Evaluation of the Juvenile Drug Court Diversion Program

October 1999

Prepared by the Criminal Justice Council's
Statistical Analysis Center

STATE OF DELAWARE
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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Preface

Established in 1995 for juveniles from the City of Wilmington, the Family Court Juvenile Drug Court Program has grown into the only statewide Juvenile Drug Court program in the nation. From its inception the Judges of Family Court have sensed that the Juvenile Drug Court effectively serves its juvenile participants and the public's need for safety. The following evaluative report, conducted by the Statistical Analysis Center, objectively confirms the Juvenile Court's success:

- In reducing the overall recidivism rate of Delaware's juvenile substance-abuse offenders by statistically-significant levels;
- In reducing the arrest rates of the Juvenile Drug Court participants;
- In reducing the new offense rates of the Juvenile Drug Court graduates;
- In reducing the arrest rates on any category of offense (notably, felonies) of the Juvenile Drug Court juvenile graduates; and
- In reducing the arrest rates on felony-level drug offenses of the Juvenile Drug Court juvenile graduates.

At the same time that the evaluation demonstrates the Juvenile Drug Court has established an effective foundation, other findings in the report raise important questions and future challenges in maximizing the benefits of the program for its minority participants:

- How can the Juvenile Drug Court become a more effective community-based program by enlisting the counsel of community-based leaders?
- How can the Juvenile Drug Court program both increase parental participation and provide increased parental support?
- How can the Juvenile Drug Court better screen juveniles for needs beyond their substance-abuse issues?
- How can the Juvenile Drug Court program enhance the aftercare program in culturally competent ways?

As a Court we are committed to discussing issues related to these questions and we are confident that solutions will be forthcoming.

I wish to extend my gratitude to the Statistical Analysis Center and the Criminal Justice Council for this encouraging and helpful report. I also want to thank my colleagues who sit on

the Juvenile Drug Court for their tireless and effective service: The Honorable Peggy L. Ableman, The Honorable Kenneth M. Millman, The Honorable William N. Nicholas, The Honorable Peter B. Jones, and The Honorable William L. Chapman for his efforts in starting the Juvenile Drug Court in Wilmington in 1995. The Division of Child Mental Health and SODAT, Inc. deserve special recognition for their collaborative part in making the Juvenile Drug Court a notable and effective program. Most importantly of all, Family Court congratulates the juveniles and their parents who participate in the Juvenile Drug Court program. It is primarily their dedication and efforts that has enhanced the quality of their personal lives and the lives of all Delawareans by making our state safer for all its citizens.

The Honorable Vincent J. Poppiti
Chief Judge
Family Court of the State of Delaware

Evaluation of the Juvenile Drug Court Diversion Program

In 1995, Family Court of the State of Delaware, in cooperation with the city of Wilmington, Delaware, implemented a diversion and treatment program for juveniles with little or no prior criminal records who were arrested in Wilmington for misdemeanor drug charges. The city of Wilmington, using funds from the Comprehensive Communities Program, contracted with SODAT to provide substance abuse treatment for the juveniles. SODAT is a nonprofit agency specializing in outpatient treatment for substance abuse for adults and juveniles. In the treatment and diversion program, eligible juveniles are offered an opportunity for avoiding adjudication by successfully completing a treatment program.

In 1997 with the original funding exhausted, Family Court applied for and received funding from the Drug Court Program Office, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice to continue and expand the program. The program first expanded to encompass all of New Castle County in addition to the city of Wilmington. In 1998, the program began to serve juveniles from the city of Dover in Kent County. In 1999, the program expanded again to serve juveniles throughout Kent County and most recently, Sussex County. Because the Sussex program is too new to report results, it is not included in this evaluation.

Methodology

Delaware's Statistical Analysis Center was given the responsibility of evaluating the program. The first evaluation was completed in February of 1998 and involved a comparison of recidivism between the program group and a carefully constructed comparison group. For this report, the original database was expanded to include all juveniles who were admitted to the juvenile drug diversion program in New Castle and Kent Counties by the end of the first quarter of 1999. Demographic and program information from case files were recorded. Criminal history information on all arrests statewide for each juvenile was collected and verified using the Delaware Criminal Justice Information System.

In addition, an expanded comparison group was constructed by finding all arrests of 154 juveniles for comparable drug charges prior to the start of the programs in both countries. Using a matched comparison technique, 154 juveniles were randomly chosen to create a comparison group with equivalent criminal histories. The groups are also comparable in race and gender.

Other methods of data collection included participation in Drug Court team meetings, court observation, a snapshot of court appearance activity, and discussions with various Court and treatment personnel.

This second year juvenile drug court evaluation was to be enhanced by the addition of more detailed education, employment, and family information. The degree of success of juveniles, it is believed, would benefit from this additional social information. We were only partially successful in the collection of this additional information. Report cards were found for only twelve juveniles and pay stubs for only four.

Thus, data about families, work, and education at intake are used and court data are derived from the snapshot of all juveniles in the program who appeared in New Castle County or Kent County Family Court in May 1999.

