

Assessment of the Current Juvenile Detention System in Georgia

March 19, 2003



**Children and Youth Coordinating Council
Georgia Detention Alternatives Initiative**
10 Park Place South, Suite 410, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Part I: Overview of Georgia’s Juvenile Justice System/System Analysis.....	1
Part II: Juvenile Crime Profile.....	8
Part III: Statewide Detention Data.....	14
Part IV: Interagency Barriers to Detention Reform.....	27
Part V: Conclusion/Future Analysis.....	29
Attachment A.....	30

Tables

1	Georgia Population of Juveniles 10 – 17 Years by Gender and Race.....	8
2	Hispanic/Latino Population of Juveniles 10 – 17 Years by Gender.....	9
3	Statewide Juvenile Arrests (by offense) Age 16 and Under.....	10
4	Juvenile Arrests (by offense, percent female) Age 16 and Under.....	11
5	Juvenile Court Cases Filed (number of youth), 1990 – 2000.....	12
6	Counts Filed by Juvenile Courts by Offense and Race 1996 – 2000.....	13
7	Most Serious Offense Committed by Detained Youth: 2000 – 2002.....	16
8	Age and Gender for Most Serious Offense by Detained Youth 2002.....	16
9	Average Number of Days in Detention for All Detained Youth.....	18
10	Total Detained Youth.....	19
11	Percent of Total Detained Youth by DAI Score Category.....	20
12	Reasons Youth With DAI Scores Below 12 Were Detained.....	22
13	Percent Detained Youth Receiving DAI by DAI Score Category.....	23
14	Average Length of Stay, by DAI Score Category/Race & Gender.....	24
15	Most Serious Offense Committed by Different Groups.....	25

Figures

1	Average Daily Population in RYDCs by Month FY2000 – FY 2003.....	17
2	Average Length of Stay for Detained Youth by DAI Score Category.....	21

Introduction:

Since Georgia's 1998 Memorandum of Agreement with the U. S. Department of Justice concerning conditions of confinement in the state's secure juvenile facilities, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has focused heavily on statewide juvenile detention reform. In 2000, the Annie E. Casey Foundation joined DJJ in this effort by funding the Georgia Detention Alternatives Initiative (GDAI). During the past three years, a great deal of progress has been made in reducing population and improving conditions in Georgia's secure juvenile detention centers. Yet progress has been limited in some respects due to the complexities of Georgia's juvenile justice system and the challenges inherent in applying the Annie E. Casey Foundation's detention reform model on a statewide level. In short, detention populations and overcrowding have been significantly reduced, but large numbers of low-risk offenders continue to be detained in many jurisdictions. Much of the state's judiciary has yet to embrace the core principals of detention reform, particularly the use of Georgia's Detention Assessment Instrument (DAI) as a standardized decision-making tool.

DJJ has significantly enhanced the quality of statistical data concerning youth under its jurisdiction. As a result, Georgia can now provide a clearer picture of the youth entering its network of Regional Youth Detention Centers (RYDCs) and a more accurate assessment of detention trends and patterns. Thus, while the state still lacks a comprehensive juvenile court database, data are much more complete than in the past, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of the state's juvenile detention system. What follows is an in-depth assessment of juvenile detention trends and issues in Georgia in accordance with the planning process outlined in Volume I of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "Pathways to Juvenile Detention Reform".

Part I: Overview of Georgia's Juvenile Justice System/System Analysis

The initiation of statewide detention reform in Georgia has been hampered due to the state's size, tenth most populous in the U.S., the lack of detailed legal restrictions on the use of secure detention, and the diverse fragmented nature of Georgia's juvenile justice system. The system consists of two primary elements: local juvenile courts serving either single counties or multi-county jurisdictions and the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. Together, the two are responsible for serving all youth under the age of 17 who have either violated criminal statutes (i.e., delinquents) or have committed status offenses. However, since the passage of Senate Bill 440 in 1994, juveniles charged with one of seven serious violent offenses come within the exclusive jurisdiction of the superior courts. Juvenile courts continue to have the authority to waive other juvenile offenders to adult court under specific circumstances, although this involves only 40 to 60 cases each year.

In Georgia, youth that are 17 years of age or older fall under jurisdiction of the state's adult criminal system except when they are already under juvenile court supervision upon reaching age 17. In those instances, the juvenile justice system can retain jurisdiction over a youth until age 21 or until he/she is charged with a new criminal offense.

A. Juvenile Court Structure

With a single exception, Georgia's 159 counties are served by three different types of juvenile courts: (1) independent courts with full or part-time juvenile judges who supervise county-funded intake and probation departments; (2) courts with full or part-time juvenile judges where DJJ provides all intake and probation services, and (3) courts where intake and probation responsibilities are shared between DJJ staff and county personnel. One Judicial circuit in Southwest Georgia continues to be served by Superior Court Judges who hear juvenile cases.

Independent juvenile courts are located in 16 of the state's counties. Seven of these serve populous, urban counties, six are located in intermediate-sized counties with populations between 50,000 and 100,000, and three are located in predominantly rural communities. Independent courts are funded entirely by county commissions and provide intake and probation services through locally controlled and directed probation departments. Altogether, independent courts handle approximately 50% of all delinquent cases in the state each year. These courts are subject exclusively to local control and vary significantly in philosophy and practice.

Responsibility for intake and probation services is shared between county and DJJ staff in nine counties, with these services being provided exclusively by DJJ employees in 134 counties. Since intake and probation services in the latter are managed by DJJ, procedures and practices in these jurisdictions are more consistent and often differ from those of independent courts.

Thus, there are two distinct intake/probation systems in the state - one centrally controlled by DJJ with uniform policies and operational policies, and the other operating independently under the direction of local juvenile court judges. Courts with shared responsibility represent a blend of these two systems, but tend to operate more in accordance with DJJ policies. In addition, individual judicial philosophies and practices vary a great deal and play a major role in shaping the character of each juvenile court. A major challenge facing Georgia's juvenile justice system is the integration and standardization of juvenile court practices between DJJ and the independent courts, particularly in regard to detention practices.

B. Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

As Georgia's juvenile correctional agency, the Department of Juvenile Justice is responsible for all youth committed to state custody. In addition, the Department provides juvenile intake and probation services for 143 counties. The Department manages five long-term Youth Development Centers (YDCs) directly and contracts with private providers for four other institutions for 90-day placements.

DJJ's Community Corrections manages a network of 22 Regional Youth Detention Centers (RYDCs) and a variety of detention alternatives. This entity is also responsible for parole and aftercare services in all of the state's 159 counties and administers a number of community-based alternatives for committed youth, including four group homes, five Multi Service Centers or evening report centers, three community schools and intensive supervision programs in 22 jurisdictions. In addition, the Department contracts with various public and private agencies for residential and outpatient treatment of special needs offenders.

C. Detention Process

There are five primary decision points for youth within Georgia's juvenile justice system:

- (1) Arrest
- (2) Intake
- (3) Adjudication
- (4) Disposition
- (5) Placement (for committed youth)

At any point in the process, offenders may be diverted from further penetration of the system. DJJ data indicates that more than 60% of all youth entering the system each year are diverted prior to a formal adjudication.

1) Arrest:

Most delinquent offenders enter the system through contact with law enforcement. However, most status offenders and some delinquents are referred directly to the court by parents, school officials or other parties filing a petition. When a police officer apprehends a youth suspected of committing an offense, the officer can either release the youth or file a juvenile court complaint. If charges are filed, the officer may recommend detention of the youth but must, in either case, bring the case before a

juvenile court intake officer authorized by the presiding juvenile judge.

2) Intake:

State law requires that court-authorized intake officers be available to receive complaints 24 hours a day. Outside of independent court jurisdictions, DJJ employees typically serve as intake workers as authorized by the presiding juvenile judge. When a complaint is received, the intake worker makes the initial detention decision. If the youth is charged, the worker subsequently recommends to either informally adjust the case or to file a petition for formal processing.

If a youth is charged, the intake worker then determines whether the youth should be detained pending a detention hearing or released to his/her family pending adjudication or adjustment. Except in populous, urban jurisdictions, this usually occurs prior to the transportation of the youth to a Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC). Thus, RYDC staff play no role in the detention decision because this decision is made before the youth actually reaches the detention center.

The Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) section governing detention provides for the use of secure detention **for purposes other than public safety or to ensure court appearance**. Specifically, Georgia law permits secure detention in order to protect a child from harm. Coupled with a very broad definition as to what constitutes a risk to public safety, secure detention is permitted for virtually any child prior to adjudication. This has led to the detention of significant numbers of low risk offenders who have high mental health needs and behavioral problems. This constitutes a major barrier to detention reform.

During 2000, DJJ mandated the use of a detailed Detention Assessment Instrument (DAI) by all departmental intake staff as an objective guide for detention decisions. Detention decisions are based on numerous factors that have been incorporated into the DAI. Georgia's DAI mandates the unconditional release of youth with low risk (0-7) scores. Medium risk youth (8-11) may be released either unconditionally or into non-secure diversion programs, while high risk youth (12 and over) should usually be securely detained.

However, the DAI has not been universally accepted by the judiciary, particularly in counties with independent courts. Until late 2002, no independent court utilized DAI's at intake (three are now using it to some extent), and DAI's were only completed in these jurisdictions for youth securely detained. In addition, DJJ intake workers have not consistently entered DAI scores for youth released at intake into DJJ's Juvenile Tracking

System (JTS). As a result, DAI data are missing for nearly all youth released at intake, preventing any assessment of the DAI override rate for the state. Instead, only the proportion of low, medium and high risk youth actually detained can be determined.

In early 2000, DJJ created a network of case expeditors charged with reviewing intake decisions and moving low and medium risk youth from secure detention as quickly as possible. These workers have access to a wider range of residential and non-residential resources than those previously available. Although DJJ intake officers consider DAI scores in all detention decisions, a full range of alternatives may not be immediately available at the time of intake, particularly in rural areas. In these instances, youth may be detained briefly until an alternative placement can be arranged. Thus, the DAI score may drive the decision to remove rather than divert a youth from detention.

If a youth charged with a delinquent offense is detained, a probable cause hearing must be held within 48 hours. At this hearing, the judge determines if continued detention prior to adjudication is necessary. If continued detention is ordered, an adjudicatory hearing must be held within 10 working days. Status offenders who are detained at intake must receive detention hearings within 48 hours, including weekends and holidays. Unlike delinquents, status offenders may only be held in detention for an additional 48 hours following a detention hearing and must then either be released or adjudicated. Under Georgia law, status offenders must be released following adjudication unless they are committed to state custody. Committed status offenders can be detained indefinitely pending placement. In general, committed status offenders are released from detention shortly after commitment.

3) Adjudication:

Unless a petition is adjusted, dismissed or withdrawn, an adjudicatory hearing will be held for all youth charged with either a delinquent or status offense. During the adjudicatory hearing, a judge can either dismiss or acquit the youth, hold the charge in abeyance, or make a finding of delinquency or unruliness.

4) Disposition:

When a youth is adjudicated delinquent or unruly, a dispositional hearing is held either immediately following adjudication or at a separate hearing. During disposition, a judge may make one of the following decisions:

dismissal/conditional dismissal; unofficial probation; probation; intensive probation; commitment to DJJ, or sentencing for up to 90 days in a Youth Development Center (YDC).

Youth having three or more prior court appearances for felonies or charged with aggravated assault, aggravated battery, robbery and armed robbery without a firearm, kidnapping, arson and several different weapons offenses can also be committed as designated felons. Juvenile court judges now have the authority to sentence these offenders to YDC for up to five years. Youth charged with one of seven violent felonies, including murder, rape, and armed robbery with a firearm, are automatically charged as adults, but can be committed as designated felons if their cases are transferred back to juvenile court. Most youth waived to adult court are held in DJJ facilities pending trial until they are 17 years of age. They often remain in detention for extended periods of a year or more and constitute a significant proportion of DJJ's detention population.

5) Placement:

Probation - Once adjudicated, all juvenile offenders are subject to a disposition of probation under whatever conditions of supervision the court prescribes. Probation can be ordered for up to two years with a provision for extension. A variety of concurrent actions are also authorized in conjunction with probation for delinquents, including placement in a residential or non-residential program for delinquent children, mandatory restitution, community service work, monetary fines and the suspension of a driver's license up to age 18.

Probation conditions range from minimal reporting requirements to close supervision with mandatory curfews and participation in specific rehabilitative activities. Minor offenders are often placed on informal probation but most delinquents are, at a minimum, given six months to one year of official probation.

A variety of specialized programs for probated youth are available in the state's more populous communities and many courts include participation in these programs as a probation condition. However, such services are not available in many of the state's rural jurisdictions. In these localities, judges often have only the options of simple probation, sentencing youth to a 90-day program, or commitment to DJJ.

Probated youth are given various conditions by the Juvenile Court; which if violated, can lead to probation revocation. Although DJJ has implemented

detailed guidelines restricting the use of probation revocations, a significant number of low risk offenders continue to be detained for probation violations. While most are detained prior to adjudication/ disposition, a small number are detained under court order specifically placing them in detention. Judicial policies and practices concerning revocation vary widely across the state, often operating in direct conflict with DJJ policies.

90-Day Placement - Effective July 1, 1994, Juvenile Court Judges were authorized to incarcerate any delinquent offender for up to 90 days in a Youth Development Center (YDC). Many jurisdictions utilize this option as an accountability-based sanction, especially for probation violators. However, youth charged with any offense are subject to this disposition and numerous first time and/or minor offenders have received this disposition. Initially, DJJ established boot camp programs to hold youth sentenced under this provision, both male and female. However, during 2000 all boot camps were replaced with more education-oriented 90-day programs.

These placements often involve low and medium risk youth who then are placed in detention awaiting placement into a 90-day program. These youth are frequently detained only after disposition, by-passing the intake process. Four to five thousand 90-day placements occur each year across the state, contributing significantly to the high volume of DAI overrides in Georgia.

Commitment/Placement - Once a youth has been committed to DJJ, a panel of DJJ staff and other professionals convene to determine the most appropriate placement for the youth. These screening committees consider a number of factors in making placement decisions and utilize a standardized screening instrument. While commitment can lead to incarceration in a YDC, more than 60% of all committed youth are currently placed in non-secure programs. It is anticipated that this number will continue to rise in the future as more alternative programs become available. Alternately placed youth are subject to revocation if they violate the conditions of their placement or placement in a YDC if they commit new offenses.

Youth placed in YDCs are assigned minimum and maximum lengths of stay based primarily on court involvement and risk to re-offend. Once released from a YDC or an alternate placement, youth are placed on after-care supervision in their community. After-care is normally terminated when the supervising worker feels the youth has made a satisfactory adjustment within the community or upon the expiration of the youth's commitment order. Commitment orders are valid for two years, except in designated felony cases, when commitment can be ordered for up to five years.

Part II: Juvenile Crime Profile

A. Demographic Data

Georgia's population grew from 6,478,149 to 8,186,453 in the ten-year period from 1990-2000, a 26% increase (2.6% annually). Only the states of California, Texas, and Florida added more people. From a percentage basis, Georgia was the fastest growing state east of the Rocky Mountains.

The highest levels of growth continue to be in the metropolitan Atlanta region. This 20 county region had a 39% growth rate, with Henry and Forsyth Counties growing by over 100%. Although growth rates in other parts of Georgia were lower than in Atlanta, there was still significant growth in other regions of the state in excess of 20%. Only eight counties lost population during the decade. Six of these eight counties were in Southwest Georgia.

Racial Diversity

Migration patterns have significantly changed the racial composition of Georgia during the past decade. Throughout most of the state's history, racial distinctions were limited to black and white. The numbers from Census 2000 changed this. The African-American population rose from 27% to nearly 28%, which is the highest level in fifty years. This percent increase was the largest of any state in the union. At current growth rates, in the next few years Georgia will pass both Texas and New York to have the largest African-American/Black population of any state.

