The juvenile justice system serves not only youths who break the law but also youths who are victimized by others. In fact, it is the legal duty of many youth-serving institutions to protect children from harm. Unfortunately, the system sometimes fails to successfully protect these children. For example, on January 22, 1999, Ammy Dovangsibountham ran away from home after approximately three years of sexual abuse by her stepfather, Sounthaly Keosay. The police found Ammy and took her to a juvenile detention center in Sioux City, Iowa, where intake workers interviewed her about why she had run away. She explained the years of abuse, and said that her mother did not believe her when Ammy confided in her. Ammy remained in protective custody as a Child in Need of Assistance for more than a month, and eventually began alleging that her stepfather had threatened to harm her if she told anyone about the abuse. In February, Keosay was arrested and charged with sexual abuse. Ammy was reunited with her mother after Keosay’s arrest.

Unfortunately, Keosay’s bond was set at only $13,000, which he easily posted, and he was released. Officials believed that the low bail was justified because his threats were only a ploy to control his stepdaughter. Ammy found out about the release and was fearful for her safety. The police patrolled around her mother’s home as a safety precaution. However, on March 17, 1999, the police found the bodies of Ammy and her mother. They also found the body of Keosay, who had murdered them before committing suicide.

The juvenile justice system is best described as a network. This network consists of agencies, institutions, and people who are dedicated to providing rehabilitation and remediation (corrective or salvaging) services to troubled and needy adolescents. The population of juveniles served by this
network includes both juvenile offenders and juvenile victims. Unlike the criminal justice system, which is primarily concerned with securing society from criminal victimization and punishing offenders, the juvenile justice system must address a broader spectrum of issues affecting adolescents. These issues certainly include securing society from chronically deviant youths, but they also involve rehabilitating young offenders, removing young victims from toxic environments, and generally rescuing juveniles from living as victims or in conflict with authority. Thus, the criminal justice system’s emphasis on controlling and punishing adult deviance represents a much narrower focus in comparison to the juvenile justice system’s expansive emphasis on the provision of security, rehabilitation, and remediation services.

Two types of youths are served by the juvenile justice system, illustrating the scope of this network:

- **Children in trouble.** Youths who violate the law, either as juvenile delinquents or as status offenders. Some delinquent offenders are waived into criminal court and tried as adults.
- **Children in need.** Youths who are not properly cared for by an adult, for example, abused, neglected, or abandoned children.

Children in trouble are young people who engage in problem behaviors, generally defined as behavior that is legally or culturally unacceptable. Youths who live in environments that are conducive to encouraging these activities, or who exhibit antisocial behaviors that can lead to early deviance, are termed **at-risk juveniles**. In some states, all juveniles within defined age ranges are defined as at-risk, but for our purposes, we shall discuss youths who fit the profile for possible deviance. In accordance with this definition, at-risk juveniles tend to have difficulty in school, have conflicted relationships with parents and peers, and have repeated problems with authority figures and institutions. Rebelliousness, associations with antisocial peer groups, and incorrigibility are common behaviors among at-risk juveniles. Unacceptable behaviors do, of course, include severe deviance such as property destruction, theft, burglary, violence, and other criminal conduct. However, children in trouble also engage in other forms of behavioral deviance such as dropping out of school, alcohol and drug abuse, early sexual activity and pregnancy, gang associations, and generally antisocial behavior.

Children in need are youths who require official intervention to remove them from harmful environments and to remediate the effects of these environments. They are victims of abuse, neglect, abandonment, or other evidence of adult failure to properly care for them. Unlike the adult criminal justice system, which has minimal jurisdiction and resources to remediate adult victimization (other than punitive sanctions against criminal perpetrators), the juvenile justice system is designed to rescue children in need. Official intervention includes the proactive removal of children in need from
toxic environments, their placement in designated “safe places” such as group homes, and managing their progress until they reach the age of majority. Not every official intervention requires removal, and instead may involve the supervision of home environments by social workers or other officials to assure the health and safety of children within the household.

This chapter investigates the background to problems encountered by children in trouble and children in need, including risk environments and their participation in socially unacceptable behaviors. Problems unique to these populations are also addressed, as well as the many challenges posed to the juvenile justice system for helping juvenile offenders and victims. The discussion in this chapter reviews

- Modern Problems: Young People and Risk Factors
- Youths in Conflict With Authority: Children in Trouble
- Youths Requiring Intervention: Children in Need
- Rescuing Youths: Helping Children in Trouble and Children in Need

### Chapter Perspective 5.1

**Sexual Exploitation of Juveniles**

It is important to understand that sexual exploitation of children by adults is a criminal offense across the county. Every state has enacted statutes prohibiting adults from procuring juveniles for sexual purposes. Included in this prohibition are incest (sex with family members), statutory rape (sex with persons under the age of majority), and fondling (sexual touching of a child’s body). Sexual exploitation and abuse refers to the:

“. . . involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator, including contacts for sexual purposes, prostitution, pornography, or other sexually exploitative activities. . . .”

Although most child victims are exploited by someone they know, most of these victims are exploited by a parent or guardian, usually involving a male parent assaulting girl children. Girls are exploited much more than boys—up to three times as often. Approximately one third of victims are under the age of 12 years, and many victims are very young children—including cases of infants being assaulted. All of these examples represent criminal behavior by adults.

Indicators of sexual exploitation include behavioral signs, such as depression, anger, fear, sexual sophistication, shyness around physicians, status offenses, or delinquency. Unfortunately, cases of exploitation are often reported in homes, day care centers, religious institutions, and other environments. Approximately 100,000 cases are reported annually, although experts estimate that up to 90% of cases are never reported—the “hidden” victimization of children.
Modern Problems: Young People and Risk Factors

The historically foundational movements promoting the concept of juvenile justice—the Child-Savers Movement, Houses of Refuge, and Chicago juvenile court—addressed very basic problems of young people, such as delinquency, incorrigibility, and idleness. These problems unfortunately still exist, but they persist in quite different forms than in the past, because they are present in conjunction with new challenges unique to juveniles in the modern era. Newer problems such as modern juvenile violence, substance abuse, poverty and homelessness, the needs of special populations, and risk factors place greater numbers of juveniles at risk of committing serious offenses that can lead to serious confrontations with authority.

Juveniles and Violence in the Modern Era

Young people are both victims and perpetrators of violence. As victims, the facts of many cases have received extensive scrutiny and have led to reexaminations of public policy. As perpetrators, the facts of several high-profile cases have boosted the public’s perception that juvenile violence is epidemic, and have consequently led to popular support for stronger measures against young violent offenders.