Program Entry and Exit

The Juvenile Drug Court program targets juveniles with misdemeanor drug possession offenses for program consideration. Accompanying non-violent charges such as shoplifting do not generally exclude a juvenile from participation. During the Comprehensive Communities grant period, the criteria for program eligibility was drug involvement and minimal criminal history. Referrals came from a variety of sources including the police, Family Court, and defense attorneys, and in most cases were approved by the assigned deputy attorney general (DAG) assigned to the program. The original judge assigned to the program, however, also admitted some individuals with more extensive criminal histories whom he felt would benefit from program participation because of the access to treatment.

Under the current grant period, the criteria were narrowed to exclude juveniles with pending charges or convictions for violent offenses to comply with federal grant requirements. Although the program has emphasized juveniles with misdemeanor drug charges, in practice, the Attorney General's Office however, in its discretion, has allowed juveniles with charges of possession with intent to deliver a controlled substance (a felony offense) on a case by case basis to enter the juvenile drug court. The single most common charge faced by juveniles in the program has been possession of marijuana, which is a misdemeanor.

Referrals now come from the criminal case processing units in the Family Courts which put potential cases on the arraignment calendar and flags them for the DAG's review. In New Castle County, a SODAT staff person is available on the day of arraignments to consult with the DAG on referrals and to discuss program requirements with the juveniles and accompanying parent or guardian. In Kent County, the juveniles are already arraigned and then referred to the DAG's office for review and SODAT for evaluation.

The juvenile and parent or guardian are given forms to sign to ensure that they understand all the terms of the program, the rights given up, and the consequences of noncompliance. The juvenile's and parent's signatures are confirmed in court and the judge officially accepts the juvenile into the program.

During the program, the juvenile should maintain sobriety, attend all scheduled treatment sessions, and refrain from criminal activity. However, noncompliance is not grounds for automatic termination from the program. Relapse, which is not uncommon in substance abuse treatment progress, is sometimes handled by increasing the treatment intensity.

Individuals who are out of compliance are placed on a behavioral contract in which they agree to comply with the enhanced treatment plan and program rules within a certain period. If noncompliance persists, SODAT will request that the Court place the juveniles on a termination

calendar. The judge may allow them to continue the program if they achieve compliance with the enhanced program, but generally there will be zero tolerance for continued violations.

Adjudications are more likely than arrests to result in program termination, especially serious charges that lead to detention and secure care. Even adjudications will not result in a program termination in some cases. Decisions are made on a case by case basis; a less serious charge which clearly results from the struggle for sobriety is less likely to lead to termination. Even if an individual is kept in the program after adjudication, he still must face the consequences of that finding.

The judge makes the decision about the consequences of noncompliance. Many factors are considered, such as whether a relapsed juvenile is attending regularly, whether the juvenile is in compliance with the program stipulations, whether a new arrest and conviction arises out of a substance abuse problem, and whether the juvenile appears to be making sincere efforts to overcome addiction. When a juvenile is terminated from the program, he or she will be adjudicated and sentenced if found guilty.

For graduation, an individual must complete all of their treatment plan goals and be in compliance with diversion program rules for a substantial period of time, on average 200 days. At graduation, the juvenile is given a certificate and the charges are dismissed.

Treatment

All juveniles who enter in the program will go through intake and assessment procedures at SODAT; the contracted nonprofit substance abuse agency. Intake involves the juveniles and parents/guardians signing consent forms allowing information to be released to the Court consent allows SODAT to get treatment histories from other treatment providers. Patient rights are explained and an acknowledgment form is signed. The program services and requirements and consequences for noncompliance are reviewed. Personal information is also confirmed such as residence, school, employment, family, contact numbers, and insurance. A medical history is taken. A test for tuberculosis is done and a baseline urine screen is given to detect a wide range of abused substances.

The SODAT assessment involves the collection of information about family relationships and history, any history of physical abuse, social environment, school history and problems, employment, substance use history, substance abuse treatment history, mental health history, and criminal history.

The SODAT staff will then present the juvenile's evaluation to the Multidisciplinary Team who will develop an initial treatment plan and priorities. A DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV) diagnosis is made, a global assessment functioning score is developed, and a diagnostic summary is written. The juvenile is then assigned to a primary case SODAT manager/counselor who oversees the treatment plan.

All juveniles in the program receive case management services from SODAT. They include (1) regular urine screenings for drug use at least monthly and (2) court reporting and (3) accompaniment for monthly court reporting. The counselors write reports to the Court before each juvenile is scheduled to appear. The SODAT staff attends the status hearing with the juvenile, giving a short verbal summary of the juvenile's participation, highlighting progress and problems, and making recommendations.

There are three levels of involvement that SODAT may have with a drug court juvenile. All juveniles receive case management services from SODAT, some juveniles receive only case management services while receiving treatment elsewhere. Fifty-three individuals, 13.2 percent, received or are receiving only case management from SODAT with treatment provided elsewhere through agencies such as Brandywine Counseling and Crossroads. Generally, these juveniles had already started treatment in these programs before being placed in the drug court program.