Table 1

Georgia Population of Juveniles 10-17 Years By Gender and Race

Male Juveniles	Population	Female Juveniles	Population
White	366,879	White	272,872
African-American/Black	167,833	African-American/Black	163,969
Asian	9,938	Asian	9,377
American Indian	1,458	American Indian	1,291
Pacific Islander	211	Pacific Islander	235
One other race	12,168	One other race	9,467
Two or more other races	9,072	Two or more other races	7,984
Total	567,559	Total	465,195

2000 Census Data

In addition, the Hispanic/Latino population has risen to over 5% of the state's total population. The Asian population also doubled in the last decade, while the white population has declined from 70% to 62%.

Juvenile Population

Georgia's juvenile population increased at a greater rate than the state's general population between 1990 and 2000, with a growth rate of 30% (3% annually). Moreover, minority populations continue to represent a larger proportion of the juvenile population than that of the General population. African-American youth comprise 32% of Georgia's youth population ages 10-17.

Table 2

Hispanic/Latino Population of Juveniles 10-17 Years By Gender

Male Juveniles	Population	Female Juveniles	Population
Hispanic or Latino	26,010	Hispanic or Latino	20,766

2000 Census Data

Note: Hispanics/Latinos may be of any race.

The Hispanic youth population continues to increase rapidly, and now comprises nearly 5% of the state's total youth population. In some localities, such as Gainesville and Dalton in Northeast Georgia, this proportion is significantly higher.

B. Juvenile Arrest Data

As in other states, serious juvenile crime has steadily declined in Georgia over the past decade. However, total juvenile court cases have continued to increase, with misdemeanors and status offenses comprising an ever-increasing proportion of all juvenile court cases in the state. Thus, the fragmented data currently available indicates a consistent pattern of increasing numbers of less serious offenders entering the juvenile court system and comprising an even greater proportion of incarcerated youth.

Despite a slight increase in some arrest categories in 2001, Georgia's juvenile arrest data clearly illustrates the major reduction in serious juvenile offenses that has occurred since 1993. Juvenile arrests for murder, for example, have declined from a high of 68 in 1993 to 34 in 2001. Similarly, arrests for aggravated assault have dropped more than 40%, from a high of 1,437 in 1993 to 896 in 2001. Motor vehicle arrests declined 54% during the same period while burglary arrests declined 21%. Rape, robbery and weapons violations have also declined significantly between 1993 and 2001.

Yet the total number of arrests continued to steadily increase after 1993 before stabilizing in 1997 at levels 20% to 25% higher than 1993 levels. This increase resulted primarily from a steady rise in arrests for status and public order offenses, drug offenses and minor property crimes. Furthermore, juveniles charged with serious, violent offenses have, since 1994, come under the jurisdiction of the adult court system. The proportion of serious offenders among Georgia's juvenile offender population has steadily declined, with low risk youth comprising a steadily increasing proportion of juvenile court cases. This same pattern is mirrored in juvenile court referral data.

Ethnic Profiles

As illustrated in Table 3, minority youth consistently account for 58% - 60% of all juvenile arrests and the vast majority of serious violent juvenile offenses in the state.

Table 3
Statewide Juvenile Arrests (by offense) Age 16 and Under

OFFENSE	1993		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Total	% Min	Total	% Min	Total	% Min	Total	% Min	Total	% Min	Total	% Min
Murder/Manslaughter	68	91	71	72	35	57	53	74	54	78	34	60
Rape	92	81	94	86	53	77	56	71	65	77	51	76
Robbery	540	92	449	90	284	88	265	87	276	85	355	87
Aggravated Assault	1,437	84	1,067	80	968	73	802	76	866	80	896	76
Burglary	2,019	61	1,893	56	1,699	56	1,557	57	1,477	65	1,606	61
Larceny	5,930	62	6,567	62	6,164	60	5,927	63	5,853	63	5,607	64
Motor Vehicle Theft	1,394	78	950	73	744	64	666	70	664	73	634	69
Drug Sales	257	69	468	63	375	67	399	60	361	57	346	51
Drug Possession	822	68	2,072	66	1,667	60	1,414	57	1,589	53	1,586	49
Weapons Offense	1,216	87	743	76	652	67	671	62	675	66	709	68
Runaway	2,591	32	2,661	37	2,788	37	3,308	37	2,313	45	2,143	47
Total Arrests	29,723	60	36,412	61	35,004	57	34,157	58	33,622	59	35,681	58

% Min = Percent minority youth. Note: the GBI data system counts arrests for multiple offenses other than capital felonies as single arrests. It also considers multiple arrests for the same crime other than capital felonies as a single arrest. The number of criminal cases and counts filed against individuals each year is therefore far greater than reported arrests.

Minority youth comprise an even greater proportion of juvenile court referrals (see Table 6), and have constituted approximately 75% of all juveniles transferred to superior court since the implementation of SB 440 in 1994. Minorities also comprise a heavily disproportionate number of committed youth in the state and an even larger proportion of youth committed for serious and violent offenses. In 2001, for example, 69% of all youth committed to DJJ and 74% placed in YDCs were minority. African-American youth account for nearly all minority youth in the state's juvenile justice, although the proportion of Hispanic youth is steadily rising.

Female Offenders

Female offenders have consistently constituted a minority of juvenile offenders in Georgia and a much smaller percentage of serious juvenile offenders. However, the actual number and proportion of female offenders has steadily increased in recent years. The proportion of female offenders accounting for all juvenile arrests statewide rose from 24% in 1992 to 30% in 2001. Female arrest rates for property crimes and status offenses have remained fairly constant, but have slowly increased for drug offenses. Females have accounted for 26% - 29% of all juvenile arrests for aggravated assault each year, a much higher rate than during the eighties.

Table 4

Juvenile Arrests (by offense, percent female) Age 16 and Under

OFFENSE	1994		1997		1998		1999		2001	
	Total	% Fem	Total	% Fem	Total	% Fem	Total	% Fem	Total	% Fem
Murder/Manslaughter	2	4	21	29	3	8	9	17	3	10
Rape	0	0	2	2	2	4	3	5	4	8
Robbery	44	8	24	5	16	6	11	4	27	8
Aggravated Assault	339	26	301	28	272	28	212	26	260	29
Burglary	163	7	159	8	151	9	137	9	138	9
Larceny	2,060	27	2,046	31	1,890	31	1,913	32	1,952	35
Motor Vehicle Theft	131	10	446	36	104	14	105	16	124	20
Drug Sales	37	9	53	11	43	11	56	14	46	14
Drug Possession	110	9	213	10	213	13	202	14	261	16
Weapons Offense	181	15	123	17	107	16	96	14	130	19
Runaway	1,749	59	1,558	59	1,629	56	1,426	59	1,251	58
Total Arrests	8,800	26	10,451	29	10,200	29	10,306	30	11,757	30

% Fem = Percent of female arrests out of total

DJJ commitment data also indicates that the number of serious offenses committed by female youth has been rising in recent years. In 1993, for example, 14% of all youth committed to DJJ were female, and females comprised only 5% of all YDC admissions. In 1999, 20% of all DJJ commitments were female, and

female youth comprised 17% of all admissions to YDCs and 90-day boot camps. The state's low, but increasing, incarceration rate for females stems largely from the fact that female offenders represent a small proportion of serious property and violent offenses.

Most committed female youth are charged either with status offenses or minor delinquencies. Females consistently account for approximately 60% of all status offenses in the state each year. Thus, the alternative plan rate for committed female youth has historically been much higher (85% in 1999) than that for committed male youth.

C. Juvenile Court Referrals

During the 1980s and early 1990s, delinquent and unruly referrals to juvenile courts in Georgia rose steadily, increasing an average of more than 10% each year. After 1995, however, this increase slowed considerably, with total cases increasing only 6% in 1995, 8% in 1996, and 4% in 1997 before declining slightly in 1998. Since 1999, total cases have declined somewhat but remain at much higher levels than 1990 and before. This trend is more marked for delinquent cases, which rose approximately 5% each year between 1992 and 1995 before leveling off in 1996 at approximately 65,000 cases a year. Status offenses, which were increasing much more rapidly than delinquent cases, also began to level off in 1996 at a rate of approximately 19,000 annually, and began to decline in 1999. (See Table 5) The steady growth of delinquency cases in the State's juvenile courts which marked the late 1980s and early 1990s appears to have peaked during mid-decade, with the number of these cases statewide remaining relatively stable, until 1999 when they began declining.