Juveniles as Victims of Violence. Juvenile victimization is regularly at the forefront of public and media attention, and high-profile cases receive particular scrutiny. Some of these cases eventually have an impact on public policy, such as when children are kidnapped, assaulted, or murdered. Examples of widely covered cases of victimization include the following incidents from around the country:

- In California, Polly Klaas was kidnapped from her bedroom during a slumber party and murdered. Her killer, Richard Allen Davis, was a lifelong criminal. Cases like this have led to policies such as “three-strikes” laws to keep recidivists permanently behind bars.
- In New Jersey, Megan Kanka was kidnapped, raped, and murdered by Jesse Tammendequas, a twice-convicted sex offender who lived several doors away from her family. Every state has since passed Megan’s Laws, which require formerly convicted sex offenders to register when they move into neighborhoods.
- In South Carolina, Susan Smith drowned her two sons by shutting them inside her vehicle and submerging it in a lake. She concocted a ruse accusing an unidentified African American male of kidnapping her boys, adding a racial dimension to the case.
- In Colorado, JonBenét Ramsey was murdered in the basement of her family home. The police never solved the case.
Although the foregoing examples are certainly horrific, and were publicly reported, they represent only a few examples of a much larger problem: the fact that teenagers are victimized by violent crime at higher rates than adults:

Persons between ages 12 and 15 years and 16 and 19 years had higher rates of violent crime victimization than those 25 years or older. Persons 12 to 19 years of age were twice as likely as those 25 to 34 years of age and 3 times as likely as those 35 to 49 years of age to be victims of violent crimes. . . . For the crime of aggravated assault, individuals between ages 16 and 19 years had a significantly higher rate of victimization than any other age group.4

There has been a high toll in juvenile victimization over time. This is not a new phenomenon—during a 10-year period between 1985 and 1995, approximately 25,000 youths were murdered.5 It must be remembered that these data represent reported and known incidents, and that most incidents of physical and sexual victimization remain unreported and undiscovered—the so-called hidden victimization that is discussed in Chapter 4. These incidents occur secretly within insular households or institutions and are never reported to outsiders or the authorities. Thus, unreported victimization occurs inside dysfunctional families, schools, day care centers, religious institutions, and youth organizations. Individual victimizers are typically authority figures such as older relatives, teachers, care providers, clergy, and youth organization leaders.

Juveniles as Perpetrators of Violence. Juvenile perpetration of violence also receives extensive coverage, particularly when the cases seem to have implications for society as a whole. It is not an exaggeration to conclude that some of these cases have shocked the conscience of the nation, as indicated in the following incidents:

• In New York City, teenagers on a “wilding” spree in Central Park raped, beat, and nearly killed an investment banker who became known as the “Central Park jogger.” She suffered a fractured skull and nearly bled to death. Popular sentiment called for increased placement of juveniles into the adult criminal justice system.
• In West Paducah, Kentucky, a student fired on a prayer group at Heath High School, killing 3 and wounding 5 people.
• In Jonesboro, Arkansas, two students lying in ambush outside Westside Middle School opened fire on students and teachers who exited the school after a fire alarm had been pulled. They killed 5 people and wounded 10 others.
• In Littleton, Colorado, two students embarked on a killing spree at Columbine High School. The pair murdered 12 students and one teacher before committing suicide.
During the mid-1980s, arrests of juveniles for violent offenses increased, a trend that continued into the mid-1990s before declining into the years of the new millennium. Prior to this welcome decline (which was unanticipated), the decade-long spike in violent activity led many analysts and practitioners to predict a continued upsurge in juvenile violence well into the early twenty-first century. As discussed in Chapter 4, many theorists argued that a new type of violent juvenile offender—the superpredator—would characterize the new generation of delinquents. Theorists writing on the superpredator profile described them as “kids that have absolutely no respect for human life and no sense of the future.” As the delinquency rate declined during the latter years of the 1990s and into the new millennium, the superpredator phenomenon did not occur. Chapter Perspective 5.2 discusses the superpredator scare.

**CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE 5.2**

The Superpredator Scare

During the spike in crime and delinquency from the early 1980s to the 1990s, dire predictions were made about the near future. Some experts argued that trends in juvenile violence, gang behavior, and underclass values would become so deeply entrenched that a new breed of violent juvenile criminal would emerge. Vast numbers of these young criminals, termed “superpredators,” would (according to these experts) terrorize the American urban core well into the new millennium.

This concept, first introduced in Chapter 4, presented a fearsome profile that described this new breed of delinquent as “fatherless, Godless, and jobless . . . radically impulsive, brutally remorseless youngsters, including ever more teenage boys, who murder, assault, rob, burglarize, deal deadly drugs, join gun-toting gangs, and create serious communal disorders.” Superpredators theoretically arise from dysfunctional homes, inadequate schools, and morally bankrupt communities. According to proponents of this theory, the most effective countermeasures against the expected superpredator epidemic are strict enforcement of the law and a return to basic moral values.

Fortunately for American society, the superpredator phenomenon never arose in urban communities. During the 1990s (and into the new millennium), juvenile “arrests for serious violent offenses and property offenses declined” steadily both nationally and in most states. In retrospect, the superpredator scare was in part a political analysis that recommended polemical remedies for a complex social problem.

Risky Behaviors: Youths and Substance Abuse

“Substance abuse” refers to experimentation with illicit (illegal) drugs—including those that are specifically prohibited for use by juveniles. Many adolescents have used alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Researchers have long
associated substance abuse with juvenile delinquency. This does not mean that substance abuse or other problems are universally present, or directly cause delinquency. However, this association has been noted as being persistent among many youths who engage in serious acts of delinquency. Alcohol and drugs in particular have been associated with violent teen deviance and are considered to be among the most serious problems of youths in the modern era.

Alcohol and Tobacco. Although juveniles ingest the same illegal drugs that are abused by adults—such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin—some legal substances are specifically banned from use by minors. For example, adults legally and commonly use tobacco and alcohol, but their purchase and use by juveniles are prohibited, and violators are classified as status offenders. There is a dichotomy (two or more opinions) in these policies, as evidenced by the fact that the purchase and use of tobacco products by minors is regulated by many, but not all, states. The national movement to ban underage smoking and chewing is part of a larger American cultural movement to become a smokeless society. Hence, many states prohibit underage tobacco purchases as a means to end early addiction to nicotine. A similar motive is given for regulating underage access to alcoholic beverages, which in every state can be legally purchased and consumed only by persons 21 years of age and older. For those under the age of 21, nearly every use of alcohol is a
status offense. This means that although the age of majority is often set at 18 years of age, persons between 18 and 21 can be charged as status offenders for liquor law violations.

**Intoxicating Drugs.** Illicit drug use (including alcohol) by juveniles peaked during the early 1980s, declined during the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, and then showed a slow increase. As reported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in 1998,

After years of continuous decline, reported drug use by high school seniors grew in several categories after 1992. Eighth and 10th graders reported similar increases in drug use, although their levels of use were below those of 12th graders.\(^\text{10}\)

Although drug abuse during the 1990s and the new millennium was well below the incidence of use during the 1970s and 1980s, a slow increase in usage occurred for marijuana, cocaine, alcohol, and other illicit drugs. Many studies confirmed this trend. One study noted the following percentages of 12th graders admitting to using illicit substances in the previous year:\(^\text{11}\)

- 74% used alcohol.
- 38% used marijuana.
- 9% used hallucinogens.
- 6% used cocaine.
- 6% used inhalants.
- 1% used heroin.

Table 5.1 compares the incidence of drug use among teenagers for the years 1979 and 2001.