Second, juveniles who have been arrested for drug possession, but are not scored as addicted by the DSM-IV assessment, are provided a psycho-educational program to educate juveniles about drugs, peer interactions, and avoiding peer pressure. Family counseling, job training, and scholastic intervention are also available as needed. Drug screens are given regularly and juveniles who cannot maintain sobriety may be moved up to more intensive treatment.

Third, SODAT provides treatment programs for addicted juveniles. The treatment program includes treatment group sessions, individual counseling, and family counseling in the New Castle County program. Family counseling was not available in the Dover program until the winter of 1999. Groups are run by the juveniles' case managers and individuals generally stay in same group unless other commitments intervene.

In the group sessions, the group leader will generally choose a pertinent topic, sometimes introducing it by using videos to give information and stimulate discussion. Group sessions are scheduled every week while individual sessions are scheduled about once a month.

The level of treatment that an individual receives may change during the treatment process depending upon need. Someone in the educational program may need to move up to the treatment program while someone in treatment at SODAT may be found to need more intensive treatment and enter day or inpatient treatment at another facility. Completion of more intensive treatment may be followed by a period of case management or less intense treatment at SODAT before graduation.

Court Proceedings

Both Courts schedule status hearings with juveniles approximately once a month if progress is satisfactory or every two weeks if the juvenile is in danger of being terminated from the program. In both Courts, judges make the final decisions, but in the process give considerable weight to SODAT's recommendations.

SODAT's recommendations to the Court might include continuation in the program, a more intensive level of treatment, graduation from the program, or putting the juvenile on a termination calendar. Other recommendations might include a request that a curfew be imposed, an order for a mental health examination, anger management education, or a job search.

Court proceedings vary somewhat between New Castle County and Kent County. In New Castle County, the judge hears the cases of juveniles in a group of ten or less. The juveniles sit together at the table while accompanying parents take seats along the back of the courtroom. In Kent County, each juvenile is heard separately and sits with his accompanying parent, parents, or guardian.

The New Castle County judge holds juvenile drug court two afternoons per month. Three one hour sessions are scheduled, from 1:00 - 2:00 PM, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM, and from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM. Approximately 27 - 30 juveniles are scheduled each afternoon. Juveniles and their accompanying parents or guardians remain for the full one-hour session with the exception of graduating juveniles who are heard first, congratulated, and permitted to leave.

Court observation on a typical day in the New Castle County Court found seven juveniles scheduled for the first session. Five showed up. Between sessions, the SODAT case manager called the boys and left messages about their failure to attend. She reached one mother who reacted with a lack of concern. She agreed, at the program director's urging, to call the school. The boy received the message and took a bus to court, arriving toward the end of the last session. The judge reproached the boy but allowed him to continue in the program, citing his otherwise exemplary report.

Ten juveniles were scheduled for the second session. Eight arrived for the session; seven were on time and one was five minutes late and reminded of his responsibility to arrive on time by the project director. One of the two remaining juveniles arrived for the last session, stating that he had misread the time. For the third session, nine of the ten individuals arrived as scheduled.

The judge spent anywhere from three to six minutes discussing the juvenile's progress with him or her. The judge was clearly prepared with questions and comments that pertained to the particular individual and multiple issues were covered. Issues such as attendance, active participation, drug screen results, school performance, cooperation at home, and work were addressed. The judge offered praise to those with good reports and a mixture of both praise and negative criticism to those with mixed reports. To those having trouble maintaining sobriety who were nevertheless putting effort into the program, she stressed her belief that the individual could successfully complete the program.

On the day of observation, the school year was about to end and the judge made it a point to find out what the juveniles' plans were for the summer. For those old enough to get jobs, she urged them to do so, citing an article showing an availability of summer jobs for youth. For those who were not old enough, she suggested volunteer work, a reading program, and was approving of plans for structured recreational activities such as Boys and Girls Club summer camp.

One theme the judge stressed was fairness which seemed to hit a responsive chord with the juveniles. On issues of being late for court and/or group treatment sessions or in response to individual's unwillingness to participate in some part of the treatment program, she stressed that it would be unfair for her to fail to call some juveniles to task when others were complying with rules and treatment plans.

The judge also used some juveniles as object lessons, addressing all the juveniles in court. For example, after she had discussed one boy's inability to maintain sobriety with him, she learned that his prospective summer job offer with a bank had fallen through when he failed a drug test. She pointed out to him and to the group that there are career consequences for failing to overcome an addiction, such as losing a good paying white collar job in an air conditioned environment. Some of the juveniles had not yet found jobs and others had reported that they would be cutting grass or making pizzas; the comments about the boy's lost opportunity appeared to have an impact.

She also pointed out to juveniles who were having trouble maintaining sobriety, that this was evidence of an addiction, first addressing the juvenile and then the group as a whole. She reminded them that many once had the belief that marijuana was not addictive yet here were individuals who clearly wanted to complete a program that would allow them to avoid having a criminal conviction yet who could not gain control over their behavior.