Table 5

Juvenile Court Cases Filed (Number of Youth), 1990-2000

Year	Delinquent	Status	Total
1990	39,204	11,418	50,622
1996	64,107	18,425	85,532
1997	65,564	19,582	85,146
1998	65,203	18,909	84,112
1999	62,963	17,512	80,475
2000	57,596	16,362	73,958

Note: Data are collected annually by the Administrative Office of the Courts from regional court administrators. Historically, a number of counties do not report, predominantly those with small populations.

Unfortunately, Georgia does not have a comprehensive statewide juvenile court database. Since 1993 however, the Council of Juvenile Court Judges (CJ CJ) has operated a limited database which now includes comprehensive court referral data for 25 jurisdictions, including most urban courts. Though historical data are not consistently available for all participating courts, data from this source allows for reasonably reliable analysis of juvenile crime trends and offender characteristics.

As discussed, juvenile arrests for violent and major property offenses have steadily declined since the early 1990s. This trend is confirmed by recent juvenile court case data illustrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Counts Filed in Juvenile Courts By Offense and Race 1996-2000

OFFENSE	1996		1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Total	% Min	Total	% Min	Total	% Min	Total	% Min	Total	% Min
Major Violent Offenders										
Murder/Manslaughter*	7	57	4	100	6	50	6	100	4	100
Forcible Rape*	10	70	12	83	4	100	7	71	11	100
Armed Robbery*	19	91	42	71	33	73	25	76	50	92
Robbery (Other)	147	91	138	91	122	96	124	94	110	94
Aggravated Assault, Related Offenses	758	82	724	87	662	85	503	89	512	88
Kidnapping	38	84	10	100	11	100	7	86	16	87
Major Property Crimes										
Burglary	1,166	63	988	55	935	58	815	70	591	70
Felony Theft By Taking	6,390	71	5,620	72	4,613	73	4,215	72	3,359	73
Drugs										
Sales	715	90	753	90	660	90	549	88	445	89
Possession	1,660	69	1,598	58	1,572	66	1,382	63	1,126	63
Status Offenses	4,724	56	4,888	67	4,397	54	3,901	52	3,331	56
Misdemeanors and Minor Felonies	18,027	64	18,389	70	18,376	70	17,603	71	14,796	72

*As of June 1, 1994, Superior Courts assumed exclusive jurisdiction of all or most of these offenses, leading to a sharp reduction in the number of offenses reported by juvenile courts. Data covers 12 counties that comprise approximately 22% of the population. However, the sample is primarily urban and suburban counties.

% Min = Percent minority youth

Representing case referral data for 12 Georgia counties encompassing 22% of the state's population, this data clearly suggests a steady decline in violent juvenile crime during the past four years, a trend which has become more evident recently. Total cases filed declined 26% between 1996 and 2000, with a 14% reduction occurring between 1999 and 2000. Table 6 illustrates a significant decline in nearly all offense categories between 1996 and 2000, with aggravated assault cases, for example, dropping more than 30% between 1996 and 2000.

Significantly, in 1999, this decline extended for the first time to property crimes, with theft and burglary offenses falling sharply during the past two years. Even status offenses, which have steadily increased in number over the past twenty years, declined slightly dropping 27% after 1996. After a decade of steady increases, cases involving drug sales have dropped 23% since 1996.

It should be noted that even as the volume of juvenile court cases has declined, the proportion of minority youth comprising offenders within various categories has remained fairly constant, with minority youth continuing to account for the vast majority of serious, violent offenses and drug cases, as well as a disproportionate number of serious property crimes. This is a long-standing trend in the state and a primary factor in minority overrepresentation in Georgia's secure juvenile facilities.

Most significantly, this data clearly illustrates the relatively minor nature of the overwhelming number of cases coming before the juvenile court system, and the steady growth in the proportion of these cases as compared to more serious offenders.

Part III: Statewide Detention Data

A. Management Information System Capabilities

While Georgia does not possess a unified juvenile court information system, significant data are available through both the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and the Council of Juvenile Court Judges. During 1999, DJJ initiated the development of a department-wide shared database, the Juvenile Tracking System (JTS). This database was implemented at the close of FY 2000 and replaced approximately 130 stand-alone databases operated by individual DJJ community offices, detention centers and Youth Development Centers.

This initiative created a real-time database which eventually encompassed all youth served by the Department. The ultimate objective of JTS is to capture data at its inception at each decision point in the system. As part of the JTS initiative,

DJJ now captures all data related to juvenile detention, including detailed information collected through the Detention Assessment Instrument. The database allows for delineation of pre and post adjudication data, tracking of alternatives to detention, average length of stay, admitting offenses and ultimate placement.

The full implementation of JTS occurred over a two year period and complete data in many locations are not yet available. In particular, it has taken time for DJJ field staff to become accustomed to the system and complete all aspects of the process. This has been particularly true of DAI data which, as discussed above, is not yet entered for the majority of youth diverted from secure detention. Thus, historical data relating to the detention process are not complete. Basic admission and release data are reliable since 1999.

Although the core functions of JTS have been fully implemented, the system is still evolving and additional statistical information continues to become available. Likewise, confidence in the data continues to improve. However, certain types of data, such as DAI scores for diverted youth, remain incomplete. Although these data gaps are being filled, a full analysis of detention practices in the state is not yet possible.

The Council of Juvenile Court Judges now collects referral and dispositional data from 27 juvenile courts in the state which can be utilized for analytical purposes. Participants in this project have been added incrementally and now encompass jurisdictions covering more than 50% of the state's population and annual juvenile court caseload. Due to the changing number of participants, historical data provided through this system are fragmented and inconsistent.

However, the system continues to expand, and data for 2001 and beyond promises to be much more consistent. Efforts are currently under way to link DJJ's data system with several Atlanta area courts. Although it appears unlikely that a unified judicial database will be created in the near term, all juvenile court judges were granted limited access by DJJ to the JTS system effective January 1, 2003.

B. Characteristics of Detained Population

As discussed above, the vast majority of youth entering Georgia's juvenile justice system are non-violent property offenders or misdemeanants. As illustrated in Table 7, the same pattern appears to hold true for detained youth.

Table 7

Most Serious Offense Committed by Detained Youth: CY 2000 to CY 2002

Region 1 - 5 Most Serious Offense (MSO)	Year Detained					
	CY 2000		CY 2001		CY 2002	
	N	%CY Total	N	%CY Total	N	%CY Total
Property	4,693	26.5	4,926	26.4	4,554	27.9
Technical Violations	3,662	20.6	3,157	16.9	2,525	15.5
Violent	2,862	16.1	2,886	15.5	2,375	14.6
Public Order	2,757	15.5	3,504	18.8	3,309	20.3
Using Drugs	964	5.4	1,064	5.7	920	5.6
Status	949	5.4	1,178	6.3	1,063	6.5
Selling Drugs	586	3.3	568	3.0	312	1.9
Weapons Violation	560	3.2	598	3.2	544	3.3
Violent Sex	478	2.7	561	3.0	540	3.3
Traffic	134	0.8	118	0.6	96	0.6
Non-Violent Sex	93	0.5	118	0.6	77	0.5
Total	17,738	100.0	18,678	100.0	16,315	100.0

* Excludes Out-of-State detained youth

The proportion of female offenders among juvenile detainees remains constant at approximately 27%. However, females consistently account for roughly 60% of admissions for status offenses each year and nearly 35% of admissions for technical violations. (Table 8)

Table 8

Age and Gender for the Most Serious Offense Committed by Detained Youth in CY 2002

