

An Assessment of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court

**Iowa Department of Human Rights
Division of Criminal & Juvenile Justice Planning &
Statistical Analysis Center**

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Introduction

The Case for a Juvenile Drug Court

The juvenile court traditionally has been considered an institution specifically established to address the juvenile's needs holistically. However, many juvenile court practitioners have found the conventional approach to be ineffective when applied to the problems of juvenile substance-abusing offenders.¹ During the past several years, a number of jurisdictions have looked to the experiences of adult drug courts to determine how juvenile courts might adapt to deal with the increasing population of substance-abusing juveniles more effectively.

Development of juvenile drug courts is proving to be a much more complex task than development of adult drug courts. Juvenile drug courts require the involvement of more agencies and community representatives than adult drug courts. Among the unique challenges presented are:²

- ❑ Developing strategies to motivate juvenile offenders to change. Juvenile substance abusers often lack the “hitting the bottom” motivation that adult long-term substance abusers experience and often respond to in their recovery process. Juvenile offenders also frequently present a sense of invulnerability and a lack of maturity, and are at different developmental stages.
- ❑ Counteracting the negative influence of peers, gangs, and family members;
- ❑ Adequately addressing the needs of the family, especially families with substance abuse problems, some of which may have gone on for generations;
- ❑ Complying with confidentiality requirements for juvenile proceeding while at the same time obtaining necessary information to meaningfully address the juvenile's problems and progress; and
- ❑ Responding to the numerous developmental changes that occur in the lives of the juveniles while they are under the court's jurisdictions.

The development of juvenile drug courts has, therefore, required special strategies to address these and other issues that emerged during the course of program planning and implementation. While the hallmark of juvenile drug courts operating to date has been flexibility, the following characteristics are common to their approaches:

- ❑ Earlier and more comprehensive intake assessments;

¹ “Juvenile and Family Drug Courts: an Overview,” the Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project. Report prepared by the Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project at the American University, Washington, DC.

² Ibid.

- ❑ Greater focus on the functioning of the family, as well as the juvenile and/or parent, throughout the period of participation in the drug court program;
- ❑ Closer integration of the information obtained during the intake and assessment process with subsequent decisions made in the case;
- ❑ Greater coordination among the court, the treatment community, the school system, and other community agencies in responding to the needs of the juvenile, the family, and the court;
- ❑ More active and continuous judicial supervision of both the juvenile and/or family member's progress in treatment and compliance with other program conditions and the various treatment and other rehabilitation services being provided;
- ❑ Immediate judicial use of both sanctions applied for noncompliance and incentives to recognize progress by the juvenile and the family.

History & Development of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court

In 1994, Polk County established a Community Prevention Policy Board to serve as an advisory board for the Juvenile Crime Prevention Community Grant (JCPCG) that Polk County received from 1995 to 2000. The Community Prevention Policy Board is a fifty member planning organization that now oversees six major grant programs.³ In the beginning of 1999, the Community Prevention Policy Board expanded its responsibilities to develop and oversee a juvenile drug court and develop criteria for admission. In doing so, the Community Prevention Policy Board created a planning group for a juvenile drug court that included representatives from the juvenile justice system, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, nonprofit human service agencies, and other key community members.

During this same period (the late 1990s), a “Comprehensive Strategy” for Polk County youth was initiated.⁴ This complementary effort established a list of the most pervasive risk indicators in Polk County: family management problems, the availability of drugs, academic failure in school, extreme economic deprivation and community disconnectedness. These risk factors have been found to have a high correlation to adolescent problems (i.e., substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and violence). The Comprehensive Strategy identified gaps in services among providers, including the juvenile justice system. Youth leaving substance abuse treatment were identified as needing more programming for aftercare. It was hypothesized that youth

³ The Community Prevention Policy Board now oversees the Decat Planning and Development Committee, the Juvenile Justice Youth Development Grant Funds (Juvenile Crime Prevention Community Grant and the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant), the Juvenile Drug Court Grant, the Community Connections Collaboration, the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Chronic & Violent Juvenile Offenders, and the Empowerment initiative.

⁴ Polk County was one of six sites selected in Iowa as a part of the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention's Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders.

have a greater chance at maintaining their sobriety if they have been involved in an aftercare program for at least 12 months following discharge from a treatment program. The juvenile justice system was identified in the Comprehensive Strategy to plan a system of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives that provide for delinquency prevention and immediate interventions. It was anticipated that a drug court would increase the likelihood of a favorable outcome for each youth by building protective factors based on engaging the families, peer groups, schools, and communities.

The Polk County Community Prevention Policy Committee (which was responsible for the planning and development of the Polk County juvenile drug court) identified four **primary objectives: young offenders stay clean and sober, do well in school, do well at home, and have a job if school is going well.** The Polk County juvenile drug court was designed to blend existing treatment components with judicial monitoring, immediate consequences, intensive probation supervision, and lengthy aftercare.

In the summer of 1999, Polk County was awarded a contract for a juvenile drug court. The award was funded under the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG) program administered by the Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP). In its role as grant manager, CJJP has been providing technical assistance to the Polk County program concerning fiscal matters, operational issues, and data management and reporting. A desire of the juvenile drug court director was to utilize a computerized case planning system. CJJP examined two juvenile drug court computerized case planning systems that were being used at that time in New York. Both of these systems required an extensive training regimen and fairly substantial access fees. However, limited funds necessitated the creation of a local information system. As such, CJJP worked with the director of the drug court to identify the elements, database structure, and other related components.⁵

Evaluation & Research

To provide information concerning the effectiveness of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court (PCJDC), CJJP sought and received funding from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). These funds were combined with money from other sources to help support CJJP's efforts. Upon receipt of such funding, CJJP began implementing several different research strategies including a review of relevant documents, informal interviews, observations, and the gathering of participant-specific information from case files and case manager notebooks. One of the first activities undertaken was a review of the grant applications, quarterly reports, program forms, and documents describing the development of the PCJDC, the referral process, the program, aftercare, and other aspects of the PCJDC. Also early in the process CJJP conducted informal interviews with the juvenile drug court judge, the juvenile drug court officer (JDCO), the juvenile court case

⁵ The drug court currently only has two computers in its offices, neither of which is connected to other juvenile court service computers or each other. A part-time administrative assistant was employed to enter data from written case manager sheets into the computer database and to provide other clerical duties.

managers, a representative from Employee and Family Resources (EFR), and officials from the most frequently used treatment centers and other community resources.

CJJP conducted observations of staffings and drug court sessions to both be able to better understand the program and to describe these activities. CJJP also gathered participant-specific information from case files and case manager notebooks (containing information on weekly activities and case worker contacts). Select information was also collected on those individuals referred to the program but who were not admitted. A comparison of these data is presented toward the end of this report.

The intent of this report is to describe the PCJDC, its components, the drug court team, related community resources, and the juvenile offenders. There is also a section describing ongoing monitoring and evaluation issues, which may be particularly relevant to Polk County officials and the PCJDC team. It is hoped that the information contained in this report will be useful to the juvenile court in its planning and administrative decisions as well as to other concerned individuals and agencies. It is also hoped that such information will be useful to other communities as they wrestle with gaps in juvenile justice services and ponder the need for juvenile drug courts and graduated sanctions such as these employed in this drug court.

Polk County Juvenile Drug Court Overview

Juvenile drug courts are a relatively new concept in Iowa, with the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court being only one of three currently in operation in the State.⁶ However, several communities have begun planning or have expressed interest in developing juvenile drug courts. The activities and services that make the PCJDC different from other juvenile court services or other available interventions are:

Frequency of Court Sessions – court is held once a week except in rare instances. During the first phase of the program, participants are expected to attend court weekly. As participants progress through the program the frequency of attendance may decrease to once every two or three weeks. Detention hearings and adjudication hearings are scheduled on an as needed basis.

A Team Approach – the PCJDC team consists of an associate juvenile court judge, a juvenile drug court officer, three case managers, a public defender, and an assistant county attorney. The team works together in a non-adversarial manner to provide the appropriate intervention for youths in overcoming their addictions and reducing their involvement in criminal activity.

Relationship Between Participants & Judge – the PCJDC allows for a closer relationship between the participants and judge than traditional court venues. The frequency of court sessions and the team approach allow the judge to play more of a mentoring and monitoring role. During weekly court sessions the judge spends a good deal of time directly “counseling” and mentoring each participant.

Referral

The Polk County Attorney’s Office received \$250,000 in July of 1999 for a juvenile drug court.⁷ Initially the referral process involved direct referrals from various sources (e.g., law enforcement agencies, treatment providers, and juvenile court). All of the referrals now flow through either juvenile court services or the drug court judge. The main criteria that the PCJDC uses in selecting its clients are that the juveniles:

- ❑ Have been referred to juvenile court for committing a delinquent act,
- ❑ Have a history of drug and alcohol abuse,

⁶ At the time of this report there were three juvenile drug courts operating in the state of Iowa (Woodbury County, Marshall County, and Polk County).

⁷ The PCJDC received \$249,476 the first year of operation and \$268,000 the second and third year from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention’s Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant Fund, administered by the Iowa Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning. The PCJDC is currently in its third and final year of funding through this grant fund.

- ❑ Have family support,
- ❑ Need more intensive supervision than is otherwise available to juvenile probationers,
- ❑ **Cannot** have had a sex offense,
- ❑ Have **not** been determined to be dangerous or exhibit anti-social behavior (those who have been referred to juvenile court with a prior or pending violent offense are assessed on a case-by-case basis),
- ❑ Are **not** known drug dealers.

In making the decision, whether to accept someone or not, the Juvenile Drug Court Officer (JDCO) may rely on information submitted by a variety of different entities including juvenile court officers, school officials, the county attorney, treatment providers, and others.⁸ The JDCO often receives and reviews substance abuse assessments, mental health assessments and other relevant information. Most participants receive a substance abuse assessment upon referral to PCJDC, unless they have had one from a certified substance abuse assessment center, professional or treatment facility within the past year. New Assessments may be ordered upon acceptance for those who did not receive a new one at referral.

Family support is considered to be an essential element in the successful completion of participants. If the family support is not present, the court will often recommend other services such as residential substance abuse treatment. Families are invited and strongly encouraged to attend court sessions, A.A. meetings, graduations and other PCJDC functions. The families are considered to be an ally to the case managers in the successful completion of the program. Home visits and collateral checks with parents to verify statements by the participant appear to be an integral part of the program.