Following the completion of the last session, the judge directed the project manager to notify her as soon as possible of any legitimate reasons for nonattendance before she issues capiases. This is to avoid issuing a capias when a message has gone astray. For example, one boy was hospitalized for unrelated health problems and the project manager did not receive the message in time to inform the judge during the time of his scheduled appearance.

The Kent County judge holds juvenile drug court two mornings per month. Approximately ten individuals area scheduled for hearings on each morning. The juveniles are heard separately. Parents sit at the table with the juveniles and are part of the proceedings. The SODAT staff reports on the individual's progress. The judge asks questions, makes comments, and then announces his decision.

On the day observed, ten individuals were scheduled, nine for status hearings and one for program entry. All juveniles except one arrived and were accompanied by at least one parent. The father of the absent youth appeared, related to the judge that his son was at sports camp and reported that he was doing well. The SODAT staff reported on the juvenile's progress. The judge commented that the father's appearance had avoided his issuing a capias, which would have caused his son to be arrested for failure to appear. The other eight status hearings took from four to eighteen minutes.

The judge asked open-ended questions to each individual. When juveniles were doing well, he asked them what they had learned or about their plans. When there were positive drug screen results, the judge asked each juvenile what had happened and asked for a detailed account of when relapse occurred, what time or day, who was present, and about the circumstances. He

also actively involved the parent or parents in the discussion, asking for their impressions of the juvenile's progress, about his behavior at home, their knowledge of relapse or why he had missed attending a treatment session if these events had occurred. As with the New Castle County judge, getting a summer job or keeping busy in constructive ways was a concern.

The open ended questions helped to provide insight into the juveniles' problems. For example, although the parents of one boy reported that their son was regularly attending meetings and obeying his curfew, SODAT reported that the boy had stopped attending his treatment sessions and the boy confessed that he had relapsed. The discussion revealed that the parents had set a curfew of midnight and given their son a car so they were actually unaware of where he was or what he was doing with his evenings. The judge made reference to an earlier discussion with the boy in which the juvenile had insisted that he was committed to the program, reminded him of the consequences of failure, imposed a curfew of 6:00 PM, scheduled him to appear in two weeks, and put him on a termination calendar for four weeks. If he did not achieve compliance with program regulations, he would be terminated from the program in four weeks.

In another case, ongoing conflict with a stepparent was discussed by the judge with a juvenile and his family. He expressed concern that ongoing conflict could contribute to relapse. He asked SODAT to have the family counselor meet with the family. He reminded the boy that he needed to complete his schooling if he expected to get a job that paid well enough for him to live on his own.

In both Courts, the procedures represent a departure from traditional family court juvenile hearings, first because of the addition of regular status hearings and secondly, because the judges are using group processes to facilitate the individual's progress in treatment. In New Castle County, the judge involves the 'peer group' of other juveniles, while in Kent County, the judge involves the parents or guardians in the discussions of progress and goals.

Court Form Data

In addition to observational data, information is available from court data forms developed for SODAT by the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center. The court data form includes such information as client attendance to scheduled court visits, adult accompaniment, and the nature of comments and recommendations made by the judges and SODAT staff. SODAT personnel began maintaining the data forms on court appearances in March. May was selected as a sample month for data analysis. Sixty-one juveniles were scheduled for court appearances, forty-five in New Castle County and sixteen in Kent County.

Report findings from the court form shows that 56, or 91.8 percent, of the juveniles appeared at their scheduled reviews; five juveniles did not. None of the five had called SODAT to report an inability to attend.

Table One: The Majority of Juveniles (72.1 Percent) were Accompanied by an Adult

Of those Accompanied, the Adult was their . . .	Percent of Cases
Mother	75.0
Father	15.9
Other Family or Guardian	6.8
DFS Worker	2.3

In all but one case, the appearance was a scheduled review or termination hearing. In one case, an individual had relapsed on heroin and was subpoenaed in court and detained pending commitment to inpatient treatment.

Table Two: The Judges Offer Constructive Comments to Juvenile Clients

The Judge Made Comments Regarding the Juvenile's . . .	Percent of Cases
Positive Progress	69.6
Negative Progress	12.5
Mixed (Positive and Negative) Progress	14.3
Neutral Progress	3.6
Positive Demeanor	16.1
Negative Demeanor	2.3
Cooperation of Parents	23.2

The judges followed SODAT's recommendations. Of those juveniles who appeared in court, the recommendation was that one juvenile be allowed to enter the program (1.8 percent), one be detained (1.8 percent) continuation in the program for 76.8 percent of the juveniles, graduation for 14.3 percent, and termination for 5.4 percent.

Description of the Population

The mean age of the 401 juveniles served by the juvenile drug court since 1995 is 15.9 years, with a range of 11 to 19. Table One shows the breakdown of gender and race/ethnicity. 83.8 percent are male; 16.2 percent female. 64.6 percent of the juveniles are white, 30.2 percent are African-American, 4.7 percent Hispanic and .5 percent Asian.