REGIONS 1 - 5 Most Serious Offense (MSO)	CY 2002																								
	Total MSO	Age and Gender of Detained Youth																						Total	
		Under 12				12 - 13				14 - 15				16 - 17				Over 17							
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	N			
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N		N			
Property	4,698	48	1.20	7	0.80	511	13.20	129	15.40	1811	46.90	437	52.20	1476	38.20	261	31.20	15	0.40	3	0.40	3,861		837	
Public Order	3,369	54	2.30	12	1.10	478	20.60	219	20.80	1061	45.80	519	49.30	715	30.90	301	28.60	8	0.30	2	0.20	2,316		1,053	
Violent	2,511	40	2.10	9	1.40	277	14.90	138	21.40	846	45.40	322	49.80	688	36.90	175	27.10	14	0.80	2	0.30	1,865		646	
Technical Violations	2,582	14	0.80	0	0.00	183	11.10	122	13.20	743	44.90	497	53.70	690	41.70	303	32.70	26	1.60	4	0.40	1,656		926	
Using Drugs	935	1	0.10	0	0.00	25	3.20	8	5.40	319	40.60	63	42.30	437	55.60	77	51.70	4	0.50	1	0.70	786		149	
Violent Sex	1,236	14	2.40	9	1.40	149	25.30	138	21.40	279	47.30	322	49.80	148	25.10	175	27.10	0	0.00	2	0.30	590		646	
Status	1,070	6	1.20	3	0.50	78	16.00	94	16.20	239	48.90	312	53.70	164	33.50	170	29.30	2	0.40	2	0.30	489		581	
Weapons Violation	556	5	1.10	1	0.80	70	16.10	22	18.20	199	45.70	64	52.90	161	37.00	33	27.30	0	0.00	1	0.80	435		121	
Selling Drugs	321	2	0.70	0	0.00	26	9.40	2	4.50	99	35.70	21	47.70	149	53.80	21	47.70	1	0.40	0	0.00	277		44	
Traffic	97	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	5.50	0	0.00	19	26.00	15	62.50	50	68.50	8	33.30	0	0.00	1	4.20	73		24	
Non-Violent Sex	79	0	0.00	0	0.00	6	14.60	7	18.40	15	36.60	27	71.10	20	48.80	4	10.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	41		38	
Total	17,454	184	1.05	41	0.23	1,807	10.35	879	5.04	5,630	32.26	2,599	14.89	4,698	26.92	1,528	8.75	70	0.40	18	0.10	12,389		5,065	

* Excludes Out-of-State detained youth

Somewhat surprisingly, female offenders account for approximately 26% of admissions for violent offenses and only 18% of admissions for property crimes. Not surprisingly, female offenders appear to be detained more often for less serious offenses than males due to the courts utilization of detention for protection.

Table 8 also indicates that the vast majority of detained youth are age 14 and older. In 2002, for example, 14 - 15 year olds comprised 47% of all detained youth, with the 16-17 year old age group ranking second at nearly 36%. Youth ages 12 - 13 made up 15% of the detained population while only 1.3% were under age 12.

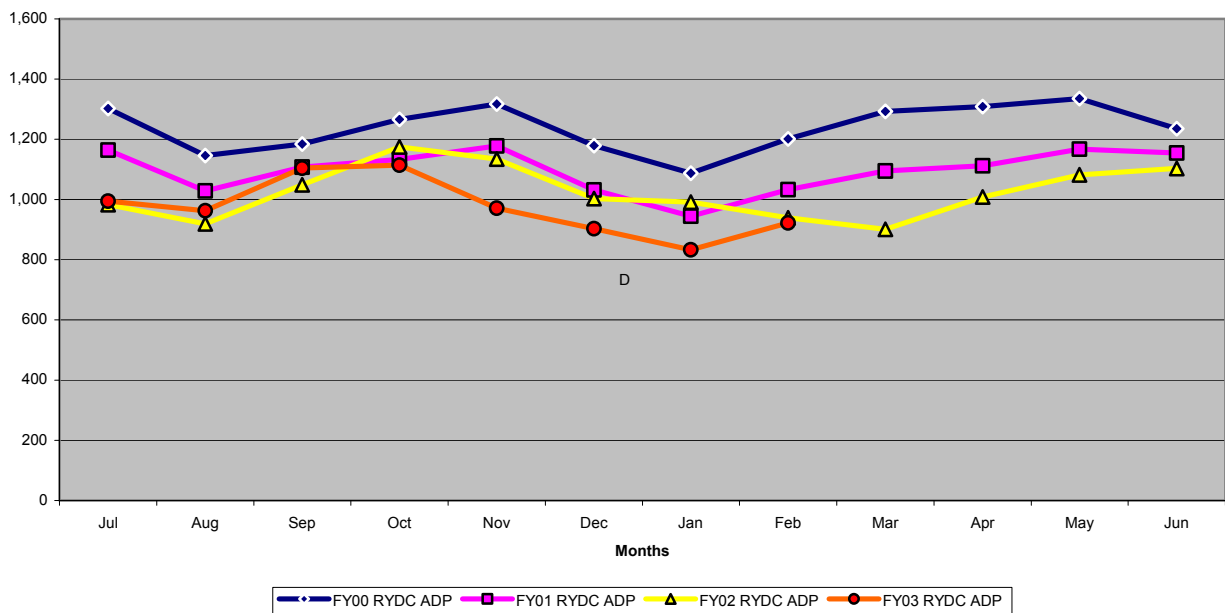
C. Detention Patterns

Overcrowding

DJJ currently operates 22 Regional Youth Detention Centers (RYDC) with a capacity of 1,123. During the early 1990s, chronic overcrowding became endemic in Georgia's detention centers and was a central issue in the U.S. Department of Justice's 1998 findings concerning conditions of confinement in secure juvenile facilities. At that time, overcrowding was severe, with some facilities routinely holding up to 300% of their capacity.

Figure 1

Average Daily Population in RYDCs by Month FY2000-FY2003



Following Georgia's 1998 Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Justice, overcrowding began to steadily decline, as the department implemented the Detention Assessment Instrument (DAI) and created additional detention alternatives.

In 2001 the state's detention centers operated just over capacity at 101%. During 2002, the average daily detention population continued to decline, with the statewide average population falling to 91% of capacity for the year. However, some facilities continued to experience overcrowding. In November, 2002, DJJ Commissioner Orlando Martinez issued stringent population controls which has ensured that all RYDCs operate within their established capacity. As a result, RYDC populations have continued to decline, reaching 80.4% of capacity in February, 2003. This progress has been made without the creation of additional RYDC capacity, and reflects DJJ's strong commitment to detention reform.

Admission/Release Trends

The elimination of overcrowding in Georgia's detention centers has been accompanied by a corresponding reduction in detention admissions. Total admissions have decreased from 24,877 in 1999 to 18,725 in calendar year 2002, a decline of 27%. The length of stay for detained youth has also declined, but less significantly, with average length of stay for all detained youth falling from 21.3 days in 2000 to 18.2 in 2002. Length of stay for both pre and post adjudicated youth has declined, though this reduction is most marked for post adjudicated youth.

Table 9

Average Number of Days in Detention for All Detained Youth			
Year Detained	Detention Days		
	Pre-Adjudication	Post-Adjudication	Total LOS
CY 2000	13.1	8.2	21.3
	21,802	21,802	21,802
CY 2001	12.9	7.3	20.2
	20,892	20,892	20,892
CY 2002	12.8	5.4	18.2
	18,206	18,206	18,206

Several factors have contributed to the recent decline in detention admissions and length of stay, primarily the introduction of the Detention Assessment Instrument and Case Expeditor system, as well as the creation of additional

detention alternatives.

Detention Assessment Instrument Trends

As illustrated in Table 10 below, the proportion of detained youth receiving a DAI score gradually rose after the instrument was introduced in 2000 until 2002, when virtually all youth admitted to detention at intake were assessed by the instrument. This was a crucial step on the road to detention reform, and has set the stage for future progress.

As discussed above, however, most youth released at intake are not scored with the DAI, or their scores are not entered into DJJ tracking system. It is not yet possible to assess the proportion of all cases receiving DAI overrides.

Data clearly illustrate that large numbers of low and medium risk youth continue to be placed in secure detention. Indeed, not only were nearly 28% of all detained youth in 2002 identified by the DAI as low risk, the percent represented an actual increase since 2001. On the other hand, the proportion of high and medium risk youth detained statewide has remained relatively stable, accounting for 41.5% and 30.7% respectively in 2002.