The ultimate decision to accept someone into the program is typically made by the JDCO in consultation with the Judge, except in situations in which the judge brings a case before the court via the issuance of a court order. Upon admission to PCJDC, youths enter into a contract for participation in juvenile drug court, which is signed in the judge's presence. The original attorney of record for the young offender withdraws as counsel and the drug court public defender assumes representation.

Offenders accepted into PCJDC may have a formal disposition that identifies PCJDC as one of the conditions of the court order. In other cases, the disposition hearing may be waived for six months and the offender enters into a consent decree that may be renewed for an additional six-months depending on progress.

⁸ The term "Juvenile Drug Court Officer" was coined by the evaluators to distinguish the juvenile court officer from other juvenile court officers within juvenile court services.

The drug court program is a structured system of graduated sanctions and immediate interventions, including incentives. Drug court participants undergo monitoring and are sometimes subjected to house arrest or electronic monitoring.

Program Phases

Upon admission to the program, participants are assigned a case manager who supervises them, monitors their progress and compliance with program rules, and guides them through a series of phases. The program was designed to include three phases, with a fourth designed for stabilization in the community when a participant reaches the completion of the program. The phases were originally designed to last between three and four months, but the length of time a participant spends in a given phase depends upon the level of progress they achieved in regards to complying with curfew, educational requirements, maintaining contact with juvenile drug court team members, treatment, support groups, and staying clean and sober. The first phase is the initial level at which an offender is placed upon admission to the program. Subsequent phases are each less restrictive than the last. The fourth phase is considered aftercare.

During the first drug court session, referred to as the orientation session, participants and parents sign a contract listing the court's requirements and possible sanctions. The drug court team normally reviews each participant's progress at a staffing session held prior to the court session. It is at these meetings, that the team decides how often to meet with participants and on a course of action if the participant is having problems. Participants typically start the drug court by attending court weekly.

The program rules and expectations are listed in a contract that each participant and their parents are required to sign. This contract includes such items as:

- Appear in court on scheduled court dates;
- See the JDCO weekly or as required;
- Undergo regular drug tests;
- Attend drug court group;
- Attend self-help meetings such as NA and AA weekly;
- Participate in counseling and/or recovery education program;
- Complete a determined number of community service hours;
- Have no unexcused absences or excessive excused absences from school.

The Drug Court contract indicates that the drug court staff may make home visits at any time during which persons and residences may be subject to search. This contract

also states “if you have any inappropriate behaviors during any drug court phase, that it can result in the following: repeat the phase, increase counseling, inpatient treatment, increase meetings, increase drug testing, time in custody, exclusion from drug court and sentence imposed.” At each court appearance the participants are given an individual contract that indicates the specific tasks that need to be completed before their next court date.

The tasks and activities that the participants are expected to focus on are summarized in weekly task sheet which they receive from the judge during their review sessions. This list indicates curfew or check in times, treatment requirements, school goals, any persons they are not allowed to be around, words of encouragement, warnings, community service requirements, and other requirements expected to be completed by their next scheduled appearance before the judge.

Phase One: Orientation – The first phase includes the most restrictions, such as early curfew (unless starting out in house arrest or electronic monitoring), weekly court sessions, two or more weekly drug screens at staff request, daily school attendance (if applicable), attendance at any treatment program and other activities specified in the court agreement. The youths are expected to begin taking responsibility for their own actions and address their substance abuse problems during this phase. After completion of the plea agreement the youth completes a substance abuse evaluation and begins treatment in a program specific to their needs. During this phase participants typically are expected to begin attending an Anonymous group (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous) or other approved support group within the community.

Upon acceptance to the program, the youth are assigned to a drug court case manager immediately and begin providing random urine samples up to three times per week. The Juvenile Drug Court Judge requires the youth to report weekly for court status review and be subjected to graduated sanctions, as well as rewards. The youth are expected to maintain their academic program toward completion of high school. The case managers begin conducting home and school visits, which typically occur throughout a participant’s involvement in the drug court program. Curfew limits are established during this phase with at least one curfew call in the evening. Callbacks and collateral checks also begin during this phase and continue throughout ones involvement in juvenile drug court.

Phase Two: Treatment - The focus of this phase is for youth to maintain sobriety and begin to accept and understand the power of their substance abuse problem. During this phase the youth work with the drug court team to develop a plan of action for relapse prevention. Case managers continue to make home and school visits, conduct urinalyses, conduct curfew checks, make collateral contacts, and otherwise continue to supervise the participants. The participants are expected to continue contact with the court during this phase. The participants may begin completing community service or

restitution during this phase of drug court.⁹ One of the common community services assignments included working at a local animal rescue shelter. The tasks at the shelter often included walking the animals, cleaning up their cages, and providing other assistance as needed. Participants have also been assigned to clean in and around the courthouse.

Phase Three: Recovery – Youth continue working toward their educational goals or begin focusing on obtaining employment during this phase as they develop a sense of confidence regarding their recovery. During this phase youth are expected to maintain their involvement with the Anonymous and support groups and establish an ongoing relationship with their sponsor or mentors from these groups. Youth continue to appear in court, submit to drug testing as required, and plan their ongoing care within the community. Case managers work with families as needed and continue monitoring youths' progress. The participants continue to be subjected to sanctions and incentives by the drug court team.

Phase Four: Integration & Ongoing Care – This phase is considered aftercare and is set up to give guidance and support to participants as they prepare to end supervision. This period is still considered to be formal probation with the drug court JDCO as the supervisor. The aftercare component is provided by SEQUAL, a service provider that also owns a private residential facility (the Clarinda Academy). SEQUAL is operating the aftercare component with two trackers based in the Des Moines area. The program is initially set up as a ninety-day period with a thirty-day review by the judge. At the thirty-day review the judge may order the case closed, continue the aftercare period, or add additional time.

The trackers meet weekly with the participants and monitor the activities and progress of the participants. The youth are expected to make appointments and be at home in the evenings at specified times. There are no task requirements issued by the court since the participants are expected to conform to the expectations set previously in regards to conduct and sobriety. The trackers are expected to prepare weekly reports to be submitted monthly to the judge. The trackers are also expected to maintain contact with the JDCO and the case managers on an as needed basis. There have been a few instances in which participants have requested to stay on their case manager's caseload during this phase. The JDCO has informed CJJP that if an individual were deemed to have had an extremely hard time with maintaining sobriety, often such a request would be granted.

During the first 12 months of operation, offenders did not enter the fourth phase until they had graduated from the program. However, after a number of participants had relapses or began having difficulty complying with program requirements, the drug court team decided to delay graduation to after the completion of aftercare. Early anecdotal evidence from the team members suggests that this has been a successful strategy, it

⁹ Other community service activities were assigned through a "violators program." The "violators program" is a two-day intensive residential program (run by the Porter Avenue Center for Education program – PACE) in which the youths must adhere to strict rules and perform several hours of community service.

allows offering the participants a better chance to keep practicing the tools they learned in treatment.

Graduation

Since the inception of the program through September, 2001, there have been three graduations. At each of the graduation ceremonies, participants, family members, and local dignitaries were present as well as current participants. Parents, participants and others have spoken at these ceremonies about their experiences with the PCJDC.

Twelve of nineteen participants deemed to have completed the program successfully went through the graduation ceremonies. The remaining seven reached the age of majority during their involvement with the PCJDC and were deemed to have achieved maximum benefits by the PCJDC team. Please note that there were two participants who reached age of majority and were considered to have failed the program.

The Polk County Juvenile Drug Court Team

Upon receipt of the funding during the summer of 1999, a drug court team was formed consisting of an Associate Juvenile Court Judge, a juvenile court officer, three case managers, an Assistant County Attorney, and a public defense attorney. The grant funds paid for the Assistant County Attorney, County Attorney's assistant, the Juvenile Court Officer, three case managers, an administrative assistant, computer and office equipment, supplies and operating expenses, and the public defender. Treatment, assessment and other types of services were provided to the PCJDC at no additional costs to the program.

Juvenile Drug Court Team

The Associate Juvenile Court Judge oversees the staffings and court sessions and works with the juvenile drug court officer (JDCO) to coordinate all other aspects of the program. The judge has spent a good deal of time promoting the program through public appearances or speaking engagements. While the JDCO is referred to as the director of the program it is the judge who has the authority to detain, terminate or revoke participants for their behavior.

The Juvenile Drug Court Officer (JDCO) was employed by juvenile court services to coordinate all aspects of the program. The JDCO works with the judge to inform other entities of the program, develop services, supervise the case managers and oversee the total caseload. Juvenile court services provide a second juvenile court officer to the PCJDC program to provide back-up support to the juvenile drug court officer for a one-year period. A factor that distinguishes the JDCO from the case managers is that only juvenile court officers may approve and transport participants to detention.

Three Juvenile Drug Court Case Managers were hired strictly for the juvenile drug court to provide supervision to the drug court participants. The case managers are in daily contact with the participants through phone calls or site visits. Some days they see a participant and their family multiple times at the participant's home, school, or workplace. The case managers keep in contact with the schools, administer drug tests, and otherwise monitor the participant's progress and compliance with the program's rules and requirements.

The Polk County Attorney's office provides one part-time assistant attorney and an administrative assistant. The County Attorney is designated to work 19 to 20 hours a week with the juvenile drug court. The County Attorney's office was designated as the "fiscal agent" for the drug court team with the stipulation that they retain no oversight of the employees of either juvenile court services or the Defender's office.

The Public Defender's office contracts with a private bar attorney to represent participants of the Polk County Juvenile Drug Court. The defending attorney is dedicated to the drug court twenty hours per week (\$35/hour). This attorney has other clients outside of juvenile drug court.

Auxiliary Members - include an account auditor who assists with financial reports and issues and provides assistance in reporting the progress of the PCJDC. A part-time administrative assistant provides computer and administrative support. A court attendant helps the judge with administrative and clerical duties. An on-call court reporter is used during revocations and detention hearings to transcribe the proceedings.

Substance Abuse Assessments, Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities & Anonymous Groups

Upon acceptance to the PCJDC, the JDCO administers a global assessment instrument referred to as the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) developed by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute of Health (NIH). It was not clear to the evaluators how the information obtained from the POSIT was used in terms of case management, however, the test was maintained in the participants' case files. However, it was evident that the substance abuse assessments conducted by certified and licensed professionals were used quite extensively in case planning and management.