The annual number of juvenile arrests for drug abuse and liquor-law violations has been significant during the past 30 years. In a typical annual example, 220,700 juveniles were arrested for drug-abuse violations, and 158,500 were arrested for liquor-law violations. Another 19,600 were arrested for driving under the influence.\(^\text{12}\)

**Risky Environments: Poverty and Homelessness**

**Poor Children.** The proportion of children living in poverty is significantly higher in the United States than in other Western democracies, possibly two to three times higher.\(^\text{13}\) The National Center for Children in Poverty published the following findings on child poverty:\(^\text{14}\)

- 16% of American children—almost 12 million—lived in poverty in 2001, meaning their parents’ income was at or below the federal poverty level. This is about the same number of children who lived in poverty in 1980.
7% of American children—5 million—lived in extreme poverty. This was a 17% increase from 2000. The parents of these children made half the federal poverty level.

57% of African American children were from low-income families (down 3% from 2000); 64% of Latino (up 7%) and 34% of white children (up 3%) were from low-income families.

The child poverty rate during the latter quarter of the twentieth century was consistently high, peaking during the years 1983 and 1993. Figure 5.1 illustrates the long-term incidence of child poverty during the period 1975 to 2001.

**TABLE 5.1**  PREVIOUS MONTH USE OF MARIJUANA AND COCAINE BY TEENAGERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any drug</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Substance abuse by middle- and high-school students declined markedly after the early 1980s, but remained steady during the 1990s and into the new millennium. This trend was true for all drugs, particularly marijuana, cocaine, and alcohol. This table is a representative example of the extent of usage for all drugs, marijuana, and cocaine.

- 7% of American children—5 million—lived in extreme poverty. This was a 17% increase from 2000. The parents of these children made half the federal poverty level.
- 57% of African American children were from low-income families (down 3% from 2000); 64% of Latino (up 7%) and 34% of white children (up 3%) were from low-income families.

The child poverty rate during the latter quarter of the twentieth century was consistently high, peaking during the years 1983 and 1993. Figure 5.1 illustrates the long-term incidence of child poverty during the period 1975 to 2001.

**Figure 5.1**  Child Poverty in the United States


Poverty alone does not cause delinquency or unacceptable behaviors in young people. However, poverty makes families more vulnerable to the vagaries of precarious economic conditions, and increases the likelihood of hardships for juveniles. For example, extreme poverty exposes children to malnutrition, unhealthy environments, poor medical care, and squalor. Underclass behaviors (such as teenage pregnancy, low educational achievement, and chronic unemployment) are common in some poor communities, so that youths are reared among dysfunctional norms and behaviors. When poor children are culturally isolated in the underclass subculture, the likelihood of delinquency increases, as does the probability of multigenerational poverty.

Homeless Children. Homelessness among young people is manifested in several ways: As members of homeless families, as runaways, or as throwaways. The first category represents children who are homeless, but have adult guardians, while the latter two categories represent youths who are independently homeless and unaccompanied by adults. Runaways and throwaways are subcategories of missing children, and are discussed below.

The number of homeless families increased during the turn of the millennium, as did the overall rate of homelessness among children. Families with children have recently represented a steadily increasing proportion of homeless people. In fact, the National Coalition for the Homeless has reported that “families with children are among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population.” The Coalition also reported the following data on age and family demographics of homelessness:

- In 2001, the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ survey of 27 urban areas indicated that children under the age of 18 years accounted for 25.3% of the urban homeless population.
- Nationally in the year 2000, approximately 39% of the homeless population were children.
- In 2001, unaccompanied minors comprised 4% of the urban homeless population.
- Also in 2001, the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ survey of 27 urban areas indicated that families comprised 40% of the homeless population, an increase from previous years.
- Nationally in the year 2000, approximately 39% of the homeless population were children.
- Single mothers and children make up the largest group of people who are homeless in rural areas.

Homeless lifestyles are exceptionally stressful for families and children. Homeless young people often change schools, move from place to place, have little privacy, and have difficulty obtaining basic necessities of life (such as clothing and food). Consequently, emotional, behavioral, and learning problems are common among homeless children. They are frequently restless, frustrated, aggressive, or introverted, and have poor social skills.
Missing Children

Missing children are young persons who are unaccounted for. They are “missing” in the sense that they are not resident with an adult or institution that has been designated as their legitimate place of residence. The circumstances under which children go missing are categorized as follows:18

- **Parental or family abductions.** A family member either takes a child or fails to return a child after a legal visit.
- **Stranger or nonfamily abductions.** A forced unauthorized taking, detention, or luring of a child.
- **Runaways.** Children who leave home and stay away at least overnight without permission.
- **Thrownaways.** Children who are forced to leave home, or who are not permitted to return home.
- **Otherwise missing.** Miscellaneous reasons for absence, such as injury, disability, or age (wandering away).

It is striking that of the hundreds of thousands of children who are reported missing annually,19 the largest proportion are runaways and thrownaways. Interestingly, most runaways are teenage girls (approximately 58%), most are gone for three days or more (about 52%), and most are recidivist runaways.20 Table 5.2 summarizes the annual incidence of missing children.

### TABLE 5.2 THE INCIDENCE OF “MISSING” CHILDREN

Hundreds of thousands of children go missing each year. This table lists average and serious annual incidence of missing children, by category.4 The serious column signifies extreme circumstances surrounding the abduction or voluntary absence.

Extreme circumstances include family members moving a child out of state, ransom or murder by strangers, and runaways and thrownaways without secure places to stay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missing Child Category</th>
<th>Average Annual Incidence</th>
<th>Average Annual Serious Incidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental/family abduction</td>
<td>354,100</td>
<td>163,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger/nonfamily abduction</td>
<td>3,200–4,600</td>
<td>200–300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaways</td>
<td>450,700</td>
<td>133,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrownaways</td>
<td>127,100</td>
<td>59,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otherwise missing</td>
<td>438,200</td>
<td>139,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The AMBER Plan. In the Fall of 2001, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children promulgated the America’s Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response Plan, commonly known as the AMBER Plan. The plan was first developed in 1996 as a memorial to Amber Hagerman, a nine-year-old girl who was kidnapped and murdered in Arlington, Texas. The concept of the plan is described as follows:

The AMBER Plan is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies and broadcasters to activate an urgent bulletin in the most serious child-abduction cases. Broadcasters use the Emergency Alert System (EAS), formerly called the Emergency Broadcast System, to air a description of the abducted child and suspected abductor.

The AMBER Plan is coordinated by state and local governments, which ideally cooperate under a nationwide emergency alert umbrella when children are missing. When authorities suspect that a child has been abducted, Amber Alerts are promulgated that describe the victim, provide a profile of the abductor, and describe any special circumstances of the case. Amber Alert bulletins are broadcast on freeway alert signals, giving descriptions of suspected vehicles including license plate numbers. Since its inception, scores of missing children have been rescued under the system.