Table Three: Gender and Race/Ethnicity of the 401 Juveniles Served by the Diversion Program in New Castle and Kent Counties by March 31, 1999

	White		African-American		Hispanic		Asian		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	213	53.1	104	25.9	17	4.2	2	0.5	336	83.8
Female	46	11.5	17	4.2	2	0.5	0	0	65	16.2
Total	259	64.6	121	29.9	19	4.7	2	0.5	401	100.0

Table Four: Approximately a Third of Clients Lived with Both Parents When Admitted

	No.	Percentage
Both Parents	144	35.9
Parent & stepparent	57	14.2
Parent & parent's significant other	15	3.7
Mother	106	26.4
Father	19	4.7
Alternating custody	4	1.0
Other relative	29	7.2
Foster parent	1	0.2
Peer	4	1.0
College dorm	2	0.5
Unknown	20	5.0

The SODAT evaluator asked juveniles entering treatment for their drug of choice. Most juveniles reported marijuana as their drug of choice. The breakdown of responses is as follows:

- Marijuana was the drug of choice for 77.6 percent
- Alcohol was the second most commonly named drug of choice, listed by 7.7 percent
- Heroin was the drug of choice for 1.5 percent
- Other responses: .7 percent named nicotine, .2 percent named hallucinogens or cocaine, and 9 percent denied having a drug of choice.
- Information was unavailable for 3.0 percent.

The vast majority of juveniles (83.3 percent) were enrolled in school at the time of admission; 54 juveniles, or 13.5 percent, were not attending school. Of those not attending school, 7 juveniles, or13.0 percent, had a high school diploma or GED. Information was unavailable for 3.2 percent of the juveniles.

Less than half of the juveniles (37.7 percent) were working at the time of admission. Of those, 80.1 percent were part time or summer jobs and 19.9 were full time jobs. Information was unavailable for 3.9 percent of the juveniles.

Program Completion

Of the 401 juveniles admitted into treatment by the end of the first quarter of 1999, 218 have completed treatment, 118 failed to complete the treatment program and 65 were continuing in the program as of the end of June 1999. Looking only at the 336 inactive juveniles, the completion rate was 64.9 percent.

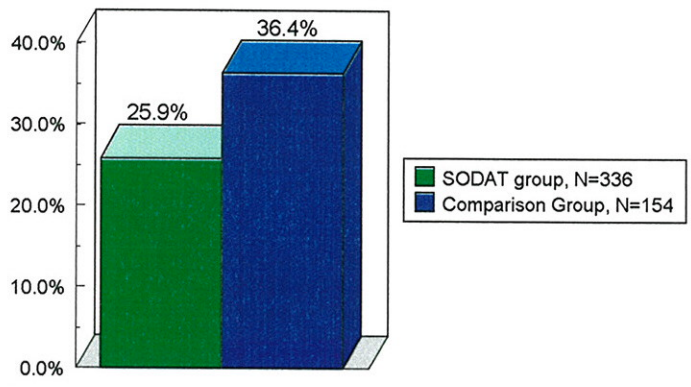
Recidivism

Recidivism is defined as a new arrest. Probation violations and contempt of court activity which showed up in arrest records were excluded from the arrest counts. Figure One shows the rearrest rate of juveniles in the SODAT treatment group during the treatment period. Only juveniles who were no longer active at the time of data collection in June 1999 were included. The comparison group figure was constructed by treating the first 200 days following their drug possession arrests as a 'treatment period.' This figure was used because it was the average time spent in treatment for the SODAT group.

The difference between the SODAT and the comparison groups is statistically significant. Using the Independent Samples t-test of the means, p = .018 .