Substance abuse assessments can be conducted at any time while youths are under the supervision of the juvenile court. The substance abuse assessment providers include both private and public treatment facilities, as well as other assessment centers and clinics. If parents have private insurance they may select an agency, otherwise the court determines where to send youths for assessment. Some of these assessments are done through a 30-day residential evaluation program at treatment facilities, the State Training School, and the Iowa Juvenile Home.

One of the primary substance abuse assessment providers used by the PCJDC is the Employee and Family Resources, a local Des Moines agency. This agency provides outpatient substance abuse assessments to the juvenile court as a part of its regular duties. The Employees and Family Resources (EFR), a local substance abuse prevention and assessment agency, has a staff person assigned to conduct substance abuse assessments of juveniles based on referrals from the county attorney's office or juvenile court services.

Lutheran Hospital, Mercy First Step and Cornerstone are three of the most frequently used treatment facilities. Located in the Des Moines Metro Area, these three facilities provide primary treatment, outpatient treatment and assessment services. Other programs in and out of the State have been utilized to provide the appropriate services to juvenile drug court participants.

The PCJDC requires mandatory attendance at Alcoholics (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) groups if the participant is not in treatment. The juvenile drug court began using existing Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous groups, but it was soon discovered that these groups focused on many issues (e.g., homelessness, employment, and long-term substance abuse problems) that were deemed by the PCJDC team to be less relevant than other issues (e.g., familial use, peer relationships, family relationships). The PCJDC team set up an AA and NA group designed specifically for participants of the drug court program. This group meets at the drug court offices. Due to school, work, and extracurricular activities schedules, participants are still allowed to attend other groups.

Other Treatment Providers

From time-to-time other treatment providers are utilized by the PCJDC. One such agency the Porter Avenue Center for Education (PACE). This is a multifaceted program that provides an alternative school, day treatment services, life skills, an extended outpatient substance abuse program, and a juvenile court diversion program. PACE has recently initiated gender-specific programming for both boys and girls. PACE is also the provider of the weekend “violators program” which largely involves community services activities (e.g., washing vehicles, picking up litter) and a strict adherence to the PCJDC contract. Private counseling agencies are also used often.

The Boy Scouts of America provides anger management courses to PCJDC participants that are ten weeks in length. There are gender specific sessions as well as sessions for both parents and youths. The Boy Scouts also provides a miscellaneous fund of approximately \$2,500 for various program expenses such as incentive lunches or dinners with participants.

Staffings & Juvenile Drug Court Sessions

Staffings

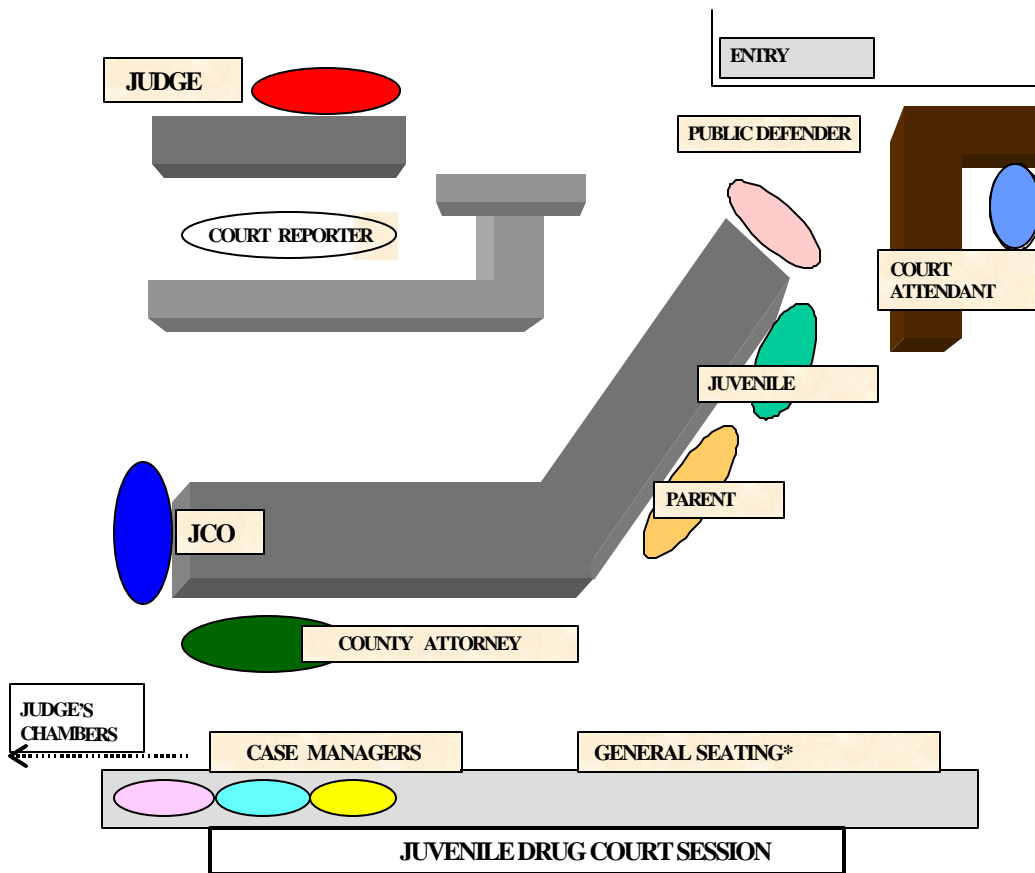
The staffings include the judge, JDCO, case managers, aftercare workers, attorneys, the administrative assistant, and occasionally guests. These meetings are held in the morning of the same day in which the court sessions are held. The staffings and court sessions take place weekly in the drug court judge's courtroom.

The atmosphere at the staffings is professional, but usually less formal than during the court sessions. During the staffing sessions all of the PCJDC team players sit around the same table. These meetings typically involve the discussion of current issues, potential new participants, those who need review, initial appearances (if any), participants in aftercare, and the status of those in the state institutions, residential treatment facilities, or on the run. The team uses these meetings to plan the handling of each case. These meetings offer an opportunity for the judge to receive information about the participants' progress that will allow her to respond appropriately during court (e.g., whether to give praise or warnings). In situations where detention hearings are warranted, the team discusses possible sanctions (e.g., violators program, residential treatment, or one of Iowa's highly structured residential juvenile facilities¹⁰).

Court Sessions

The regularly scheduled court sessions take place in the afternoon and about one dozen participants are seen in a given week. There is no set time, but court generally begins at one-thirty in the afternoon and goes until about four-thirty. Formal hearings for detention and revocations may be held on other days. The diagram below shows the formal seating arrangement for court sessions. During regular progress reviews, the team members' positions stay the same except for the judge whom often times moves from her bench to the court reporter's desk (the court reporter is not used during regular review sessions). The Judge has indicated that she does this to be closer to the participants and to lessen the formality of the regular court sessions.

¹⁰ Commonly referred to as Boot Camps.



Polk County’s juvenile drug court can be differentiated from other drug courts by using a list of variables by Sally Satel and presented in the National Drug Court Institute Review.¹¹ The list is useful in illustrating the various characteristics and personalities of drug courts, essentially providing insight as to how drug court clients are dealt with. The list is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Variables Distinguishing Drug Courts

Variable	Rationale for inclusion
Ambient noise, distraction (1-5)	Impediments to engagement of individuals and community.
Participant miked	Emphasizes primacy of participant.
Closeness to bench	Relevant to intensity of judge-participant exchange.
Participant next to lawyer	Dilution of judge-participant exchange.
Who is first addressed by judge	Emphasizes primacy of participant.
Level of eye contact	Intensity of exchange.
Physical contact	Aspect of exchange.
Remain throughout session	Opportunity to educate by example, reinforce norms and solidify group cohesion.
Arranged seating	Vehicle for setting example.
Order to cases	Opportunity to reinforce norms.
Fixed sanction algorithm	Aspect of consistency.
Review on Short notice	Capacity for immediate response, emphasize sense of judicial watchfulness.
Time spent with participant	Level of engagement, opportunity to develop relationship.
Frequency of courtroom sessions	Opportunity to develop relationship.
Judge addresses gallery	Reinforces sense of court as a community.
Participant addresses gallery	Reinforces community.
Outside contact	Level of engagement.

Ambient noise, distraction: Satel used a rating of one to five for this variable, with a rating of one referring to a very low level of ambient noise or distraction and a rating of five referring to a very high level of noise and distraction. Seven of the fifteen courts studied by Satel received a rating between three and five. The rating CJJP would give Polk County would be a three. The courtroom used for drug court in Polk County is relatively small. The entrance from the hall is fairly close to the judge’s bench and the participants, so that anyone coming into the courtroom causes some distraction.

¹¹ Satel, Sally L., MD, “Observational Study of Courtroom Dynamics in selected Drug Courts.” National Drug Court Institute Review, Vol. 1, Number 1, p.43.

Since the Judge encourages family support, there may be several members of each family, including babies and small children in the courtroom. Case managers and others often have phones ring, but usually they step out of the room to take the call. At times the background noise does get a bit high.

Participant miked: This courtroom is small, as were many of the drug courts studied by Satel and the use of microphones does not appear to be warranted. Satel indicated that the use of microphones would not have contributed to participants' being heard.

Closeness to bench: Most of the courts studied by Satel placed the judge about six to twelve feet away from the participants. During the existence of the Polk County drug court, the judges sits six to nine feet away from the participants. During formal hearings such as detention or dispositional hearings the judge sits at her bench which is on a raised platform about nine feet away from the participants. The judge may continue to sit at her bench during regular reviews if she received negative reports on one or more of the participants during the staffing to impart more of an air of authority. However, barring this, she often moved to the court reporters desk less than six feet away from the participants.

Participant next to lawyer: In only four of Satel's courts were participants seated next to their attorneys, as is true in Polk County. The participant sits between the public defender and the parent(s). The parents in Polk County are typically not seated at the table during routine reviews, but are seated behind the participants in the general seating area.

Whom does the judge first address: As was the case in eleven of Satel's fifteen drug courts, the participant is always addressed first in the PCJDC. This emphasizes that the youth is the primary focus of the drug court.

Level of eye contact: There is nearly continuous eye contact between the judge and participants when participants are being addressed. The judge assigned to the juvenile drug court wishes to treat the court as a family, something that might seem incongruous in a larger jurisdiction (or larger courtroom). Satel reported sustained eye contact in ten of her fifteen drug courts.