Unique Needs: Special Populations of Adolescents

Many youths who enter the juvenile justice system have special needs that necessitate professional intervention. These adolescents represent populations who sometimes require prolonged treatment or remediation for their needs. This is because they are often behaviorally or mentally impaired, causing them to act out unacceptably. When this happens, society is certain to respond—either through treatment or remediation, or simply by dealing with the perpetrator as a deviant offender. The following conditions exemplify special populations of young people:

- **Attention deficit disorder.** A behavioral disorder typified by deficient attention ability, chronically active physical movements (such as fidgeting), and poor self-control.
- **Prenatal exposure to diseases and drugs.** Children born of mothers who either had a venereal disease or actively abused substances such as alcohol or drugs during pregnancy. Babies can contract the mother’s venereal disease or suffer mental retardation or addiction from the mother’s prenatal alcohol or drug abuse.
- **Learning disabilities.** Deficits in learning processes, such as poor reading ability, lack of ability to memorize or follow directions, and incapability to distinguish or otherwise manage letters or numerals.
• **Emotional disturbance.** Emotionally disturbed youths exhibit extremes in emotions. These can include impulsiveness, aggression, or polar (extreme) mood swings.

All special juvenile populations require programs and facilities that can treat their conditions and control potential exhibitions of unacceptable behavior. The purpose of specialized programs and facilities is to intervene early in the lives of special populations to help them manage their conditions and to make them as productive as possible. They protect juveniles from eventual conflicts with authority.

**Risk Factors**

Many policy makers and researchers have attempted to identify specific environments, or domains, that promote an increased probability of delinquent behavior. These experts reason that if key features of these environments can be isolated, then specific policies can be crafted to reduce the possibility of delinquency. Researchers have generally concluded that juvenile delinquency occurs at higher rates for adolescents who are exposed to, or grow up in, identifiably unwholesome environments. Within these environments, certain factors—known as risk factors—can make youths more prone to engage in illegal or otherwise unacceptable behaviors. Risk factors are defined as:

... indicators of the pathways children and adolescents take to serious, violent, and chronic juvenile delinquency ... the major risk factor domains [are] families, schools, peer groups, communities, and individual characteristics ... Risk factors predict increased risk for developing a problem or disorder.22

The five domains for risk factors—families, schools, peers, communities, and individuals—each have certain chronic subenvironments that can produce a high incidence of unacceptable behaviors.23 For example, risk factors within the family domain can include divorce, poverty, adoption, welfare dependency, and underclass values. As indicated in Table 5.3, these subenvironments can be incorporated into the risk factor domains.24

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Youths in Conflict With Authority: Children in Trouble

Many children in trouble are from broken homes or dysfunctional families, have been abused or neglected, or grow up in other toxic environments such as severe poverty. These young people were defined previously as juveniles
who violate the law, either as juvenile delinquents or as status offenders. Both categories of offenders are technically noncriminal youths because neither are processed through the criminal justice system. This holds true even for juvenile delinquents who commit acts that are defined as serious felonies; as long as they remain in the juvenile justice system, they are treated as delinquents and not criminals. However, it is important to remember that although all status offenders retain their designation as juveniles, not all delinquents remain in the juvenile justice system.

Most states have established criteria under which some delinquent offenders can be waived into criminal court, tried in the same manner as adults, and punished accordingly. Many states also bypass the juvenile-to-criminal court waiver process altogether and automatically try serious offenders in criminal court as adults. These issues are discussed more fully in Chapter 7, but it is interesting at this point to note that waivers out of juvenile court began to decline during the mid-1990s. What explained this new trend? The answer is interesting and uncomplicated: States began to send greater numbers of offenders directly to criminal courts, thus circumventing the juvenile justice system ab initio (from the beginning).25

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**TABLE 5.3 RISK FACTOR DOMAINS AND CHRONIC SUBENVIRONMENTS**

Five risk factor domains have been identified by researchers and experts. These unacceptable behaviors include substance abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, dropping out of school, and violence. Several chronic subenvironments have been observed that are conducive to producing unacceptable behaviors among youths, and are summarized in this table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Peers/Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Availability of drugs</td>
<td>Family history of problem behaviors</td>
<td>Academic failure in elementary school</td>
<td>Early and persistent antisocial behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of firearms</td>
<td>Family management problems</td>
<td>Poor commitment to school</td>
<td>Rebelliousness and aggressiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws and norms favoring drugs, firearms &amp; crime</td>
<td>Chronic family conflict</td>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>Friends engaging in problem behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media portrayals of violence</td>
<td>Parental approval of problem behavior</td>
<td>Moving frequently to new schools</td>
<td>Early commencement of problem behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions and mobility</td>
<td>Parental criminal behavior</td>
<td>Dropping out</td>
<td>Constitutional &amp; congenital factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community disorganization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme economic deprivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age of Majority

Every state and the federal government have adopted statutory designations that officially define one’s status as a juvenile or an adult. These designations are based on age, and the legal age of transition from juvenile status to adulthood is termed the **age of majority**. Jurisdictions of juvenile courts are delimited by each state’s age-based criteria, so that when offenders reach the designated age of majority, they automatically become subject to criminal court jurisdiction. Technically, both status offenders and juvenile delinquents are lawbreakers who have not yet passed a state’s legally defined age of majority.

There is some consensus, but no unanimity, on the question of establishing ages of majority. Although most states place the age of majority at 18 years old, seven states place the age at 17 years old, and three states designate the age of majority at 16 years old. Under federal law, juveniles are defined as persons under the age of 18. Table 5.4 summarizes the ages of majority adopted under state and federal laws.

Status Offenders

Status offenses are defined by one’s age, pertaining solely to persons under the age of majority. These offenses are deemed by society to be unacceptable.

### TABLE 5.4 AGE OF MAJORITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age When Subject to Criminal Court Jurisdiction</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Connecticut, New York, North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, South Carolina, Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

behaviors, and include: runaway behavior, truancy, ungovernableness, underage use of alcohol or tobacco products, and curfew violations. Absent concomitant (occurring together or accompanying) criminality, persons above the age of majority may engage in these behaviors without violating the law.

When considering behavior patterns for specific status offenses, truancy is the most common offense for youths under age 15 years, and liquor law violations are most frequent for youths 16 years of age and older. Curfew violations also occur at fairly high rates in these age groups. Experts have debated whether chronic (repeated or extreme) behavior for particular types of status offenses are more or less likely to lead to career escalation. Career escalation refers to the progression from relatively minor offenses toward more serious delinquent or criminal offenses. One aspect of this debate asks whether truants and liquor-law violators tend to be chronic offenders to a greater degree than runaways. Some experts conclude that truants and liquor-law violators are more likely to escalate toward more serious delinquent or criminal activities, while others have found no significant escalation toward delinquency and crime.28 Regardless of linkage with career escalation, the fact is that status offenses have been steadily increasing over time. In comparison, delinquency rates increased and then declined during the last two decades.

It is useful to make a longitudinal (long-term over time) comparison of juvenile deviance. Table 5.5 is an example of how longitudinal data can be used to summarize the number of petitioned status cases brought before juvenile courts nationally over a 10-year period.1

Table 5.5: Longitudinal Data: Steady Increases in Petitioned Status Offense Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Serious Offense</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status offenses</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>112,300</td>
<td>158,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor law violations</td>
<td>26,200</td>
<td>27,800</td>
<td>40,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>20,600</td>
<td>33,700</td>
<td>40,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaway behavior</td>
<td>12,400</td>
<td>19,900</td>
<td>24,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungovernableness</td>
<td>12,900</td>
<td>14,900</td>
<td>21,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous¹</td>
<td>6,900</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>32,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹. Curfew, tobacco, etc.