Table 10

Total Detained Youth*					
Percent Detained Youth Receiving a DAI who were Classified within a DAI Score Category over a Three Year Period (CY 2000 - CY2002)					
Year Detained	Total Detained	% Receiving DAI	DAI Score Category		
			LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
CY 2000	21,802	30.7	18.7	32.1	49.2
		6,684	1,251	2,143	3,290
CY 2001	20,896	65.4	24.5	32.7	42.8
		13,656	3,348	4,464	5,844
CY 2002	18,725	92.6	27.8	30.7	41.5
		17,335	4,820	5,320	7,195
Total	61,423	37,675	9,419	11,927	16,329

* Excludes Out-of-State detained youth

However, these rates are far from uniform for all types of juvenile courts in Georgia. (See Table 11) Courts where intake services are provided exclusively by DJJ detain lower proportions of low and medium risk youth and higher proportions of high risk youth.

Independent courts, however, detain higher proportions of low and medium risk, and lower proportions of high risk youth. Since independent courts

accounted for more than 50% of all detained youth in 2002, it is clear that the intake process in those jurisdictions is more punitive because these courts fail to utilize the DAI for intake decisions. This also explains the increase in the proportion of low risk detainees between 2001 and 2002 in that the number of independent court youth receiving DAI scores increased by 50% in those years. The proportion of low risk youth rose as more DAI scores were captured from the independent courts.

Table 11

Sub-Group 1: DJJ Court Services					
Percent of Total Detained Youth Receiving a DAI who were Classified within a DAI Score Category over a Three Year Period (CY 2000 - CY2002)					
Year Detained	Sub-Total Detained	% Receiving DAI	DAI Score Category		
			LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
CY 2000	8,720	32.1	18.9	30.5	50.6
		2,797	530	852	1,415
CY 2001	8,406	76.2	24.8	32.0	43.2
		6,403	1,587	2,049	2,767
CY 2002	7,116	95.6	25.0	28.3	46.7
		6,804	1,701	1,928	3,175
Total	24,242	16,004	3,818	4,829	7,357

Sub-Group 2: Shared Court Services					
Percent of Total Detained Youth Receiving a DAI who were Classified within a DAI Score Category over a Three Year Period (CY 2000 - CY2002)					
Year Detained	Sub-Total Detained	% Receiving DAI	DAI Score Category		
			LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
CY 2000	1,883	30.8	19.0	32.4	48.6
		580	110	188	282
CY 2001	1,857	69.3	24.3	36.3	39.4
		1,287	313	467	507
CY 2002	1,677	91.2	28.4	34.4	37.3
		1,530	434	526	570
Total	5,417	3,397	857	1,181	1,359

Sub-Group 3: Independent Court Services					
Percent of Total Detained Youth Receiving a DAI who were Classified within a DAI Score Category over a Three Year Period (CY 2000 - CY2002)					
Year Detained	Sub-Total Detained	% Receiving DAI	DAI Score Category		
			LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
CY 2000	11,199	29.5	18.5	33.4	48.2
		3,307	611	1,103	1,593
CY 2001	10,633	56.1	24.3	32.7	43.1
		5,966	1,448	1,948	2,570

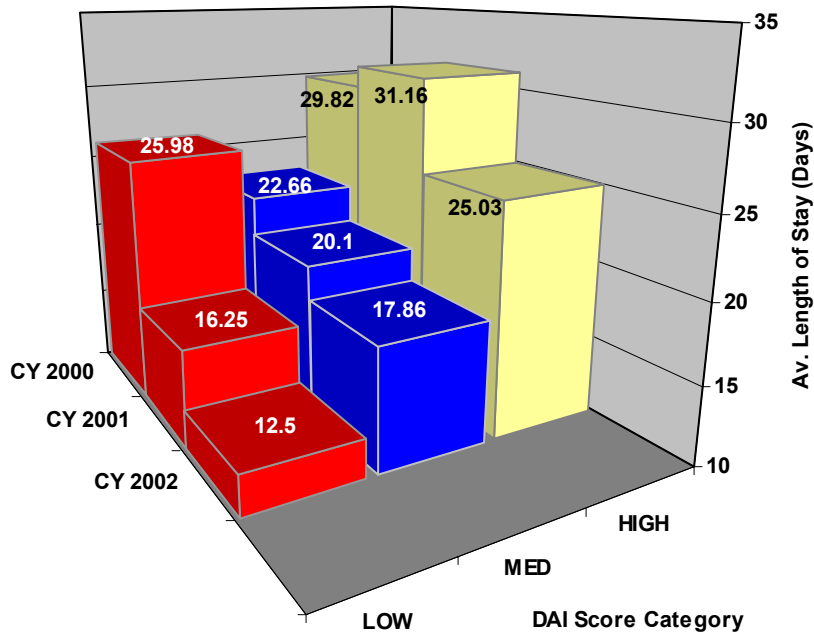
CY 2002	9,932	90.6	29.8	31.8	38.3
		9,001	2,685	2,866	3,450
Total	31,764	18,274	4,744	5,917	7,613

Unacceptable numbers of DAI overrides continue to occur in jurisdictions served by DJJ. Twenty-five percent of all youth detained by these courts in 2002 were low risk and 28% medium risk. As illustrated in Attachment A, these rates vary somewhat from region to region. In Region 2 (Northwest Georgia) for example, only 21% of detained youth in 2002 were low risk compared to 32.7% in Region 3 (Metro Atlanta). Region 5 in Southeast Georgia also holds fewer low risk youth than the rest of the state.

Similar differences can be found within the independent courts. In Region 5, which includes independent courts in Savannah and Brunswick, only 13.7% of youth detained in 2002 were low risk, as compared to 30.7% for the independent courts in Metro Atlanta (Region 3). Independent courts in Region 1 and 2 in Northern Georgia detained even greater proportions in 2002, 44.1% and 41.9% respectively.

Figure 2

Average Length of Stay (Days) for Detained Youth by DAI Score Category



Significant progress has been made in reducing the length of stay for low and medium risk youth admitted into detention. As illustrated in Figure 2, length of stay for low risk youth has been reduced dramatically, from an average of nearly 26 days in 2000 to 12.5 in 2002. Smaller reductions have occurred for both

medium and high risk youth. And, length of stay clearly tracks DAI scores, with low, medium and high risk detainees having progressively longer lengths of stay. It appears that although many low risk youth continue to be detained, they are being released more rapidly.

Table 12

Reasons Youth With DAI Scores Below 12 Were Detained

Detention Decisions for Youth Scoring 11 or Less	CY 2000		CY 2001		CY 2002		Total All Years
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Court Ordered Detention	1,205	41.7	2,807	37.9	3715	32.5	7,727
Discretionary Overrides: Aggravating Factors	746	25.8	1,918	25.9	2639	23.1	5,303
Mandatory Court Policy Override to Detention	416	14.4	1,422	19.2	1807	15.8	3,645
Intake Worker elects to override DAI and authorized detention	176	6.1	501	6.8	2171	19.0	2,848
Explicit threat to flee if released, DJJ Policy Override	139	4.8	341	4.6	348	3.0	828
DJJ Form 56 Issued	131	4.5	213	2.9	442	3.9	786
Candidate for shelter care or contract home, but did not meet placement criteria or no slots available	47	1.6	104	1.4	115	1.0	266
Inter-State Case, DJJ Policy Override	8	0.3	42	0.6	119	1.0	169
Possession / Use of firearm during offense, DJJ Policy Override	17	0.6	30	0.4	45	0.4	92
Actual / Threatened mass school violence, DJJ Policy Override	4	0.1	26	0.4	21	0.2	51
Totals	2,889		7,404		11,422		21,715

In 2002, JTS captured, for the first time, the overrides given by intake workers for a significant proportion of detained youth. (Table 12) This data, which encompasses 60% of detained youth, clearly indicates that court orders and policy together account for the majority of overrides in the state. Aggravating factors account for another 23% and DJJ policy overrides account for 4.6%.

Surprisingly, lack of available shelter or contract home placement was cited as the reason in only 1% of reported overrides, despite the consistent contention of judges and DJJ staff that they would detain far fewer youth given sufficient emergency residential alternatives.