Physical contact: All but one of Satel's drug courts showed physical contact at least during graduation. In Polk County the judge will shake hands when awarding participants their medallions for advancing to the next phase. While doing this she may provide some personal words of encouragement. She may also shake their hands when taking the medallion back as a sanction to enforce her hope that they can move forward and regain their progress. There is often a definite change in participants' demeanor when they realize they have disappointed her and the team. The team frequently applauds participants who are doing well, particularly when they may have previously relapsed. The judge makes a definite effort to recognize a participant's length of sobriety by applause.

Participants remain throughout the session: Most of the courts that Satel studied did not require participants (defendants) to remain in court following their case review. This was also the case in Polk County for almost all of the study period. While Satel correctly points out that requiring participants to stay can increase group cohesion and educate by example, it could also be argued that some employed participants might miss work, school or other extracurricular activity by being required to remain for the entirety of the session. It is also the sense of the evaluators that, if group cohesion in drug courts is desirable, it can develop in other ways. Most drug court clients know one another due to participation in the same treatment or outpatient programs.

Arranged seating: Most of the courts studied by Satel had arranged seating, as is the case with the PCJDC (please see the diagram on page 15). The participants, who are waiting their turn before the team, sit at the back of the room with their families or caseworkers and go to the table as called.

Order of cases: Satel stated that having an order of cases offered the opportunity to reinforce norms. The Polk County court has an agenda prepared for staffing, with a list of cases scheduled to appear at the next court session. Participants are called up to the table from the list, as they come into the courtroom.

Fixed sanction algorithm: there was disagreement among Satel's respondents about the utility of having a fixed series of sanctions; a number of judges in larger courts approved of them as being useful in ensuring fairness. In Polk County and in most of Satel's jurisdictions there is no fixed series of sanctions or formal guidelines under the philosophy of individualizing treatment.

While there is not a formal algorithm in Polk County, the drug court contract includes a number of sanctions (i.e., repeat the phase, increase counseling, inpatient treatment, increase drug testing, time in custody, exclusion from drug court and sentence imposed) for inappropriate behaviors during drug court. All participants and their parents are required to sign this contract. Parents are also required to report any violations of the PCJDC contract. Satel stated that having fixed sanctions gives an aspect of consistency. Some courts have debated the establishment of fixed sanctions as not being necessary to maintaining stability in the participant's sobriety.

When a participant fails to comply with the requirements of the program, consequences are immediate. The case managers have the authority to place a participant on house arrest, institute daily drug screens, and require them to come to the office to work on homework or community service. Case managers can also notify the JDCO when juvenile detention is warranted. Electronic monitoring and tracking equipment may also be used if necessary. When deemed appropriate, the judge may place the individual in a local weekend violators program, boot camp, a residential facility, or the state training school or juvenile home.

Review on short notice: Caseworkers often visit the participants at school, home or on the job to deal with crises (i.e., truancy, aggressive and antisocial behavior, alcohol or drug use, and other non compliant behaviors). If a drug screen comes out positive or is questionable, caseworkers are expected to notify the drug court juvenile court officer to determine an appropriate sanction (e.g., immediate house arrest, detention, or shelter). The judge is informed by the JDCO and she may issue a formal order. Satel wrote that the capacity of an immediate response emphasizes the sense of judicial watchfulness. Almost all of the courts studied by Satel could provide review on short notice. The Polk County juvenile drug court judge is very available to the team when needed. The juvenile court officer knows that he can contact the judge anytime of day in crisis situations.

Time spent with participant: In the courts Satel studied, the time spent with the participant ranged from one minute to five minutes. The Polk County juvenile drug court spends anywhere from five to thirty minutes depending on what the need is for each client (on a given day). There is no schedule of allotted time and some just need to check in and have a short talk with the judge, while others have greater issues to discuss.

Frequency of courtroom sessions: Participants are initially scheduled to meet with the judge every week. The frequency of sessions often diminishes as the participant progresses through the program. Frequency of appearance is a factor Satel felt helped develop relationship between the court and the client and their families. It is the opinion of the evaluators that Polk County meets this element in every way.

Judge addresses gallery/participant addresses gallery: Satel stated that this reinforces community. Polk County juvenile drug court is a small court and these factors do not come into play as a regular part of its program.

Outside contact: Most of the courts studied by Satel did not report regular outside contact between the judge and participants. The Polk County juvenile drug court is representative of this group. However, the PCJDC team occasionally holds picnics, engages in recreational activities and has various parties for the participants throughout their involvement with the program. The DCJO regularly lifts weights with participants on his own free time.

The Polk County Juvenile Drug Court Program

Referral Sources

Initially the referral process involved direct referrals from various sources (e.g., law enforcement agencies, treatment providers, and juvenile court). All of the referrals now come from either juvenile court services or the drug court judge. In examining the original or initial source of referrals, this study's findings indicate that the largest source of the referrals was indeed juvenile court services. Only a small percentage of the referrals came from juvenile court diversion programs, treatment providers, or the Polk County Attorney's Office. It is possible that some of the referrals credited to juvenile court services began as informal conversations initiated by one of the other entities.

Admission Criteria

A total of 99 juveniles were referred to the PCJDC between August 1999 and December 31, 2001. Just over a third of these cases (n=39) were deemed to have met the program's requirements for admission. The two primary reasons for referral correspond closely with the program's stated goals and objectives, which are; (1) that the youth has a substance abuse problem and (2) there is a need for more intensive supervision than is otherwise available to juvenile probationers. The main criteria that the PCJDC uses in selecting its clients are that the juveniles:

- ❑ Have been referred to juvenile court for committing a delinquent act
- ❑ Have a history of drug and alcohol abuse.
- ❑ Cannot have had a sex offense.
- ❑ Have **not** been determined to be dangerous or exhibit anti-social behavior.
- ❑ Are **not** known drug dealers.

Those who have been referred to juvenile court with a prior or pending violent offense are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

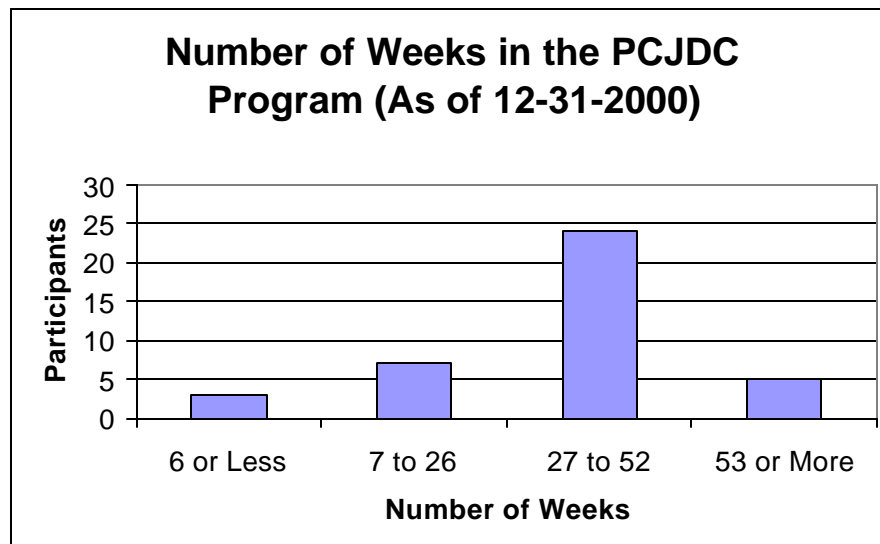
There were 60 individuals referred, but not admitted to the program.

Reasons stated by the PCJDC team that these individuals were not admitted ranged from no confirmed drug abuse or only low level use to extensive use with violent behavior.

Length of Time in The PCJDC Program

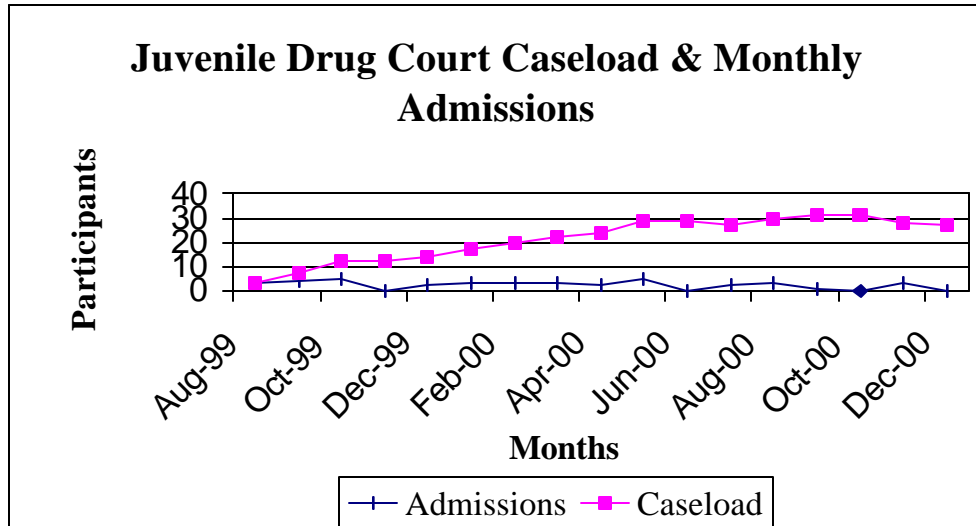
The length of the program varies greatly among the participants and depends largely on an individual's abilities to achieve and maintain sobriety and comply with

program rules. The length of time participants spend in the PCJDC program ranges from 4.7 to 70 weeks. The length of time an individual was in the program could be due to date of admission, time in residential treatment, or placement and compliance with program rules and requirements.



The first admission was on August 18th, 1999 and two more were added later that month. By the end of nine months the number of participants had grown to 30, which was considered to be the maximum desired caseload size. It was estimated by the PCJDC team that a maximum of 30 would allow the three case managers to have no more than ten active cases at a time. The number of admissions for a given month ranged from zero to five with an average of 2.29 admissions for a month. There were four months in which there were no admissions. The number of monthly admissions is closely tied to the maximum caseload size; a waiting list has been established for entry into the program, and this list has included up to fifteen names.

It is possible that a case manager may have had someone on his or her caseload who was in aftercare, the State Training School or the Iowa Juvenile Home (for a 30 day evaluation), a residential facility, or a treatment facility which would have limited supervision activities and contacts for a given period of time. There were three individuals who absconded from the program. A female participant who was on the run for two months was eventually caught and placed in Iowa Juvenile Home for a 30-day evaluation with the expectation that she would be returned to the program. There were two male runaways: one ended in a revocation (placement in the State Training School) and the other went to Mexico (supposedly to live with relatives) and the case was later closed.