FIGURE ONE: New Arrests during the Treatment Period

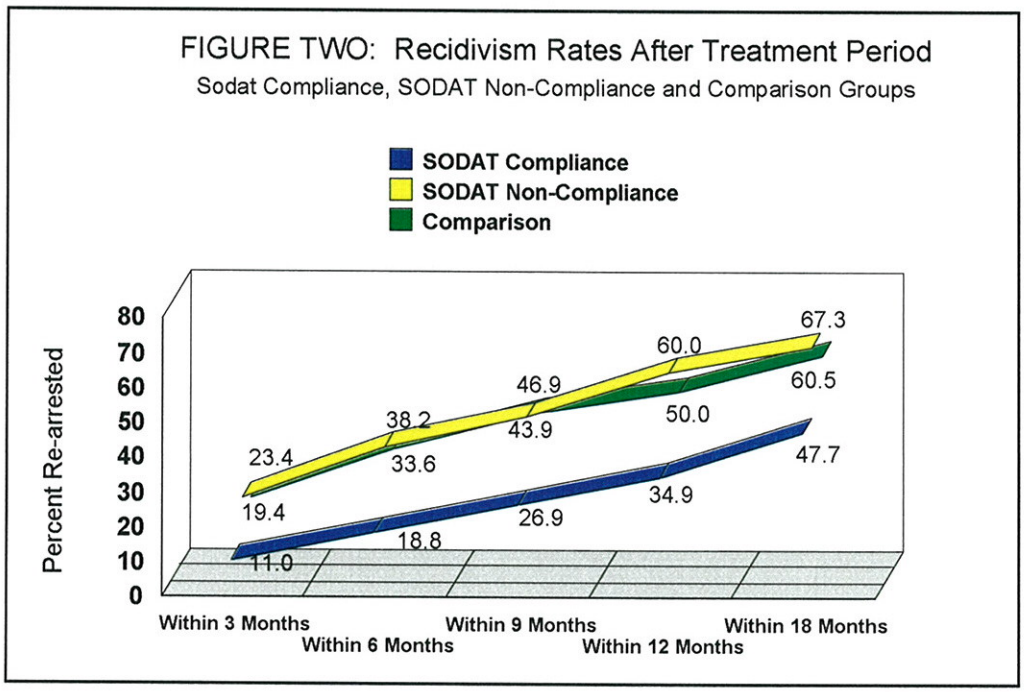
Perentage of Juveniles in each category



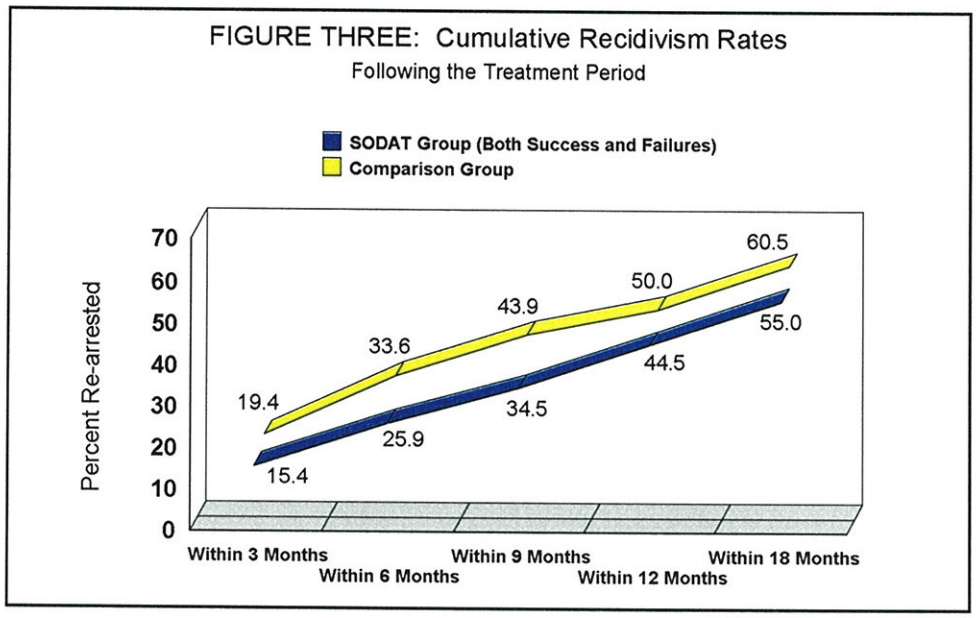
NOTE: The figure for the SODAT group represents the percent of arrests during the actual treatment periods for each individual. The 'treatment period' for the juveniles in the comparison group is considered to be 200 days, average for the SODAT group.

Figure Two shows the cumulative recidivism rate beginning with the time juveniles completed or were terminated from treatment and continuing through eighteen months following treatment. Only those individuals who had completed or been terminated from the program for the specified follow-up period are included in each figure. Thus, the number of juveniles in each category progressively declines in each group. At three months, there are 311 juveniles in the SODAT group (200 that complied with program, and 111 that did not comply with the program) and 139 in the control group. At eighteen months, there are 140 SODAT juveniles (88 that complied with the program, and 52 that did not) and 81 control group juveniles.

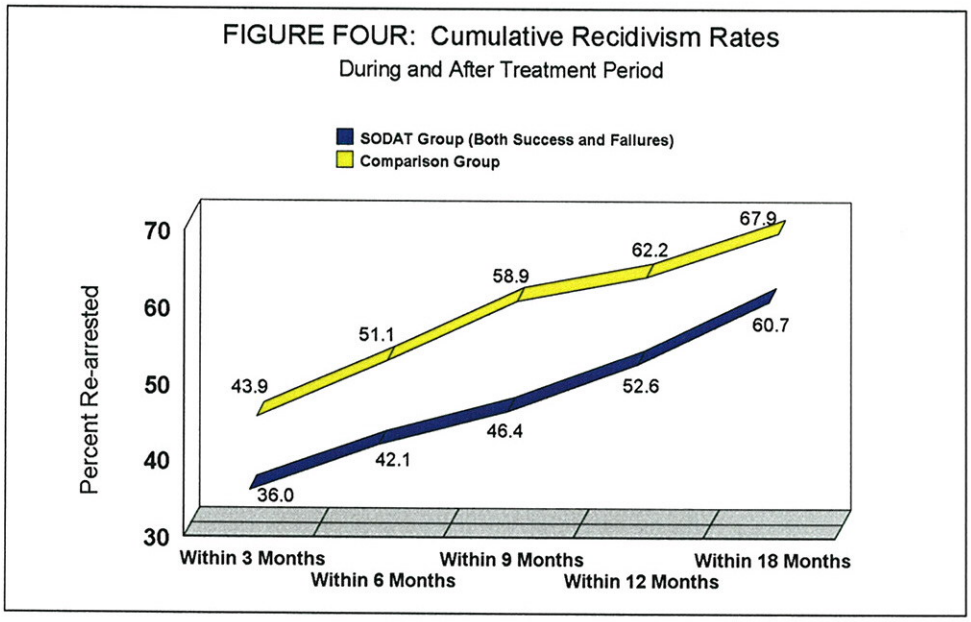
Recidivism rates for successful SODAT participants is significantly better than the non-successful SODAT participant or the comparison group. When looking at post treatment recidivism, the results are statistically significant until 18 months out. For successful treatment juveniles versus the comparison group, p. = .030, .003, .004, .029, .097. For successful treatment juveniles versus the unsuccessful treatment group, it is also statistically significant, p. = .004, .000, .001, .000, .024. The differences between the unsuccessful treatment group and the comparison group are not statistically significant.