Longitudinal data (long-term over time) are useful to explain trends in juvenile deviance. For example, these data show that the number of status offenses has increased annually in the United States. This table is an example of how longitudinal data can be used to summarize the number of petitioned status cases brought before juvenile courts nationally over a 10-year period.1

States try to act in the “best interest” of the child when dealing with status offenders, and therefore apply creative approaches and standards for
labeling and processing these offenders. For example, a number of states have officially decriminalized status offenses, meaning that offenders are not deemed to be lawbreakers. Other states have reclassified status offenders as dependent children, so that youths are diverted to child and youth service agencies rather than juvenile courts. Many of these approaches and standards are specifically designed to soften potential trauma for young status offenders entering into the juvenile justice system for the first time. Thus, a principal reason for diversion outside of the juvenile courts is society’s concern about stigmatizing nondelinquent offenders. The fear is that stigma in court might stimulate chronic behavior in status offenders, leading to more youths engaging in recidivist and delinquent behavior. This is a legitimate concern, because chronic status offenders are nearly always referred to juvenile court.

**Juvenile Delinquents**

A juvenile delinquent is a person who commits an offense that would be considered a crime had the offender been over the age of majority. Thus, delinquent offenses are not synonymous with status offenses. Juvenile delinquents

*Photo 5.2* A group of juveniles vandalizing an abandoned building. Some acts of juvenile delinquency are a result of destructive “fun.”
have committed the same offenses as adult criminals, including serious felonies, but because they have been designated as delinquents, they are processed through the juvenile justice system. Hence, even though an adolescent may have committed a particularly egregious offense, the word delinquent is used in lieu of criminal, in part to reduce the likelihood of stigmatizing young serious offenders.

Readers will recall from Chapter 4 that self-reported data are surveys of youths asking them to report their juvenile acts. As discussed previously, one of the most influential self-report studies was the National Youth Survey (NYS), which examined a national cohort (sample) of 1,725 youths ages 11 to 17 years from 1976 to 1980. The NYS reported that delinquency increased by nearly 50% during this period, showing that the delinquency rate was high and escalating during these years. Another influential self-report study is the Monitoring the Future Study (MTF), which has measured delinquency and drug abuse among a national sample of high school seniors since 1982, with 8th and 10th graders added in 1991. Analyses of NYS and MTF data indicate that drug use and delinquency were highest during the 1980s and early 1990s before declining.

Data from another interesting study—the FBI’s Supplementary Homicide Report—carefully compiled data on juvenile homicide offenders. The Supplementary Homicide Report did not report self-reported data. Data collected during the period 1984 to 1994 provide an interesting historical snapshot of patterns of juvenile homicide. According to these data, juvenile homicides increased markedly during the mid-1980s and early 1990s, with most offenders 15 to 17 years of age. Males committed the vast majority of homicides, and 61% of homicide offenders were African American juveniles. Also, more than 80% of homicides were committed using a firearm, with males and older adolescents more likely to use a gun. Significantly, most victims were of the same race as their assailants.

Significant numbers of youths are arrested annually for serious offenses, mostly for property crimes. Table 5.6 summarizes the number of juvenile arrests for serious delinquent offenses.31

It is important to understand that although the 2001 data for arrests are significant, and the proportion of offenses perpetrated by juveniles is reportedly high, these data represent an overall decline in comparison to data reported during the 1980s and early 1990s. For example, the 1990s saw substantial declines for burglary and motor vehicle theft and a moderate decline for arson.

As is the case with some status offenders, many juvenile delinquents are chronic offenders. They engage in repeated and serious delinquency, sometimes committing acts of serious property vandalism or physical violence. Chronic offenders are in a sense “career delinquents” because they intend to continue in their behavior without pause, perhaps envisioning themselves as someday becoming career adult criminals. They represent classic cases of career escalation. Many, but certainly not all, career delinquents are from poor urban backgrounds, often growing up with underclass values. For
TABLE 5.6  JUVENILE ARRESTS FOR INDEX CRIMES, 2001

Index Crimes are the most serious felonies reported by the FBI in its annual Uniform Crime Report. Juveniles account for many of these crimes, although the greatest proportion of juvenile offenses are property crimes.

This table reports the number of arrests of juveniles for serious (index) felonies.\textsuperscript{a}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Charged</th>
<th>Total All Ages</th>
<th>Ages Under 15</th>
<th>Ages Under 18</th>
<th>Ages Over 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime Index total</td>
<td>11,554,737</td>
<td>150,223</td>
<td>407,106</td>
<td>1,147,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent distribution Crime Index</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent crime</td>
<td>434,391</td>
<td>22,146</td>
<td>67,002</td>
<td>367,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent distribution violent crime</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property crime</td>
<td>1,120,346</td>
<td>128,077</td>
<td>340,104</td>
<td>780,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent distribution property crime</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murder &amp; nonnegligent manslaughter</td>
<td>9,426</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>8,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcible rape</td>
<td>18,576</td>
<td>1,180</td>
<td>3,119</td>
<td>15,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>76,667</td>
<td>4,354</td>
<td>18,111</td>
<td>58,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated assault</td>
<td>329,722</td>
<td>16,498</td>
<td>44,815</td>
<td>284,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>198,883</td>
<td>23,287</td>
<td>61,623</td>
<td>137,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny-theft</td>
<td>806,093</td>
<td>92,317</td>
<td>238,605</td>
<td>567,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor vehicle theft</td>
<td>102,607</td>
<td>8,425</td>
<td>33,563</td>
<td>69,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>12,763</td>
<td>4,048</td>
<td>6,313</td>
<td>6,450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


recidivist delinquents, acquiring an education, developing interpersonal skills, and investigating quality employment are all secondary to their anti-social behaviors and lifestyles. By the time they reach the age of majority, chronic delinquent offenders typically have few skills, poor education, and a great deal of experience with the justice system.

Youths Requiring Intervention: Children in Need

Children in need were defined previously as juveniles who are not properly cared for by an adult, and who may be taken into the juvenile justice system.
for their own protection under the doctrine of *parens patriae*. Many of these youths are placed in foster and group homes and are monitored by child welfare agencies. It has been noted that experts generally describe several categories of children in need:

- **Dependent children.** Children who are abandoned by parents or guardians or are otherwise uncared for. Youths live in inadequate and needy conditions, which are usually not the fault of their parents or other adult guardians. There is usually no intentional neglect. For example, there may be conditions of extreme poverty in which the parents do not have the means to provide adequate food, clothing, or shelter.
- **Neglected children.** Child victims who do not receive proper care from parents or other guardians. Youths live in inadequate and needy conditions, which are intentionally created by their parents or other adult guardians. Substance abuse such as alcoholism and drug addiction are frequently present and contribute to family financial distress, parental health problems, and parental death. Common types of neglect are physical, emotional, and educational neglect.
- **Abused children.** Children who are assaulted physically, sexually, or emotionally by their parents or other adult guardians.