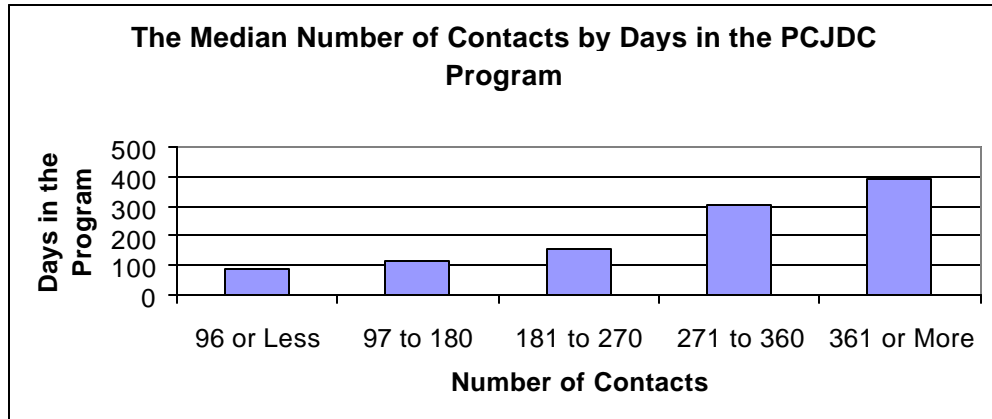


The first graduation occurred in August of 2000, but the graduates were not considered to be off a case manager’s caseload until November of 2000. This was because the participants who graduated in August were required to undergo three months of aftercare services prior to final discharge. There were an additional three participants who graduated in November of 2000, but were not deleted from the caseload until after the study period (August, 1999 - December, 2000). After the November graduation, a change was made to move the graduation ceremony to after the completion of the aftercare services (as described above).

Case Management Issues

There was a continuum in regards to the number of contacts between the juveniles and their case managers from 18 to 611 with a median of 233.25 contacts per person.¹² The contacts included curfew calls, school visits, office visits and any other contacts with a participant. The number of contacts a case manager had with a given participant is dependent on when the individual was admitted to the program, how much time a participant spent in the violators program, treatment, detention, boot camp, the state training school, the Iowa Juvenile Home, on the run, or whether the participant was unsuccessfully terminated. For example, the participant who had the lowest number of contacts was only in the program a short time prior to being sent to a boot camp for non-compliance issues. A participant with the next lowest number of contacts had absconded from the program after only a short time.

¹² The Median may be defined as the middle score in a set of ranked scores.



Collateral contacts were not included in the data presented in the figure listed above.¹³ Collateral contacts were used quite often to check progress and confirm requests to attend various functions or go on trips out-of-town. The workers recorded this information in two places: (1) a weekly performance form that also includes information about substance abuse screens, educational attendance and progress, curfew checks, court issues, and treatment issues; and (2) a contact form where case managers write up their notes on curfew calls; school, office, and home contacts; and contacts with other pertinent individuals. These forms are also used by the case managers to indicate any relevant problems or concerns.

¹³ Collateral Contacts include conversations and meeting with parents, guardians, other relatives, employers or bosses, school officials, treatment providers, and other concerned and relevant individuals.

Participant & Comparison Group Information

Information was collected on 39 individuals who were admitted to the PCJDC between August of 1999 and December of 2000. This group is referred to in the following section as the **“PCJDC participant group.”** In addition, limited information was collected on 60 individuals who were referred to the program, but not accepted during the same time period. This group is referred to as the **“comparison group.”**

The participant and comparison group information was collected from case files, case manager notes, other program documents, and through informal interviews with the PCJDC team members. Only selected information (demographics, treatment information at referral, referral offense, household composition at referral) was available for the comparison group – this information is presented below. As of the end of the study period (December 31, 2000) only seven had graduated from the program. There were also six individuals who were initially rejected, but later accepted into the program.

Once a case is rejected, the case file and most of the information goes to the supervising JDCO. The information maintained by the PCJDC is very minimal, including name, race, sex, age, school grade / educational status, type of school, treatment status, type of household, most serious offense at referral, and subsequent offenses after date of referral. Outcome information is not currently readily available on the rejected cases and a process to collect such information on those cases is strongly encouraged. This would allow for a comparison between the accepted and rejected cases as to success and failure in maintaining sobriety, limiting or eliminating criminal activity, and otherwise engaging in positive, and pro-social activities.

Sex, Age, and Race

Both the PCJDC participants and the comparison group were mostly white, male, and between the ages of 15 and 16 (see Table 1). However, the comparison group was found to have a slightly higher number of persons of color than the participant group. The cases of nine persons of color were examined as to why they were not accepted. The information examined showed that these individuals had committed violent offenses, were drug dealers, or were considered to be “too close to 18” to begin the program.

The ages of the individuals referred to PCJDC ranged from 13 to 17, with a median age of 16 for both groups. The youngest person referred was 13, while the youngest person accepted was 14. Currently, young offenders are allowed to participate in juvenile drug court up to their 18th birthday, with one exception. Dispositional orders entered subsequent to the child attaining the age of seventeen years and prior to the child’s eighteenth birthday may terminate as late as one year and six months after the date of the disposition.

Table 1: Race & Age by Participant and Comparison Group & Sex

<i>Demographics</i>	PCJDC Participants					Comparison Group*				
		Males		Females			Males		Females	
Race	Total	n	%	n	%	Total	n	%	n	%
Caucasian	36	30	93.8	6	85.7	48	41	87.2	7	77.8
African-American	2	1	3.1	1	14.3	6	5	10.6	1	11.1
Hispanic	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1	2.1	0	0.0
Asian / Pacific Islander	1	1	3.1	0	2.6	1	0	0.0	1	11.1
Native American	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0		0.0
Totals	39	32	100.0	7	100.0	56	47	100.0	9	100.0
Age	Total	n	%	n	%	Total	n	%	n	%
13	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1	2.2	1	11.1
14	4	3	9.4	1	14.3	9	5	10.9	4	44.4
15	7	7	21.9	0	0.0	11	10	21.7	1	11.1
16	21	17	53.3	4	57.1	19	18	39.0	1	11.1
17	7	5	15.6	2	28.6	14	12	26.1	2	22.2
Totals	39	32	100.0	7	100.0	55	46	100.0	9	100.0

*Comparison Group was missing race information on four individuals and sex information on five.

Educational Information

Findings regarding education at admission show that most participants entering the drug court were reported to be in grades 8 through 12, with one working on a GED and two attending a local community college¹⁴ (see Table 2).

Table 2: School Grade & Educational Status by Participant & Comparison Group

<i>School Grade / Educational Status at Referral*</i>	PCJDC Participants*					Comparison Group**				
		Males		Females			Males		Females	
	Total	n	%	n	%	Total	n	%	n	%
7 th grade	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1	2.2	1	11.1
8 th grade	1	0	0.0	1	14.3	1	0	0.0	1	11.1
9 th grade	12	11	34.4	1	14.3	18	15	32.6	3	33.3
10 th grade	13	12	37.5	1	14.3	11	11	23.9	0	0.0
11 th grade	6	5	15.6	1	14.3	11	9	19.6	2	22.2
12 th grade	3	2	6.3	1	14.3	4	3	6.5	1	11.1
Worked on GED	1	0	0.0	1	14.3	2	2	4.3	0	0.0
Enrolled in Community College	2	2	6.3	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Not Attending	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	5	10.9	1	11.1
Totals	38	32	100.0	6	100.0	55	46	100.0	9	100.0

*Participant Group was missing school information on one female.

**Comparison Group was missing school information on five individuals.

¹⁴ Two students were attending the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC).

Findings for the comparison group show that overall the educational status was similar to the participant group except that there were two seventh graders and six individuals who were reported to not be attending school at the time of their referral.

Most of the PCJDC participants were reported to be in some type of school or educational program at the time of referral. The female participants were more likely to have been in an alternative school than the male participants. Female participants were also found to have been in an alternative school at a higher rate than the males and females in the comparison group (see Table 3).

Table 3: Type of School (Traditional or Alternative) by Participant & Comparison Groups.

<i>Type of School</i>	PCJDC Participants*					Comparison Group**				
	Total	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Traditional	21	19	65.5	2	28.6	32	28	62.2	4	44.4
Alternative	16	10	34.5	5	71.4	16	12	26.7	4	44.4
Not in School	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	5	11.1	1	11.1
Totals	37	29	100.0	7	100.0	54	45	100.0	9	100.0

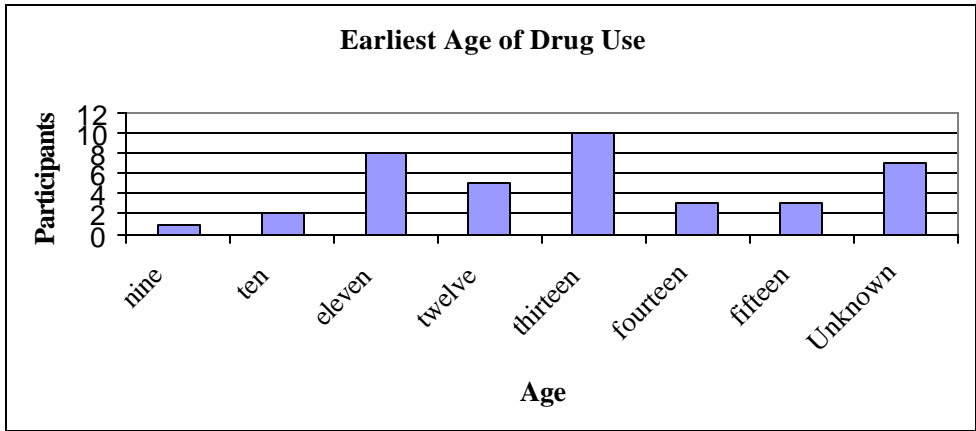
*Participant Group was missing information regarding type of school on one individual. The two participants who were attending a local community college were not included in these data.

**Comparison group was missing information concerning type of school on six individuals.

Drug & Alcohol Use

The earliest drug or alcohol use of the participants and comparison groups was reported to have occurred at nine years of age. All of the participants were found to have used or at least experimented with alcohol. A majority (n = 35) of participants reported that they had used or tried THC (marijuana). Sixteen were reported to have tried tobacco, ten cocaine, nine methamphetamines, and seven had tried some other type of controlled substances.