D. Racial Differences

Just as African-American youth account for nearly two-thirds of juvenile arrests in Georgia each year, they also comprise a similar proportion of detention admissions, as indicated in Table 13. In 2002, for example, African-American youth consisted of 58% of all detention admissions. Other minorities made up only 5.5% and the remaining 36.5% were white.

African-American youth also tend to have higher DAI scores. In 2002, only 23.4% of African-American youth detained were low risk, while 41.8% were high risk. Hispanic and Asian youth, with low and medium DAI scores are more likely to be detained than African-American or white youth.

Table 13

Percent Detained Youth Receiving a DAI who were Classified within a DAI Score Category in CY 2002					
Race Group	Total Detained	% Receiving DAI	DAI Score Category		
			LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
White	6,088	91.9	29.0	29.0	33.9
		5,592	1,763	1,767	2,062
Black	11,615	93.3	23.4	28.0	41.8
		10,831	2,720	3,252	4,859
Other	1,022	89.2	33.0	29.5	26.8
		912	337	301	274
Total	18,725	17,335	4,820	5,320	7,195

* Excludes Out-of-State detained youth

Low risk African-American youth are held in detention somewhat longer than white youth. However, there is no significant difference in lengths of stay for medium risk white and African-American youth.

High risk white males have the longest length of stay of any group in 2002 at 26.7 days, as compared to 18.1 days for high risk African-American males. High risk white females also have a longer length of stay than African-American females. (Table 14)

Table 14

Average Length of Stay (LOS) Associated with DAI Score Categories for Different Racial/Gender Groups by Year Detained*

DAI Score	Race	Gender	Yr Detained	Av. LOS	DAI Score	Race	Gender	Yr Detained	Av. LOS	DAI Score	Race	Gender	Yr Detained	Av. LOS
LOW	WHITE	MALE	CY2000	24.5	LOW	BLACK	MALE	CY2000	29.4	LOW	OTHER	MALE	CY2000	56.2
			CY2001	16.0				CY2001	18.1				CY2001	17.8
			CY2002	12.9				CY2002	13.7				CY2002	11.5
	WHITE	FEMALE	CY2000	18.9		BLACK	FEMALE	CY2000	22.3		OTHER	FEMALE	CY2000	14.4
			CY2001	13.0				CY2001	15.3				CY2001	17.2
			CY2002	10.7				CY2002	11.8				CY2002	8.6
MEDIUM	WHITE	MALE	CY2000	20.3	MEDIUM	BLACK	MALE	CY2000	20.3	MEDIUM	OTHER	MALE	CY2000	30.4
			CY2001	20.5				CY2001	20.5				CY2001	20.2
			CY2002	19.5				CY2002	19.5				CY2002	19.7
	WHITE	FEMALE	CY2000	18.9		BLACK	FEMALE	CY2000	18.9		OTHER	FEMALE	CY2000	8.5
			CY2001	17.0				CY2001	17.0				CY2001	13.4
			CY2002	16.0				CY2002	16.0				CY2002	14.4
HIGH	WHITE	MALE	CY2000	30.2	HIGH	BLACK	MALE	CY2000	23.8	HIGH	OTHER	MALE	CY2000	56.7
			CY2001	28.3				CY2001	21.7				CY2001	48.0
			CY2002	26.7				CY2002	18.1				CY2002	29.6
	WHITE	FEMALE	CY2000	25.8		BLACK	FEMALE	CY2000	24.3		OTHER	FEMALE	CY2000	21.4
			CY2001	19.9				CY2001	17.3				CY2001	21.0
			CY2002	20.7				CY2002	16.0				CY2002	20.8

Average Length of Stay (LOS) covers Pre and Post Adjudication detention days

* All tables exclude Out-of-State detained youth

There are significant differences in admitting offenses between African-American and white youth. (Table 15) In 2002, violent offenses accounted for 10.9% of white detention admissions as compared to 17.5% of African-American admissions. On the other hand, status offenses accounted for nearly 10% of white admissions, in contrast to 4.24% of African-American youth detained. In general, it appears that detention trends for African-American youth parallel arrest patterns.

Table 15

Most Serious Offense Committed by Different Groups of Detained Youth in CY 2002

REGIONS 1 - 5 Most Serious Offense (MSO)	Detained Groups							
	WHITE		BLACK		OTHER		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Property	1,465	26.68	3,010	28.88	223	24.56	4,698	27.93
Public Order	949	17.28	2,280	21.88	140	15.42	3,369	20.03
Technical Violations	953	17.36	1,404	13.47	225	24.78	2,582	15.35
Violent	600	10.93	1,822	17.48	89	9.80	2,511	14.93
Status	539	9.82	442	4.24	89	9.80	1,070	6.36
Using Drugs	408	7.43	474	4.55	53	5.84	935	5.56
Violent Sex	227	4.13	353	3.39	22	2.42	602	3.58
Weapons Violation	134	2.44	384	3.68	38	4.19	556	3.31
Selling Drugs	142	2.59	170	1.63	9	0.99	321	1.91
Traffic	39	0.71	42	0.40	16	1.76	97	0.58
Non-Violent Sex	35	0.64	40	0.38	4	0.44	79	0.47
Total	5,491	100.00	10,421	100.00	908	100.00	16,820	100.00

* All tables exclude Out-of-State detained youth

E. Detention Alternatives

Since 1999, DJJ has developed a number of detention alternative options around the state. These include wrap-around services, tracking, behavior aides, housebound detention, and day and evening reporting at Multi-Service Centers, all of which allow youth to remain at home. There are also a limited number of beds available from contract homes and emergency shelters.

Wrap-Around Services provide family assessment and supervision and

treatment for youth within the youth's own home, with support services to enable the family to continue caring for the child in the home. Services are directed to avoid residential placement by meeting the youth's treatment and safety needs in the home community or facilitating the youth's successful return home and reintegration into the community following residential treatment. Staff is available 24 hours a day for crisis management. Focus of treatment is on the family as a unit, rather than on the individual child. These services are purchased from private providers and are available to pre-adjudicated youth and to youth committed to the DJJ. There are an average of 60 slots available for this service.

Tracking Services provide intensive surveillance and monitoring of youth at home pending further action of the court. Trackers frequently and randomly monitor the youth to insure compliance with court conditions and availability for the next court appearance by conducting face-to-face contacts with youth a minimum of five times a day. Tracking contacts occur in the home, neighborhood, school or work. A private contract vendor provides this service, with 128 slots available.

Behavior Aides provide services for those youth with school related offenses or problems. An aide accompanies the youth to school, ensuring class attendance and compliance with other school conditions. The aide may also work with the family to stabilize the youth by providing assistance with behavior management. The 10 slots available are purchased from private providers.

Housebound Detention provides an alternative to secure detention whereby the youth is restricted to home when not attending school or work. When accompanied by the parent or guardian, youth may also leave home for pre-approved medical appointments and religious services. Housebound detention staff maintain daily contact with the youth and electronic monitoring may also be used. The DJJ Intensive Supervision Program units provide this service, for a total of 294 spaces.

Multi-Service Center (MSC)/Day and Evening Reporting provides an array of day and evening services and programming for juveniles who can be maintained in their home. Services for 25 slots include case management, education, group and individual counseling, vocational opportunities, employment assistance and leisure activities for the development of appropriate social skills. Programs with the MSC include Community School which provide an alternative to public school and the Intensive Supervision Program. The centers operate for extended and weekend hours and are located in Macon, Savannah, Decatur, East Point and Columbus.

Contract Homes are non-secure, non-licensed, private substitute family homes that provide services to no more than five youth at one time. The primary family provider is required to attend the same training as foster parents. With a statewide capacity of 23, these homes serve pre-adjudicated youth for no more than 90 days.

Emergency Shelters provide 24-hour residential care for up to 90 days for pre and post-adjudicated medium risk youth who are unable to be placed at home. Facilities are licensed as child caring institutions and services are purchased on a per diem basis from private providers. The state also operates two group homes in Albany and Savannah. Statewide capacity is approximately 68 beds for this non-secure detention alternative.