Comparison also must be made between the comparison group and ***all*** SODAT participants as a whole, whether they were compliant or not. When comparing all SODAT participant together, the results are not as significant, but still positive. Figure Three consistently shows a small but consistently lower recidivism rate for the SODAT group than for the comparison group. However, none of the differences between the SODAT group and the comparison group are statistically significant at the .05 level which is the academic standard. Using the Independent Samples T-Test of the means, p = .295, .108, .093, .399, and .429, for 3, 6, 9, 12, and 18 months, respectively. This indicates that the maximum impact of the juvenile drug court program is at six and nine months following program completion **or** failure.



Another way to examine recidivism is to look at new arrests following program admission. Figure Four presents a cumulative recidivism rate that includes recidivism **both** during and following the treatment period. Once again, only those individuals who had completed **or** been terminated from the program for the specified follow-up period are included in each figure. Figure Four shows a wider divergence between the treatment and the comparison groups, but only the nine month figures reach statistical significance. Using the Independent Samples t-test of the means, p = .113, .086, .031, .141, and .287, for 3, 6, 9, 12, and 18 months, respectively. While the majority of these figures are not statistically significant in the strictest sense, the persistence of meaningful numbers indicate that the differences are unlikely to be the result of chance. This perspective again indicates maximum effectiveness for six to nine months following release. Measuring recidivism from the start of the program also indicates the importance of being actively involved in a juvenile drug court program.



Once again combining all SODAT participants, Table Five shows the most serious new charges incurred by juveniles after treatment up until 18 months following treatment. The SODAT program participants are less likely to be arrested in any category of offense, most notably for felonies, than are juveniles in the comparison group. These results indicate that not only does the Juvenile Drug Court program reduce recidivism, it also helps decrease the impact on public safety by reducing the severity of crime.

Table Five: Most serious new charges incurred after the treatment period*

	All SODAT Participants	**Comparison Group**	
Most Serious Charges	**Percent**	**Percent**	**Percentage Point Difference**
No new charges	62.4	55.0	7.4
Violent Felony	10.4	13.9	-3.5
Drug Felony	3.8	8.6	-4.8
Nonviolent Felony	3.8	6.0	-2.2
Violent Misdemeanor	2.7	4.0	-1.3
Drug Misdemeanor	5.3	4.0	1.3
Other Misdemeanor	10.7	7.3	3.4
DUI	0.6	0	0.6
Violation	0.3	0.7	-0.4

* Figures are presented without regard to period at risk.

Grant Periods

Table Six shows that despite the geographical expansion in availability of the program as well as the usual personnel changes which occur over time, program outcomes have been consistent.

Table Six: Juveniles in the Drug Diversion Program who have been Re-arrested During the First Year following Program Discharge By Grant Period

	No. in	Percent Re-arrested
First Grant Period	162	45.1
Second Grant Period	47	42.6

Note: Using Independent T-Test of the Means, p. = .762

Risk factors associated with recidivism in the SODAT treatment group

The relationships between demographic and other factors and recidivism were also examined. Only those juveniles discharged from the program twelve months or more before data collection are included in the following tables. Table Seven shows that minority juveniles are significantly more likely to be re-arrested as compared to white juveniles. Table Eight shows that boys are significantly more likely than girls to be re-arrested.

Table Seven: Juveniles in the Drug Diversion Program who have been Re-arrested During the First Year following Program Discharge by Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity *	No. in Category	Percent Re-arrested
African-American	81	60.5
Hispanic	6	66.7
White	121	33.1

Note: Using Pearson's Chi Square, p. = .001

* In addition, there were two Asian juveniles in the program, neither of whom have reoffended.