**Child Dependency and Neglect**

Juvenile justice systems have always had jurisdiction over dependent and neglected children. However, the two categories were often conflated (mixed), so that no differentiation was made between youths who were dependent and those who were neglected. In the modern era, a distinction has been made between the two, in recognition of the underlying causes and characteristics of these conditions. Experts now understand that parents and guardians of children in need can act either proactively or passively to cause hardship for their children. That is, they can either intentionally create dangerous environments (proactive), or be responsible for these environments without an intentional contribution to the outcome (passive). Children in need suffer regardless of whether their conditions are the result of parental action or inaction—the outcome is the same. These children are likely to develop emotional and psychological problems, and they often become status offenders, delinquents, and criminals.

Although child dependency and neglect govern similar conditions, they are distinguishable by parental intentions and the quality of parents’ behavior. Child dependency is characterized by parents’ complete inability to provide for the basic needs of their children, whereas child neglect is characterized by proactive parental *intention* to deprive children of their basic needs. In comparison, abuse is by definition an example of extremely proactive behavior by parents and guardians. It is intentionally carried out and potentially extremely dangerous. In all of these categories—dependency,
neglect, and abuse—the juvenile justice system will often intervene very aggressively for the best interests of the child.

Neglected and dependent children frequently grow up in families that have been devastated by death, divorce, or economic distress. In addition to severe family disruption, they may also be victims of extreme poverty. Experts have identified three common types of neglect:

- **Physical neglect.** “Abandonment, expulsion from the home, delay or failure to seek remedial health care, inadequate supervision, disregard for hazards in the home, or inadequate food, clothing, or shelter.”
- **Emotional neglect.** “Inadequate nurturance or affection . . . maladaptive behavior and other inattention to emotional/developmental needs.”
- **Educational neglect.** “Permitting the child to be chronically truant or other inattention to educational needs.”

Signs of neglect and dependency include inadequate clothing (for example, in cold climates), malnutrition, poor medical care, and unhealthy hygiene. Neglected and dependent children may also exhibit behavioral problems such as stealing, substance abuse, listlessness at school and elsewhere, and never being supervised by an adult. Without basic necessities or positive adult role models, neglected and dependent children can become alienated, emotionally dysfunctional, and psychologically damaged. Because neglected children in particular tend to be unsupervised, they are often brought into the juvenile justice system for status offenses such as truancy or curfew offenses. This can lead to career escalation and future criminality.

### Child Abuse

Households that practice physical, sexual, or emotional abuse are by definition very damaging environments for children. From the child’s perspective, these environments are filled with fear, uncertainty, and danger. Self-esteem is eroded, dysfunctional norms become a way of life, and children reared in abusive homes often grow up to be violent teenagers and adults. One factor that serves to further aggravate the consequences of abuse is that many physical and emotional abusers convince children that they “deserve” to be abused. Abusive parents frequently justify their mistreatment as disciplinary measures that are needed to correct the child victim’s unacceptable behavior. Abused children can come to believe this explanation and blame themselves for their parents’ conduct.

Two fundamental concepts should be understood about physical and sexual abuse: Physical abuse is tantamount to assault and battery, whereas sexual abuse involves the exploitation of children for sexual pleasure or financial gain. These types of abuse exist within every demographic group and economic class in every region of the country, so that it is clearly a
national problem affecting all communities. And yet, research has identified associations between higher rates of abuse and low educational level, unemployment, poverty, and young age of the abuser. Research also indicates that child abusers tend to be mothers, parents, or other family members; relatively few abuse cases involve friends of the family or caregivers. Domestic violence and sexual abuse are hidden crimes because they frequently occur inside homes or within insular (secretive or closed) institutions. Incidents occur among families, which are among the most insular institutions in our culture. Thus, most cases of physical and sexual abuse go unreported for many reasons, often because of embarrassment, fear of retaliation, or a person’s dysfunctional conclusion that abuse is somehow a “normal” way of life. It is estimated that one to two million children have been physically assaulted or threatened with deadly weapons.

Compared with emotional abuse, cases of physical or sexual abuse are fairly easily identified because of the physical trauma and abnormal behavior that often occurs. Emotional abuse is very difficult to measure because of the absence of physical scars and presence of subtle psychological scars. In essence, children “hurt on the inside” when abused emotionally. An emotionally abused child is one who is regularly insulted, criticized, blamed, ignored, or given overly intrusive attention. Their emotional needs are not nurtured, and they are frequently the object of rages, parental self-pity, or verbal assaults. The effect on children can be equally as damaging as physical or sexual abuse. Emotional abuse is recognized as a form of abuse in many jurisdictions.

Laws Governing Child Abuse and Neglect. To combat child abuse and neglect, the federal government passed the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act in 1974, as amended in 1978. It criminalized child abuse and neglect caused by parents or guardians:

... physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of eighteen, by a person who is responsible for the child’s welfare under circumstances, which indicate the child’s health, or welfare is harmed or threatened.

The federal law also mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect. Similarly, every state has enacted child abuse and neglect statutes. The scope of these laws varies from state to state, with some providing expansive definitions of abuse and neglect and others using a more narrow approach. Every state has also enacted child abuse reporting statutes, which are laws mandating reporting procedures for certain institutions and professions. Under these laws, state agencies have been designated to investigate allegations of abuse, and in many cases there are statutory reporting requirements for school employees, medical personnel, social service workers, and law enforcement officers. Reporting authorities are often granted civil immunity.
when they report apparent abuse in good faith. Legal privileges such as the physician–patient and husband–wife privileges are waived in many jurisdictions. Thus, child abuse reporting statutes often give legal protection to authorities who come forward with reports of possible abuse and eliminate legal privileges that might have previously protected abusers.

Child abuse reporting statutes represent significant progress in the national effort to end child abuse and neglect. Although these laws are not perfect—many are unclear about what should be reported and who should make the report—they widen the net of the juvenile justice system and place significant responsibility on parents for their behavior.

Rescuing Youths: Helping Children in Trouble and Children in Need

There exists within the juvenile justice system a broad support network of individuals, agencies, and institutions that are responsible for the welfare of children in trouble and children in need. This support network is quite extensive, and its components can be classified as follows:

- **The immediate community.** Made up of families, neighbors, and friends, the immediate community are those who are closest to troubled and needy children.
- **Intervening institutions.** These institutions include schools and law enforcement agencies. Officials within these institutions are key personnel in the effort to help troubled and needy children.
- **Remedial institutions.** Child protective and health care agencies that essentially try to investigate and remediate the damaging effects of troubled and needy environments.

The Immediate Community

Family, neighbors, and friends are “first-line” interveners in the overall effort to help children in trouble and children in need. These persons are closest to youthful offenders and victims and most likely know the adults responsible for their circumstances. Because of this, several presumptions may be made about members of the immediate community and their relationships to juveniles: First, because of their proximity, they are persons most likely to know the juvenile and have personal knowledge about the young person’s behavior and environment. Second, these persons are best positioned to bring about quick and immediate intervention from the appropriate officials and agencies. Third, members of the immediate community may very well be responsible for the child’s environment as their abusers, neglecters, or participants in their deviant behavior. Fourth,
because members of the immediate community probably know those persons who are responsible for the juvenile’s behavior and environment, they can also be least likely to report this to the authorities out of a skewed sense of loyalty or simply not wanting to get involved.