Information about an individual's drug of choice was only available for about half of the individuals in the comparison group. The information showed that most of these individuals had used or experimented with alcohol and THC. Cocaine was also listed as one of the preferred drugs of choice for some of these individuals.



Drug & Alcohol Tests

The case managers conduct drug screens on the young offenders throughout their involvement with the program. It is also possible that participants were tested by other entities (e.g., law enforcement, treatment providers, state training school, juvenile court officers) during their time in drug court. Drug tests were found to have occurred at a number of different places including the PCJDC offices, court, the participants’ homes, school, or anywhere else deemed appropriate by the case managers.

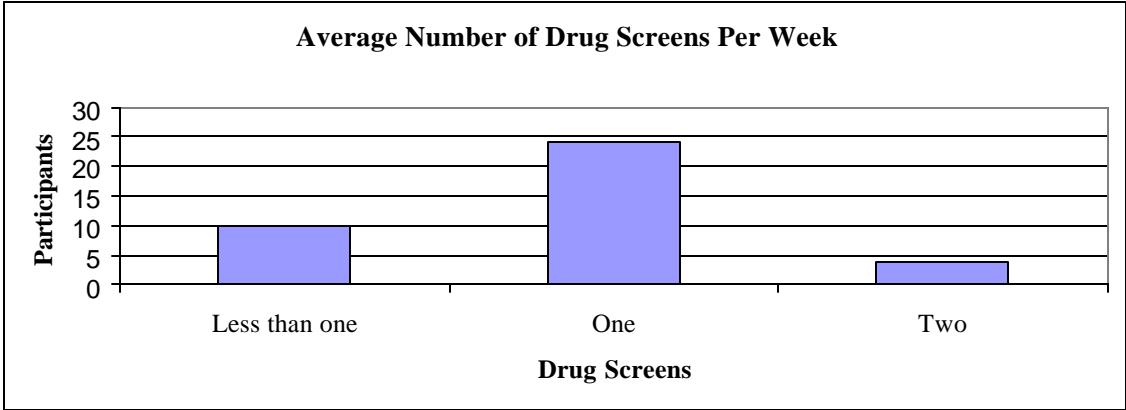
The cup currently being used to collect urine specimens tests for five items: THC, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates, and PCP. There is also a separate cup used by the case managers to test for alcohol. When results are contested or there are some questions about the results, the tests are sent to a local lab for processing.

The number of drug screens that participants were subjected to varied between one and approximately 80, with this variation dependent on their start date, length of program participation and whether they were placed in a residential treatment facility for any time during their involvement with the PCJDC. The number of drug tests an individual received was also dependent on the number of times a participant was sent to the violators program, detention, went out-of-town on family trips or engaged in other family or extracurricular activities.

The average number of drug screens per week ranged from 0.2 to two with an average of 1.1.¹⁵ The average number of drug screens per week is a rather crude rate, because it simply shows the number of drug screens someone had by the number of weeks they were in the program. This rate does not account for weeks in which an individual was in residential treatment or was involved in some other type of treatment or activity that did not require the case manager to conduct screens. A participant may have

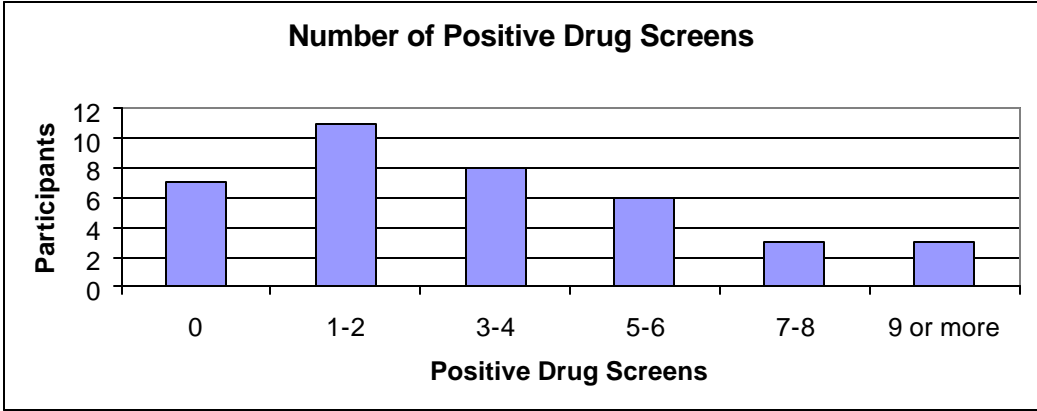
¹⁵ In a study of juvenile drug courts (by the Office of Justice Programs) across the United States it was found that most juvenile drug courts test participants at least once per week and most test more frequently during phase I. Testing frequency was found to decrease as the participants progressed to other program phases.

been tested during time away from the program, but unless the test was conducted by the case managers, it would not have been reported in the statistics.



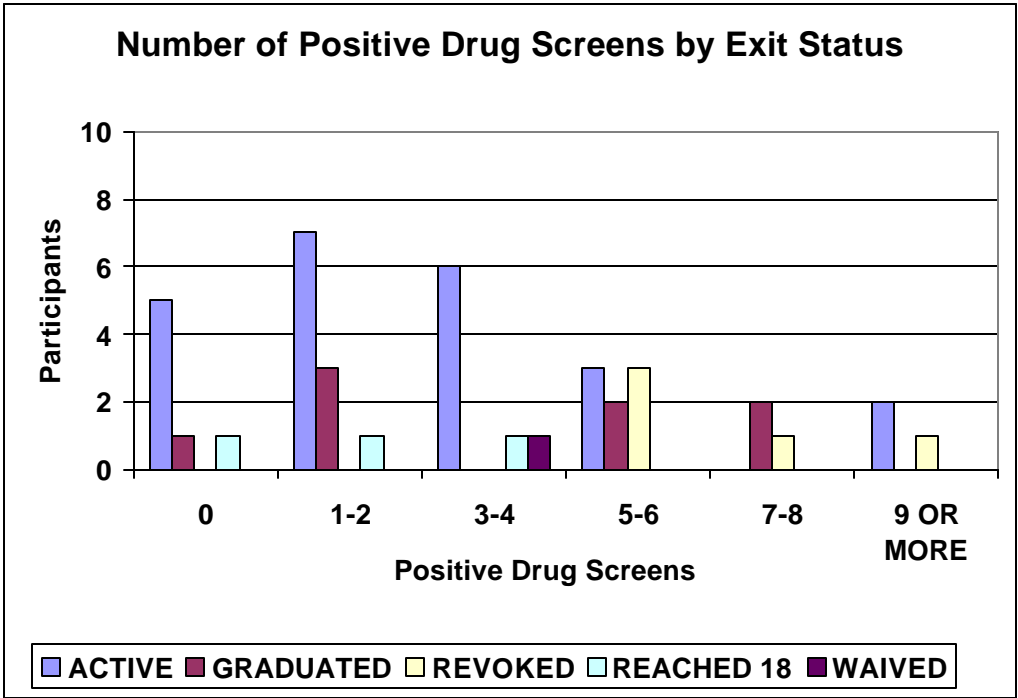
Number of Positive Drug Screens

Over 80 percent of the participants had at least one positive drug test, only 20 percent had none. The number of positive tests ranged between one and twelve with an average of 3.0 per person. The number of positive drug screens seems to indicate that the PCJDC does indeed have participants in the program who have serious, chronic drug problems. These data also suggest that the PCJDC gives the participants numerous chances to obtain sobriety.



As of the end of the study time period (December, 2000) there were seven participants who graduated, 23 active cases, five revoked, one waived to adult court, and three who reached 18 years of age. Participants who were revoked were found to have between five and six positive drug screens. The finding that two individuals were active

and had nine or more positive drug screens adds further support to the contention that the program gives the participants adequate chances to turn their lives around.



Treatment

CJJP examined a young offender’s treatment status at referral to determine whether an individual was in or had completed substance abuse treatment at referral or was conditionally admitted to PCJDC with the stipulation that he or she completes such treatment prior to admission.¹⁶

The findings in Table 4 indicate that the comparison group was more likely to **not** have had treatment than the participant group. This table also shows that the majority of the participants had at least started treatment prior to admission, with 13 having completed it. There was one female who did not begin treatment prior to admission but was placed in outpatient treatment just after her admission to the program.

¹⁶ No distinction was made between residential and outpatient treatment.

Table 4: Treatment Status at Time of Referral to PCJDC

<i>Treatment Status at Referral</i>	PCJDC Participants*					Comparison Group**				
	Total	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females	
		n	%	n	%		n	%	n	%
Treatment Completed Prior to Referral	13	10	32.2	3	42.9	11	11	23.4	0	0.0
Treatment Started Prior to Referral and Continuing	24	21	67.8	3	42.9	23	18	38.3	5	62.5
No Treatment Started or Completed at Referral	1	0	0.0	1	14.3	21	18	38.3	3	37.5
Totals	38	31	100.0	7	100.0	55	47	100.0	8	100.0

*PCJDC was missing treatment information on one individual.

**Comparison group was missing treatment information on five individuals.

Family Issues

Family support is considered a very critical element in the success of the youth admitted to the PCJDC. The case managers work with the families to help establish and maintain supportive and pro-social relationships. The findings regarding household composition at referral show that 38.5 percent of the participants were identified as living in a single-parent family, 30.8 percent in a biological family, 18.0 percent in a blended family, and 5.1 percent in an extended family (see Table 5).¹⁷ Household composition was found to be similar for the comparison group (42.1 percent were living in a single parent household, 35.0 percent were in a biological family, 21.1 percent were in a blended family, 18.0 percent were living in extended family).

Some of the participants' parents were reported to have participated and been very involved in counseling sessions and other aspects of the youths' recovery such as attending AA/NA sessions, but other parents were unable to stop their own substance abuse and criminal behaviors. These parents were deemed by the PCJDC team as **not** having the skills necessary to deal with enforcing the rules of the home and the program. The families are strongly encouraged to attend court sessions with their children. It is the parents who serve as one of the most important collateral contacts for the case managers in supervising the youth.

¹⁷ The familial categories were developed by the PCJDC team and employed in the family information form that each family is to complete upon admission. Please note that a single-parent family was often the biological mother. The category "biological family" was used to refer to those families in which both the biological mother and father were present in the household. Blended families often included one biological parent and a step-parent and step-siblings. The extended family referred to those cases in which another family member (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles) were the primary caretakers.

