often

I am not in school

24. ... I now like school:

Much more A little more Just as much A little less Much less

I am not in school

25. ... now my grades are:

Much better A little better Just the same A little worse Much worse

I am not in school

26. ... I now help out at home:

Much more often A little more often Just as often A little less often Much less often

I never help at home

27. ... I now work for pay:

Much more often A little more often Just as often A little less often Much less often

I never work for pay

28. ... I now participate in after-school activities or sports:

Much more often A little more often Just as often A little less often Much less often

I never do after school activities

29. ... I now get along with my parents (or guardians):

Much better A little better The same A little worse Much worse

I hardly ever see my parents or guardians

V. This is about your opinions, compared to before you went to detention.

Check the best box.

Compared to before I went to detention, I am now ...

- | | <i>Much more likely</i> | <i>A little more likely</i> | <i>Equally likely or unlikely</i> | <i>A little less likely</i> | <i>Much less likely</i> | |
|-----|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 30. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ... to feel good about my future. |
| 31. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ... to talk to my parents (or guardians) about important things. |
| 32. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ... to smoke cigarettes, get drunk, and/or use drugs. |
| 33. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ... to get in a fistfight. |
| 34. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ... to graduate from high school. |
| 35. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ... to feel sad or lonely. |
| 36. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ... to do something that could get me in trouble with the police. |
| 37. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ... to lose my temper. |



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