Although on the front line, the immediate community’s frequency and effectiveness of intervention can be quite erratic. Persons often exhibit reluctance to report child maltreatment. Part of the reason is that the maltreatment may be misinterpreted as discipline, in which neighbors and family may conclude that it is none of their business. There is also a fear of retribution, especially if one is the spouse or relative of an abuser. Another reason can be concern about making an important decision such as intervention on incomplete information; that is, concern about being mistaken about one’s interpretation of the behavior that is observed. One final reason for erratic reporting is the simple fact that a great deal of child maltreatment occurs secretly within households, so that neighbors, friends, and family members may be completely unaware of the child’s environment.

Intervening Institutions

Schools are the single most prevalent reporting authority on child maltreatment, followed by law enforcement agencies. There is an officially mandated reason for this: Child abuse reporting statutes require schools and law enforcement agencies to report evidence of child maltreatment. Under this mandate, schools and law enforcement agencies have come to play a critical role in identifying troubled and needy children and informing child welfare authorities about their conditions. It is now routine policy for these intervening institutions to employ trained experts who are adept at identifying maltreatment, and who have been empowered to act officially on behalf of these institutions.

It should be understood that schools sit in loco parentis and are charged to be proactive intervening institutions, whereas law enforcement agencies become involved when there is a problem and are usually reactive institutions. Within the context of our discussion, the term schools refers to the many professionals working within the education system: administrators, teachers, nurses, coaches, and counselors. These professionals are in close contact with young people for extended periods of time each day, as well as over weeks and months. Therefore, they are arguably the best resource within the juvenile justice system to proactively identify maltreatment and carry out effective intervention expeditiously. In comparison, law enforcement officials do not become aware of, and do not respond to, child maltreatment until someone reports a possible problem—hence, they are reactive in their intervention. Reports may come from members of the immediate community, or from remedial institutions. For example, neighbors or family members might call the police during an abusive incident, or emergency medical personnel could call the police after treating an injured or terrified child.
Remedial Institutions

Health care agencies treat physically and emotionally damaged children, and child protective agencies investigate and process allegations of maltreatment. Both remedial institutions are obligated under law (e.g., in accordance with child abuse reporting statutes) to report identified cases of maltreatment. Thus, they are linked by law to other components of the juvenile justice system.

Health care agencies intervene through hospital emergency rooms, emergency medical services, mental health agencies, doctor’s examinations, and public health clinics. As with the cases of schools and law enforcement agencies, personnel are trained to identify child maltreatment and are authorized to act officially on behalf of their agencies. Child protective agencies work closely with all juvenile justice institutions, because large numbers of cases are referred to them by other agencies. Schools, law enforcement agencies, and health care agencies all rely on child protective services to intervene as investigators and protectors of maltreated juveniles. Of the investigations conducted by child protective services, more than 50% of cases result in findings of no maltreatment, roughly 35% to 40% of allegations are substantiated or suspicion of maltreatment is found, and the remaining cases involve either no finding or false reports.35

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE CHAPTER 5

Juvenile Division Commander—Major
Urban Police Agency

Major urban police agencies typically establish juvenile bureaus to address the problems of juvenile deviance and victimization. Officers who are assigned to these bureaus are specialists and are specially trained to deal with youth gangs, delinquents, status offenders, and victims. Higher-ranking urban juvenile police officers are experts on a broad range of youth-related problems and issues, and they frequently possess academic bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

I. Personal Profile

A. Name:
   Sharyn Buck

B. Agency:
   Los Angeles Police Department

C. Rank and/or Title:
   Commanding Officer, Juvenile Division (Captain)

D. Education (Schools and Degrees):
   AA, Journalism
   BA, Broadcast Journalism
   MA, Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Tactics
E. Professional Training:
Twenty-one years of law enforcement experience, including leadership training, advanced management courses, and extensive everyday application

F. Professional Organizations/Community Group Memberships:
Southern California Juvenile Officer’s Association
National Association of Female Executives
National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives
City of Hope Steering Committee for Women’s Professional Golf
International Association of Chiefs of Police
Mayor’s Youth Council
Advisory committee for LA’s BEST (mayor’s after-school program)

II. Professional Profile

A. What personal or other background experiences led to your decision to choose this profession?
Wanting a career that offered me opportunities, variety of assignments, challenges, and a good salary, law enforcement was the perfect choice. Growing up I was involved in competitive sports and with LAPD I have had the fortune of representing the Department across the United States in athletic events. Being able to serve the people of the city that I grew up in has been the best part of all! Another plus is that I have two brothers who are law enforcement officers (LAPD), and it was their enthusiasm and excitement that led me to this profession.

B. Please state a few of your personal reasons/motivations for your decision to continue in this profession.
Being a Los Angeles police officer is a very rewarding career, as each day brings a different and unique experience. The promotional opportunities, as well as the diversity of job assignments, have certainly been a motivating factor for me to continue in this profession. However, as my leadership responsibilities increased, the opportunity to interact and solve problems with higher levels of the community, such as City Council members, the Police Commissioner, and other law enforcement department heads has also expanded. This experience continues to motivate me to want to contribute as much as I can in the field of law enforcement, as it relates to youth and youth crime.

C. Which job experiences have had an important impact on you?
With a degree in broadcast journalism, I had the very distinct opportunity to be the Officer-in-Charge of the Department’s Press Relations Section, where I represented the Department and the Chief of Police in working with the media. In this high-profile assignment, I learned to effectively interact with many different political and community organizations, developing significant long-lasting relationships. In speaking to media representatives from all over the world, I was able to enhance my communication skills, especially in high pressure situations. When you conduct media interviews on events that impact the Police Department, you feel very good about being
able to not only deliver the message, but to also represent an agency such as the Los Angeles Police Department.

D. **What has been a particularly satisfying job experience?**

In my current assignment as the Commanding Officer of the Juvenile Division, I work with a group of dedicated, talented detectives who investigate the most sensitive, yet horrific cases involving children who are victims of physical and/or sexual abuse. It has been a privilege for me to work with such passionate people, striving to protect those that can’t protect themselves, the children who are victimized. I feel very satisfied that I can help them do their jobs and enhance morale on a daily basis.

E. **What has been a particularly challenging job experience?**

All of my assignments have been challenging, as I tend to apply for those type of positions. But, if I had to select one, it would probably be working in the Internal Affairs Division. In that position I investigated and presented cases against officers who were accused of serious misconduct. The assignment was very demanding, but certainly rewarding. I learned so much about our disciplinary system, an experience that provided me significant insight for future promotions and for the management positions I have held throughout my career.

F. **What do you think the future holds for your profession?**

The future for law enforcement will continue to be on the cutting edge of keeping communities crime free and safe from terrorism.

As the demands increase for law enforcement officers to be held to the highest standard in their behavior and interaction with the communities they serve, so will the advancement in technology to ensure those standards are adhered to. In the field of child abuse, the needs continue to grow for advancements in Internet safety, specifically in educating children as to the dangers of cyberspace.