Table 5: Type of Household at Referral by Participant & Comparison Group

<i>Type of Household at Referral</i>	PCJDC Participants					Comparison Group*				
	Total	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females	
		n	%	n	%		n	%	n	%
Blended	7	7	21.9	0	0.0	12	11	11.1	1	11.1
Biological & Adopted	15	12	37.5	3	42.9	20	17	35.4	3	33.3
Single	15	12	37.5	3	42.9	24	20	41.7	4	44.4
Extended Family	2	1	3.1	1	14.3	1	0	0.0	1	11.1
Totals	39	32	100.0	7	100.0	57	48	100.0	9	100.0

*Comparison group was missing type of household at referral on three individuals.

Family Criminal History & Substance Abuse History

There were 12 males and four females in the participant group who reported having had a parent or a sibling with a criminal record (see Table 6). Of these 16 participants, all but one also reported that they had a family member with a substance abuse problem. There were also six other participants who were identified as having family members with a substance abuse history. Two of the PCJDC participants had a parent in the Polk County Adult Drug Court; one of these youths was successful in completing the program and the other was not. The influence of the two courts on the family has not been measured at this time, but if both of these programs continue there may be more situations that will allow for an examination of the risk factors involved.

Table 6: Family Criminal History & Substance Abuse History

Familial History	Males		Females		Totals*	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Family Criminal History</i>						
Yes	9	37.5	4	57.1	13	41.9
No	15	62.5	3	42.9	18	58.1
Totals	24	100.0	7	100.0	31	100.0
<i>Family Substance Abuse History</i>	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	14	56.0	3	50.0	17	54.8
No	11	44.0	3	50.0	14	45.2
Totals	25	100.0	6	100.0	31	100.0

* Familial criminal history & substance abuse history was missing for eight of the participants.

Juvenile Delinquency Offense Information

All of the PCJDC participants were under juvenile court supervision at the time of referral to the program. Over 60 percent of the offenders had been charged with some type of possession charge (see Table 7). There were some differences found between the PCJDC participants and comparison groups, as the comparison group was found to have slightly more “other” offenses such as theft, robbery, burglary, and assault than the participant group. The participant group was slightly more likely than the comparison group to have had an under-age drinking charge.

The participant group was slightly more likely than the comparison group to have offenders charged with multiple offenses. Seventeen of 39 participants (45.9 percent) were referred on one charge while the remainder had multiple charges. Over half of the comparison group had one charge at the time of the referral.

Table 7: Most serious offense charged with at referral to PCJDC

<i>Type of Offense</i>	PCJDC Participants*		Comparison Group**	
	n	%	N	%
Possession of a controlled substance	23	62.2	35	66.0
Drinking under age	9	24.3	5	9.4
OWI	1	2.7	2	3.8
OMVWOC	1	2.7	0	0.0
Manufacturing/delivering Meth	2	5.4	1	1.9
Other	1	2.7	10	18.9
<i>Totals</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>100.0</i>

*The participant group was missing offense information on two cases.

**The comparison group was missing offense information on seven cases.

Note: Possession of any controlled substance was include in the “Possession of controlled substance category,” including possession of marijuana. Possession of alcohol and public intox. were counted as “drinking under the legal age.” Manufacturing of meth. includes the manufacture and delivery of the substance. The “other” category includes theft, harassment, robbery, and burglary charges.

There was not much difference found between the participant group and comparison group concerning the level of the most serious offense charged with at referral to PCJDC (see Table 8). The majority of both groups had only misdemeanor charges. The data regarding level of offense indicates that only a small portion of the individuals in either group had been charged with felony offenses.

Table 8: Level of The Most Serious Offense Charged With at Referral to PCJDC

<i>Level of Offense</i>	PCJDC Participants*		Comparison Group**	
	n	%	n	%
Misdemeanors	30	83.3	44	84.6
Felonies	6	16.7	8	15.4
Totals	36	100.0	52	100.0

*The participant group was missing seriousness of offense information on three cases.

**The comparison group was missing seriousness of offense information on eight individuals.

CJJP examined whether any new offenses occurred after the referral or admission through the end of the study period (see Table 9). It was estimated that most of the comparison group individuals were under juvenile court supervision at the time of the subsequent offense. CJJP simply examined whether a new offense occurred and did not delve into the severity and type of the offense nor was there any examination of re-offending after a person left the PCJDC or juvenile court supervision.

Ten participants were arrested for a new offense during their involvement in drug court: one of these cases was revoked for carrying a concealed weapon, one was waived to adult court on an assault with a dangerous weapon and a willful injury charge, three had graduated, and five were still active at the conclusion of the study period. Two of the three who graduated had a possession of alcohol under the legal age charge and one had a theft 5th charge. The five active cases were found to have been charged with the following offenses: no drivers license, possession of alcohol under the legal age, theft 5th, Intoxicated while operating a motor vehicle, and an AWOL probation violation.

Approximately eleven months after the first admission, a participant was revoked and placed in the State Training School. During the study period there were an additional four participants who were revoked, one to an out-of-state boys ranch, one to the State Training School, one to probation, and one absconded to Mexico. There were also three participants who aged out of the program **without** successfully completing their juvenile drug court program.

Table 9: Offenses Occurring After Referral or Admission Through Dec 30, 2000.

Subsequent Offenses	PCJDC Participants*		Comparison Group**	
	n	%	n	%
Yes	10	27.8	11	18.3
No	26	66.7	48	98.3
Totals	36	100.0	59	100.0

*The participant group was missing information on three cases.

**The comparison group was missing information on one case.

Discussion

Juvenile Drug Court Development & implementation

The U.S. Department of Justice in May of 2001 released a bulletin, which is targeted to communities and jurisdictions in the concept or planning stages of a juvenile drug court.¹⁸ This bulletin identified indicators of need, caseload factors, the availability of treatment and other core services, key elements of juvenile drug court programs, operational elements, goals, and steps for program planning and implementation. Over two years earlier, the Polk County Community Prevention Policy Board began a planning initiative and design process that was very similar to what was listed in the U.S. Department of Justice Bulletin to develop and provide oversight to a juvenile drug court for the county.

As a part of its development process the Planning Board compiled a list of the most pervasive risk indicators in the county, including the availability of drugs, academic failure, extreme economic deprivation, and community disconnectedness. The Board further indicated that these risk factors were highly correlated with a number of adolescent problems such as substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, school dropout, and violence. A complementary planning effort under way at the same time in Polk County entitled “the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders” identified a need of the juvenile justice system to have a system of graduated sanctions as well as a continuum of treatment alternatives that provide for delinquency prevention and immediate consequences.

The U.S. Department of Justice Bulletin identified five goals for juvenile drug courts:

1. Provide immediate intervention, treatment, and structure in the lives of juveniles using drugs through the ongoing, active oversight and monitoring by the drug court judge.
2. Improve juveniles’ level of functioning in their environment, address problems that may be contributing to their use of drugs, and develop and strengthen their ability to lead crime- and drug- free lives.
3. Provide juveniles with skills that will aid them in leading productive substance-free and crime-free lives, including skills relating to their educational development, sense of self-worth, and capacity to develop positive relationships in the community.

¹⁸ This document was released in May of 2001 by the U.S. Department of Justice entitled “Juvenile Drug Court Programs.”

4. Strengthen the families of drug-involved youth by improving the capacity of families to provide structure and guidance to their children
5. Improve system capacity to promote accountability for both juvenile offenders and the services they are provided.

The evaluators found that the first and second goals listed above seem to have been met, while there was not sufficient information available to make a determination on the last three goals. The evaluators believe that the PCJDC embodies the goals identified by the U.S. Department of Justice as it was designed to be a holistic approach, blending existing treatment components with judicial monitoring, immediate consequences, intensive probation supervision, and lengthy aftercare. One of the primary objectives in developing the PCJDC was to provide a more intensive supervision than otherwise available to juvenile probationers.

PCJDC Session Observation Findings

CJJP conducted observational examinations of both the staffings and the drug court sessions. To provide structure to these observational findings, CJJP utilized a schema designed by Sally Satelin her review of 15 drug courts across the country. Satel used 17 criteria to examine the relationship between the judges and participants, as well as other aspects of the court proceedings.¹⁹

Of the 17 criteria, it was found that the PCJDC is similar to Satel's drug courts on 14 of them. The three that the PCJDC was determined to have departed from Satel's findings include:

1. The amount of ambient noise distraction.
2. Seating arrangements of participants and their attorneys.
3. The amount of time spent with participants during review sessions.

Satel's rationale for including "ambient noise," was as a measure of any impediment to the engagement of individuals and the community. Just over half of the drug courts studied by Satel rated a one on a scale of one to five, with one equaling a lack or very low level of ambient noise and five being a very high level of noise. CJJP rated the PCJDC a three on this criterion, which was considered by Satel's scale to be a moderate level of distraction. Despite giving the PCJDC a rating of three on this item, the evaluators did not believe that the noise rose to a level that impeded the court proceedings.

In the case of the second item, the evaluators found the PCJDC differed from most of the courts studied by Satel. Most of the courts studied by Satel did **not** require

¹⁹ Satel, Sally L. MD, "Observational Study of Courtroom Dynamics in selected Drug Courts." National Drug Court Institute Review, Vol. 1, Number 1, p.43.

the participant and defense lawyers to be seated next to each other. Satel argued that in having participants seated next to their lawyer it diluted the judge-participant exchange. However, in Polk County the participants were seated next to the defense lawyer. It was felt by the evaluators that this arrangement allowed for private communications between the public defender and the participant, but still permitted the public defender to act as a member of the team.

In the courts studied by Satel the amount of time typically spent with a participant was between one and five minutes. This variable was included by Satel to measure the opportunity available to develop relationships. In the PCJDC it was observed that the length of time that the judge spends with a participant is typically much more than five minutes, sometimes up to a half-hour or more. There is no schedule of allotted time and some participants just needed to check in and have a short talk with the judge, while others had issues that required more time.

Participant-Specific Data Findings

The PCJDC provides judicial supervision of juvenile offenders with substance abuse problems and integrates the administration of a variety of sanctions and services. **The PCJDC team indicated that they routinely use five primary criteria for selecting clients: the commission of a delinquent act, a history of drug and alcohol abuse, no sex offenses, no history of violence or anti-social behavior, and are not known drug dealers. The PCJDC participants were found to have met each of these criteria.** However, it was also observed that some of the individuals who were not accepted also met these criteria.