Part IV: Interagency Barriers to Detention Reform

Georgia's current system of service delivery for children in need or at risk of out-of-home placement is fragmented at best. Child-serving agencies, such as the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Human Resources, have different missions, funding streams, information systems and points of entry and exit from the system. Many times priorities and policies are crisis driven and little attention is focused on how to work together to maximize available resources. Solutions to interagency barriers are hampered by the lack of shared information, inflexible funding systems and uncoordinated agency responses.

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) is comprised of a number of divisions and offices that provide services to children and youth around the state. The Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD) is the largest division of DHR. While MHDDAD is, in theory, charged with providing services to all Georgia's children and youth, only a small percentage of its funding is allocated for child and adolescent therapists and adolescent substance abuse treatment. Thus, MHDDAD attempts to meet the needs of DJJ and juvenile court clients, but often lacks the capacity to provide adequate treatment for these youth.

Many community mental health centers have no therapists trained to work with children and adolescents and less than 100 bed spaces for adolescents are available statewide for residential substance abuse treatment. Long-term psychiatric care for severely disturbed adolescents is even more limited, with only 40 residential slots for this purpose available in the state. Instead, mental hospitals primarily provide short-term stabilization and evaluation, with an emphasis on providing long-term care on an out-patient basis.

As a result, community mental health services for juvenile offenders are often not available, and as in other states, low risk youth with mental health issues are many times placed in secure detention in lieu of an appropriate placement. The lack of ready access to state mental health services has become an increasingly critical issue for DJJ, as funding for the purchase of residential treatment remains inadequate and community services offices remain dependent on private providers and the state mental health system.

The state's Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) is the DHR agency charged with providing child protective services, foster care and welfare assistance. DFCS serves court involved youth primarily through foster care placements which are in extremely short supply for adolescents and often simply unavailable, especially for youth with mental health issues. DFCS offices are located in every county in Georgia and, like DJJ, work closely with local juvenile judges.

Historically, there has been significant friction between DJJ and DFCS at the local level. This strife most commonly involves acting-out adolescents in DFCS custody, who are charged with a minor juvenile offense and are classified as low risk according to DAI scores. Secure detention is viewed by DFCS as the next step in these cases, with DJJ personnel working equally diligently to keep low level offenders from becoming further involved with the system. Placement responsibility and options for high needs youth involved with both agencies is another source of conflict.

In recognition of this conflict, in April 2002, the Commissioners of both DHR and DJJ charged their field managers with developing local protocols or working agreements to resolve these, and other identified local issues. A Cooperative Working Agreement is currently in place in Fulton County (City of Atlanta), which outlines specific actions of DJJ, DFCS and juvenile court personnel in areas such as intake and detention, probation services, custody decisions and placement planning.

During the Fall of 2002, the Children and Youth Coordinating Council held a series of regional meetings across the state to facilitate development of local agreements between DJJ and DFCS personnel. The Fulton agreement, as well as examples from other states, was provided as a template for other jurisdictions. The meetings also provided an opportunity to discuss development of alternative programs to prevent the detention of high needs, low risk youth in DFCS custody.

It is anticipated these protocols will institutionalize interagency coordination and collaboration between DJJ and DFCS to ensure the most effective and proper

placement and treatment for the shared population of youth these agencies serve. However, in order to achieve detention reform on a statewide level, other state agencies and community organizations must be included in future discussions.

Part V: Conclusion/Future Analysis

Numerous factors inhibit the full implementation of detention reform in Georgia. The state's fragmented juvenile court system and lack of consistent judicial practices are certainly obstacles. The lack of specific, enforceable detention standards in the juvenile court legal code is another factor. Clearly, additional diversion programs are needed, particularly in rural areas. Policies providing for more effective utilization of these resources may also be required. Yet, the greatest immediate barrier to successful reform remains the continued resistance by the judiciary to utilizing the Detention Assessment Instrument during the detention decision.

One of the primary missions of the Georgia Detention Alternatives Initiative in the coming year will be to promote the consistent use of the DAI throughout Georgia's juvenile courts. Activities to accomplish this will include the following:

1. Further data analysis to determine detention practices and trends in individual judicial circuits;
2. Engage in on-going positive dialogue with the Council of Juvenile Court Judges and individual judges to build consensus for detention reform;
3. Review of policies and practices regarding DAI usage and data entry;
4. Comprehensive analysis of utilization of existing detention alternatives;
5. Development of local collaboratives supporting detention reform in selected sites; and
6. Establish a state level oversight and coordination collaborative.

ATTACHMENT A
Percent Detained Youth by Court, Region & DAI Category

Court Type	DJJ Region	CY Year Detained	Total Detained	% Detained Receiving DAI	% In DAI Score Category		
					Low	Medium	High
D.J.U.	1	2000	1,148	28.5	19.6	38.8	41.6
				327	64	127	136
		2001	1,097	70.4	27.5	37.6	35.0
				772	212	290	270
		2002	943	95.8	29.1	30.2	40.6
				903	263	273	367
	2	2000	2,053	27.3	18.2	30.3	51.5
				561	102	170	289
		2001	1,950	67.0	23.0	33.3	43.7
				1306	300	435	571
		2002	1,564	94.6	21.0	29.5	49.5
				1479	311	436	732
	3	2000	485	26.0	29.4	47.6	23
				126	37	60	29
		2001	473	81.0	30.8	37.9	31.3
				383	118	145	120
		2002	420	95.5	32.7	35.7	31.7
				401	131	143	127
	4	2000	2,831	37.5	17.7	28.7	53.6
				1062	188	305	569
		2001	2,756	81.6	25.4	29.6	45.0
				2248	571	665	1012
		2002	2,314	96.2	26.4	25.5	48.1
				2227	587	568	1072
5	2000	2,203	32.7	19.3	26.4	54.4	
			721	139	190	392	
	2001	2,130	79.5	22.8	30.3	46.9	
			1694	386	514	794	
	2002	1,875	95.7	22.8	28.3	48.9	
			1794	409	508	877	

Court Type	DJJ Region	CY Year Detained	Total Detained	% Detained Receiving	% In DAI Score Category		
					Low	Medium	High
Shared	1	2000	450	30.9	23.7	20.9	55.4
				139	33	29	77
		2001	425	71.5	17.8	35.2	47.0
				304	54	107	143
		2002	359	88.3	30.0	34.4	35.6
				317	95	109	113
	2	2000	520	25.8	23.9	34.3	41.8
				134	32	46	56
		2001	573	64.4	29.3	39.6	31.2
				369	108	146	115
		2002	476	96.2	38.4	36.0	25.5
				458	176	165	117
	3	2000	913	33.6	14.7	36.8	48.5
				307	45	113	149
		2001	859	71.5	24.6	34.9	40.6
614	151			214	249		
2002	842	89.7	21.6	33.4	45.0		
		755	163	252	340		

Court Type	DJJ Region	CY Year Detained	Total Detained	% Detained Receiving	% In DAI Score Category		
					Low	Medium	High
Independent	1	2000	1,128	38.4	29.6	35.1	35.3
				433	128	152	153
		2001	1,125	68.2	39.0	30.6	30.4
				767	299	235	233
		2002	982	93.9	44.1	29.6	26.2
				922	407	273	242
	2	2000	344	21.8	17.3	37.3	45.3
				75	13	28	34
		2001	328	47.6	21.2	44.9	34.0
				156	33	70	53
		2002	435	80.7	41.9	30.5	27.6
				351	147	107	97
	3	2000	7,575	27.6	18.1	34.3	47.7
				2090	378	716	996
		2001	7,262	52.5	23.4	32.9	43.7
				3814	891	1255	1668
		2002	6,645	91.1	30.7	31.4	37.9
				6055	1861	1900	2294
	4	2000	423	41.6	20.5	36.9	42.6
				176	36	65	75
		2001	436	78.4	24.3	31.3	44.4
342				83	107	152	
2002		412	96.6	23.9	35.2	41.0	
			398	95	140	163	
5	2000	1,729	30.8	10.5	26.6	62.9	
			533	56	142	335	
	2001	1,482	59.9	16.0	31.7	52.3	
			887	142	281	464	
	2002	1,458	87.4	13.7	35	51.3	
			1275	175	446	654	