Table Eight: Juveniles in the Drug Diversion Program who have been Re-arrested During the First Year following Program Discharge by Gender

Gender	No. in Category	Percent Re-arrested
Male	174	48.9
Female	35	22.9

Note: Using Independent Samples T-Test , p. = .005

Table Nine: Juveniles in the Drug Diversion Program who have been Re-arrested During the First Year following Program Discharge By the Parents or Guardians with whom the Juvenile Lived When Admitted

Juvenile resides with:	No. in	Percent Re-arrested
Both Parents	68	30.9
Mother	69	46.4
Father	9	55.6
Other Relative	15	60.0
Parent and Significant Other *	30	70.0

* Includes both stepparents and live-in partners.
Notes: Using Pearson's Chi Square, p. = .011
In addition, there were 2 juveniles with split custody arrangements neither of whom were re-arrested , two living on campus neither of whom were re-arrested and one living with a friend who was rearrested. Excluded from this table are juveniles whose living arrangements were not known .

Table Ten: Juveniles in the Drug Diversion Program who have been Re-arrested During the First Year following Program Discharge by Urinalysis Results During Treatment

Test Results	No. in Category	Percent Re-arrested
Positive for drugs	97	56.7
Negative for drugs	100	33.0

Notes: A positive result means that drug use was detected after treatment was begun.
Table excludes juveniles who dropped out before a urinalysis could be done and those who refused one.
Using Pearson's Chi Square, p. = .001

Table Eleven: Juveniles in the Drug Diversion Program who have been Re-arrested During the First Year following Program Discharge by Re-arrest during Program

Re-arrest During Program	No. in Category	Percent Re-arrested One Yr. after Discharge
Yes	52	69.2
No	157	36.3

Using Pearson's Chi Square, p. = .000

The data shows that minority juveniles, boys, and those not living with both parents are more likely to be re-arrested following treatment. Testing positive for drugs and being re-arrested are predictors of post-program arrests.

Gender, Minority Status, and Program Effectiveness

An important aspect of programming for juvenile offenders is gender and cultural awareness. Therefore, a closer examination of the relationships between gender and recidivism and between race/ethnicity and recidivism should be useful. Table Twelve shows that the SODAT treatment program has a lower rearrest rate following treatment for both girls and boys than the comparison group.

Table Twelve: Re-arrest rates During the First Year following Program Discharge by Gender

Gender	Group	No. in Category	Percent Re-arrested Within One Year
Male	Comparison	71	53.5
	Treatment	174	48.9
Female	Comparison	11	27.3
	Treatment	35	22.9

Table Thirteen shows that in contrast to the results by gender, minority juveniles in the treatment program do not have lower arrest rates than juveniles in the comparison group.

Table Thirteen: Re-arrest rates During the First Year following Program Discharge by Minority Status and Group

		Percent Re-arrested Within				
Status	**Group**	**Three Months**	**Six Months**	**Nine Months**	**One Year**	**Eighteen Months**
Minority	Comparison	26.8	42.3	47.7	50.0	64.9
	Treatment	25.2	39.4	52.4	60.9	64.6
Non-Minority	Comparison	14.5	27.8	41.3	50.0	56.8
	Treatment	9.7	17.3	22.1	32.8	46.7

Notes:
* Treatment group includes both success and failure cases.
* African-American and Hispanic youth were classified as minority while white and
* Asian-American youth were classified as non-minority.
* Using Independent T-Test of the Means for Minorities, p. = .779, .699, .643, .291, .980.
* Using Independent T-Test of the Means for Non-Minorities, p. = .261, .056, .005, .047, .289.
* Recidivism results for minorities in the juvenile drug court is counter intuitive at the later time periods -- that is, it appears that minorities in the drug court have higher recidivism rates. This statistically is not true because of the levels of non-significance.
* Recidivism results for non-minorities are statistically significant at 6, 9 and 12 months post-treatment, even including those who were terminated or quit the program.

Since non-minority juveniles in the treatment program were more likely to come from families where both parents are present in the household, a cross tabulation was performed to see if custodial status rather than minority status explains the higher minority re-arrest rate. Table Fourteen shows that the lower percentage of minority youth living with both parents is clearly a factor which contributes to a higher overall re-arrest rate for minorities in the program but that both factors are independently associated with a greatly likelihood of re-arrest. Unfortunately, no information about the custodial situation is available for youth in the comparison group.

Table Fourteen: Re-arrest rates During the First Six Months following Program Discharge by Minority Status and Custodial Situation for the SODAT group

Status	Lives With	No. in Category	Percent Re-arrested
Minority	Both Parents	15	26.7
	Other	86	41.9
Non-Minority	Both Parents	73	12.8
	Other	86	20.5

Note: Six months post discharge recidivism was chosen because later figures have too few juveniles in the minority, both parents category for analysis.

Family structure and program completion are two factors that we have identified as determinants of success. As Table Fifteen below shows, minorities are 62 percent less likely than non-minorities to come from a family structure with both parents, and are 31 percent less likely to complete the program. These variables may explain, in part, the different program results for minorities. Other factors that are not considered in this report, but may be other important determinants for success include peer pressure and neighborhood environment.

Table Fifteen: Minorities are Less Likely than Non-Minorities to Live with Both Parents or to Complete the Juvenile Drug Court Diversion Program

All Participants - Compliant and Non-Compliant	Percent of Total Who Lives with Both Parents	Percent of Total Who Completed Program
Minority	18.5	51.4
Non-Minority	48.2	74.9