Given the amount of time it takes to successfully complete the program and the fact that the program has only been in existence since August of 1999, there really was not enough time to complete a full outcome analysis. However, those items that were available to the evaluators such as the number who graduated or were terminated are listed below. Please note that although the study period was August, 1999 to December, 2000, the following bullets (except where specified) refer to the time period between August, 1999 and August, 2001. The reason for the increased length of time here is to provide more current and meaningful information to the PCJDC team and other community players.

Participant related outcomes:

- ❑ About one out of three individuals referred to the program are accepted.
- ❑ The caseload reached a maximum of 30 in May of 2000 which appears to have been maintained since that time.
- ❑ Twelve of nineteen participants deemed to have completed the program successfully went through the graduation ceremonies. The remaining seven

reached the age of majority during their involvement with the PCJDC and were deemed to have achieved maximum benefits by the PCJDC team.

- ❑ Between August of 1999 and September of 2001, six participants were terminated unsuccessfully from the PCJDC.
- ❑ Three individuals absconded from the program. Two were caught and terminated unsuccessfully from the program and the other one escaped to Mexico.
- ❑ Over 80 percent of the participants had at least one positive drug test, with only six having none, during their involvement with the program.
- ❑ It was found that the average number of drug screens per participant each week ranged from 0.2 to two with an average of 1.1.
- ❑ During program involvement, ten participants were arrested for a new offense during their involvement in drug court. According to the PCJDC judge only one of the successful participants had been referred to juvenile court for an additional public offense after the study period.

Program related outcomes:

- ❑ Aftercare was considered to be an integral part of participants' ability to remain drug free and sober and was included in the original design of the drug court program. Due to problems identified by the PCJDC team (such as positive drug screens) the aftercare component was moved from after graduation to before graduation. The impact of this change will require further exploration especially in conjunction with outcome data.
- ❑ Based on conversations with Case Managers and a review of notes and contact sheets, it appears that the consequences for confirmed violation of rules or requirements were typically immediate. Changes in curfew times, house arrest, and use of the violator program always appeared to be immediate. Sometimes placement into a group care facility, boot camp, or the 30-day evaluation program at the State Training Schools was delayed until a bed became available.

Participant and Comparison Group Findings

The two groups were compared on nine different variables including – race, age, school grades or educational status, type of school (traditional or alternative), treatment status, type of household at referral, family criminal history and substance abuse history, type of most serious offense charged at referral, and level of most serious offense charged with at referral.²⁰ While the findings below indicate some slight differences, there were quite a few similarities between the two groups. By sorting out those individuals that do not meet admission criteria one could acquire a more appropriate comparison group.

²⁰ The time period for comparison data is August, 1999 to December, 2001.

These comparison groups could be maintained on an ongoing basis and a process set up to regularly collect outcome information. Such information could be used for self-evaluation and be useful in grant applications and for other informational and promotional purposes.

The findings comparing the participants with the comparison group show:

- ❑ PCJDC participants and the comparison group were mostly white, male, and between the ages of 15 and 16.
- ❑ All of the participants and most of the comparison group were reported to be in some type of school or educational program at the time of referral. The female participants were more likely to have been in an alternative school than the male participants. Female participants were also found to have been in an alternative school at a higher rate than the males and females in the comparison group.
- ❑ All of the participants and most of the comparison group were found to have experimented or used alcohol, and some had experimented or used controlled substances.
- ❑ THC was found to be a common substance of choice for both groups.
- ❑ More serious substances were also experimented with or used by a small number in both groups.
- ❑ The comparison group was more likely to not have had treatment than the participant group. The majority of the participants had started treatment prior to admission, with 13 having completed it.
- ❑ The findings for household composition at the time of the referral were similar for both groups, with the largest percentage of both groups living in single parent homes.

Technical Assistance & Evaluation Issues

CJJP has provided technical assistance to the PCJDC in terms of data organization and information management. CJJP worked with the JDCO to create a database and protocols for capturing outcome information on both participants and the comparison group. One of the activities was to identify the successful graduates, the partially successful participants and the unsuccessful discharges. Another activity was to conduct an evaluation study of the program to examine the goals, resources, participants, and outcomes of the PCJDC.

The JDCO has regularly reported information about the PCJDC through quarterly reports, year-end statistics, and other documents prepared as requested. In the quarterly report the PCJDC is currently providing CJJP with: (1) a spreadsheet listing result areas,

programs and services, action steps and time frames, and program outcome measures; (2) some description of program changes; (3) participant demographics; (4) substance abuse information; and (5) selected participant outcomes. The information contained in the quarterly reports and other documents has generally been considered by CJJP as a good start in describing the program and its clients.

Developing Outcome Measures to Examine the Effectiveness of the Program

It is hoped that the following comments may serve as a guide for the PCJDC team to provide more meaningful outcome data in the future. However, it should be pointed out that volumes have been written on evaluation strategies and the use of outcome measures, that is not the intention here. Rather, this is a brief discussion of some of the more pertinent issues to consider when examining the effectiveness of a given program or intervention. The evaluators believe that the information already being collected and reported is useful and should continue, with the new information to be used as a supplement to gauge program effectiveness.

PCJDC's four primary objectives could be used as a starting point for what type of outcome information to capture for both participants and a comparison group. The four primary objectives are:

1. ***Did the young offenders stay clean and sober*** during their involvement with PCJDC? The PCJDC currently tracks and reports the number of drug tests given, the number of negative tests, and all the number of treatment appointments attended. While these intermediate outcomes are the focus of the PCJDC (how well did they do in the program), there appears to be a desire for the PCJDC team to know how well the participants do after leaving or graduating from the program.

In developing more in-depth measures of this variable, the program may need to develop or identify protocols that will examine the participant's attitude toward controlled substances, the participant's cognition or knowledge about controlled substances, and behaviors beyond staying clean and sober (e.g., not hanging around with peers who exhibit anti-social behaviors or who actively use controlled substances). The program may want to examine the POSIT, which is being used at admission, or another similar test that could be used at program completion to allow for an empirical examination of attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral changes. Put simply, what the program should want to know, is did the participant "get it" or did they just go through the motions. One of the young men who was later identified as successfully completing the program told the judge, just prior to being moved to the aftercare phase, that he believed that he could drink in moderation upon completing the program. Clearly, he "did not get it." This young man is probably at a higher risk for continuing to have substance abuse issues throughout his life than others who have made real changes in their attitudes and behaviors.

2. ***Did they do well in school?*** This item refers to completing assignments and making progress in their academic endeavors. The only related variables that are regularly reported include “the number of school days attended” and “the type of school (e.g., alternative or traditional)”. One of the things that could be instituted would be the collection of weekly, quarterly, or semester grades. In addition, the PCJDC may want to collect additional items to gauge how well participants do in school by collecting information about school behavior (e.g., tardiness, disciplinary reports, unexcused absences, suspensions).
3. ***Did they do well at home?*** This variable is currently not being reported. However, this variable may refer to a variety of different things such as how well they are doing in their relationship with their parents or siblings, and are they abiding by the rules of the house as well as the rules of the program. Related items that are being measured and should continue to be monitored include compliance with curfews, compliance with other specific rules, and the abstinence from the use of controlled substances. Other items to consider include peer relations, runaway behavior, as well as anger and other emotional issues. There may need to be some monitoring of the parents parenting skills to ascertain whether they are using appropriate techniques. This may include a monitoring of emotional, verbal, and physical conflict or abuse. It could also include the successful completion of parenting classes if deemed necessary and appropriate.
4. ***Did they have a job if school is going well?*** Many of the participants were working part-time during their involvement with the program. This goal was considered important in at least two major ways (1) in building self-esteem, and (2) teaching the participants to be responsible for earning (and spending money) which is anticipated to help them on their way to independence from their parents and families. To simply indicate whether a participant has a job or not, may not be all that meaningful. It is often more useful to know how long they held the job, whether they complied with employers rules and regulations, and how many different jobs they have held in a specific time period.

Conclusions

It is hoped that the information presented in this report will inform the current planning efforts and the data may serve as a baseline for future evaluation efforts. The fact that two individuals are being rejected for every one accepted suggests a need to determine the specific reasons, because on paper there appear to be many similarities between the two groups. The findings clearly indicate that all of the individuals who were admitted to the program did meet the criteria set out in the drug courts mission statement, however it also seems as if there are some individuals being rejected that also meet the criteria. This may suggest there is a greater need for these types of services than the program is currently able to handle. This implies the need for better documentation for reasons for rejection. This could also help identify needs for more or different resources in juvenile court and for use by the PCJDC team.

The findings regarding demographics, school, drug use, treatment, family issues, and offense information tend to show that there are some substantiated reasons for not accepting some of those in the comparison group. However, the comparison findings also suggest that the maximum caseload number of 30, the parents' willingness to assist the youth in their recovery, and other factors account for some of the admission decisions. **It is highly recommended that the PCJDC create a system to obtain and maintain outcome information for both the program's participants and those in the group of youth not accepted for admission and to use these groups for comparison purposes on an ongoing basis.** It may be just as important to follow those youth who are terminated unsuccessfully or age out of the juvenile justice system. Such information may allow for the identification of a "best" or "better" practice.

Basically juvenile drug courts are intended to promote greater behavioral accountability on the part of participants, resulting in increased levels of compliance with court-ordered conditions of release. As a result of the intensive supervision focused on the juvenile participant and the close collaboration of the drug court team, the Polk County juvenile drug court appears to be able to:

- ❑ Respond immediately when a participant becomes involved in recidivist delinquent activity.
- ❑ Respond immediately to subsequent substance use by the participant.
- ❑ Supervise the participant intensively.
- ❑ Help the participant develop structure and accountability that can benefit the participant during the program.

Lastly, CJJP recommends that the PCJDC team develop procedures to examine both intermediate outcomes (e.g., program compliance, program completion), as discussed, and procedures that can allow for the tracking of long-term outcomes (e.g.,

future recidivism, school completion, employment, continued or further drug use). Follow-up data on the individuals under 18 years of age may prove to be a little easier than for those over the 18. Juvenile information may be obtained through an agreement with juvenile court services and the local school systems. The collection and reporting of such information would be an important way to demonstrate the impact of the program and its ability to “turn young offenders around” and potentially lessen the need for services and interventions in the future.