G. **What kind of advice/guidance would you give to interested students?**

If you are pursuing a career in law enforcement, ensure you prepare yourself both mentally and physically. Obtaining a college degree is certainly a benefit, and being in top physical shape is a plus. The one quality I believe is absolutely essential to a successful career is communication skills. If there is one skill that affords you the opportunity to succeed in law enforcement, it is the ability to interact with people, verbally and in writing. Too often people forget that being a police officer requires you to know how to communicate with people, often in critical emergency situations.

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**Chapter Summary**

The expansive juvenile justice network is designed to address modern problems and risk factors of young people. Agencies and individuals are not only
charged to redress the behavior of children in trouble but also to provide remediation for children in need. Thus, whereas the adult criminal justice system provides fairly straightforward services within a narrow focus, the juvenile justice system is a complex network with a rather broad mission.

Many modern problems of juveniles are similar to those of the past, but there are newer challenges for juveniles and society. Juveniles are both victims of violence and perpetrators. As victims, they experience criminal violence just as do adults. However, they also experience so-called “hidden” victimization, which occurs secretly in households or institutions. Because of hidden victimization, a significant proportion of physical and sexual assaults are never reported. As perpetrators, juveniles are responsible for committing the same kinds of criminal violence as adults. Although the superpredator phenomenon never arose to any great extent, the fact remains that juvenile-initiated violence makes up a significant proportion of criminal violence in many communities. Another problem is substance abuse, primarily the use of alcohol and marijuana. Other substances, such as hallucinogens and cocaine, are also frequently abused. Poverty and homelessness have potentially devastating consequences for children. Although poverty alone does not create juvenile deviance, it increases family vulnerability. Homelessness is in itself a stressful and dangerous circumstance for young people. Finally, the frequency of missing children is of concern to all sectors of society and the juvenile justice system. Fortunately, programs such as the AMBER Plan serve to coordinate rescue and recovery efforts. Special populations of juveniles also represent new challenges for the juvenile justice system, as do risk factors that may exist within the juvenile’s environment.

Children in trouble are juvenile delinquents and status offenders who are designated as such because they have not yet passed the age of majority. They are lawbreakers who receive differential treatment specifically designed for juveniles, so long as they remain within the juvenile justice system. Although the rate of status offenses has remained steady or increased during recent years, juvenile delinquency declined during the 1990s and early millennium after reaching new highs during previous decades. Children in need are dependent, neglected, and abused children. Dependency and neglect are similar, but they are distinguishable because of the role and motivation of the responsible adult. Dependency reflects the inability of parents to provide for the basic needs of their children, whereas neglect is a willful maltreatment. Child abuse is fundamentally damaging for children. Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse are all traumatic for youths and can lead to depression, withdrawal, incorrigibility, and other harmful outcomes. Child abuse prevention laws and child abuse reporting statutes have been enacted to criminalize abuse and to require that specified institutions and professionals report abuse when it occurs.

A broad network of people and institutions has been established to help children in trouble and children in need. Those closest to juveniles are the immediate community, who are often aware of troubled and needy children, but who also are often reticent about reporting these matters to the authorities. Schools
and law enforcement agencies are intervening institutions that are required by law to report maltreatment and in fact are the most prevalent reporting institutions. This is because schools are in extended contact with children, while the police are regularly called to respond to reports of maltreatment. Remedial institutions essentially treat and investigate allegations of maltreatment. Health care agencies and child protective agencies are important components of the juvenile justice system because they are able to identify and, in the case of protective agencies, monitor the condition of maltreated juveniles.

Chapter 6 investigates the role of the police in the juvenile justice system. The historical evolution of police interactions during several policing eras is summarized, and an investigation is made of police dispositions, discretion, and procedural formality. Several issues arising from police contacts with juveniles will be discussed, including search and seizure, booking, fingerprinting, interrogations, and the use of force by the police.

Questions for Review

1. What is the difference in definition between children in trouble and children in need?
2. What issues affect juvenile delinquents, status offenders, and victimized youths?
3. In what ways can poverty, underclass status, behavioral issues, and emotional issues be considered to be risk factors?
4. In what ways are children in trouble in conflict with authority?
5. What are the main problems and policy issues associated with children in trouble?
6. In what ways do children in need require intervention?
7. What are the main problems and policy issues associated with children in need?
8. Describe the assistance network that is framed by the community, families, and schools.

Key Terms and Concepts

The following topics were discussed in this chapter and are found in the Glossary:

Age of Majority AMBER Plan, The
AMBER Alerts At-Risk Juveniles
A National Problem: Children on the Street

This chapter’s Discussion Box is intended to stimulate critical discussion about the plight of juveniles who take their chances on the street.

Many children and adolescents have good reason to leave their home environments. Abuse, exploitation, and substance addiction often create intolerable situations for young people. Most runaways return home after a short period of time, but many of them take to the streets for extended periods. In essence, they genuinely move out of their homes to live elsewhere. Living among these victimized youths are other young people who leave home without a real need to escape truly toxic environments—they become runaways for a variety of reasons.

Runaways and thrownaways live in every city in America; some of them are housed in state-run shelters, and others are members of the nation’s homeless population. It is very difficult to study them systematically, because neither they nor their parents are keen to discuss the reasons for what is certainly a traumatic circumstance. False and misleading answers to research questions are common among runaways, thrownaways, and their parents or guardians. At the same time that objective interview data are difficult to collect, so too are accurate statistical (quantitative) data on the number of children living on the street or the number of families affected by this problem.

Despite the difficulty of obtaining accurate data on this problem, policy makers and members of the community cannot overlook their obligation to respond to the plight of children on the street.
Discussion Questions

1. Why do children and adolescents become runaways? Why would they prefer life on the street over life at home?
2. From the perspective of parents and guardians, what can be done to mitigate the likelihood that their children leave to live on the street?
3. What kind of research is needed to study the problem of street children? What aspects of this phenomenon should be studied?
4. How should policy makers manage this problem? Can they manage it?
5. What type of relief agencies should be established to rescue youths who genuinely take up residence outside of their homes?

Recommended Web Sites

The following Web sites investigate issues concerning children in trouble and children in need, and illustrate the types of agencies and programs available to address these constituencies:

- National Center for Children in Poverty: http://www.nccp.org/
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children: http://www.missingkids.org/
- The Future of Children: http://www.futureofchildren.org/

Note: The Web site URLs and exercises below are also from the book’s study site: http://www.sagepub.com/martin

Web Exercise

Using this chapter’s recommended Internet sites, conduct an online investigation of resources available to children in trouble and children in need.

- How comprehensive are the resources available for children in trouble and children in need?
- How would you compare the scope and quality of resources made available by public agencies vis-à-vis private agencies?
- How effective do you think these programs are?

For an online search of resources available to children in trouble and children in need, students should use a search engine and enter the following keywords:
“Child Abuse and Neglect”
“Juvenile Assistance”

Recommended Readings

The following publications provide discussions on service and remediation policy challenges for children in trouble and children in need.


Notes

3. Ibid.


14. Ibid.


17. Ibid.


20. Ibid.


24. Table adapted from Howell, ibid. (p. 105).


29. Adapted from ibid. (p. 37).


35. Ibid.