



NC Department of Public Safety
JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

Josh Stein, Governor

Jeffrey Smythe, Secretary
William L. Lassiter, Deputy Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairs of House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety
Chairs of Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety
Chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety

FROM: Jeffrey Smythe, Secretary *Jeffrey Smythe*
William L. Lassiter, Deputy Secretary *William Lassiter*

RE: Annual Evaluation of Community Programs

DATE: March 1, 2026

Pursuant to G.S. 143B-811, The Department of Public Safety shall conduct an annual evaluation of intensive intervention services. Intensive intervention services are evidence-based or research-supported community-based or residential services that are necessary for a juvenile, in order to (i) prevent the juvenile's commitment to a youth development center or detention facility or (ii) facilitate the juvenile's successful return to the community following commitment. In conducting the evaluation, the Department shall consider whether participation in intensive intervention services results in a reduction of court involvement among juveniles. The Department shall also determine whether the programs are achieving the goals and objectives of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, S.L. 1998-202.

The Department shall report the results of the evaluation to the Chairs of the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety and the Chairs of the Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety by March 1 of each year. (2013-360, s. 16D.1; 2020-83, s. 1; 2021-123, s. 6(c).)

Pursuant to G.S. 143B-853 (c), The Division of Juvenile Justice of the Department of Public Safety shall report to the Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittees on Justice and Public Safety no later than March 1, 2006, and annually thereafter, on the results of intensive intervention services. Intensive intervention services are evidence-based or research-supported community-based or residential services that are necessary for a juvenile in order to (i) prevent the juvenile's commitment to a youth development center or detention facility, (ii) facilitate the juvenile's successful return to the community following commitment, or (iii) prevent further involvement in the juvenile justice system. Specifically, the report shall provide a detailed description of each intensive intervention service, including the numbers of juveniles served, their adjudication status at the time of service, the services and treatments provided, the length of service, the total cost per juvenile, and the six- and 12-month recidivism rates for the juveniles after the termination of program services. (1998-202, s. 1(b); 2000-137, s. 1(b); 2005-276, s. 16.11(c); 2011-145, s. 19.1(l), (x), (ggg); 2017-186, s. 2(l)(lllll); 2020-83, s. 5; 2021-123, s. 6(e); 2021-180, s. 19C.9(y), (z).)





**Annual Evaluation of Intensive Intervention Services
Submitted March 1, 2026**

**Submitted by:
Department of Public Safety
Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Juvenile Community Programs Section**

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Section I

Introduction

This report is required by General Statutes § 143B-811 and 143B-853 (c) which state:

G.S. 143B-811: The Department of Public Safety shall conduct an annual evaluation on intensive intervention services. Intensive intervention services are evidence-based or research-supported community-based or residential services that are necessary for a juvenile, in order to (i) prevent the juvenile's commitment to a youth development center or detention facility or (ii) facilitate the juvenile's successful return to the community following commitment. In conducting the evaluation, the DJJ shall consider whether participation in intensive intervention services results in a reduction of court involvement among juveniles. The Department shall also determine whether the programs are achieving the goals and objectives of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, S.L. 1998-202.

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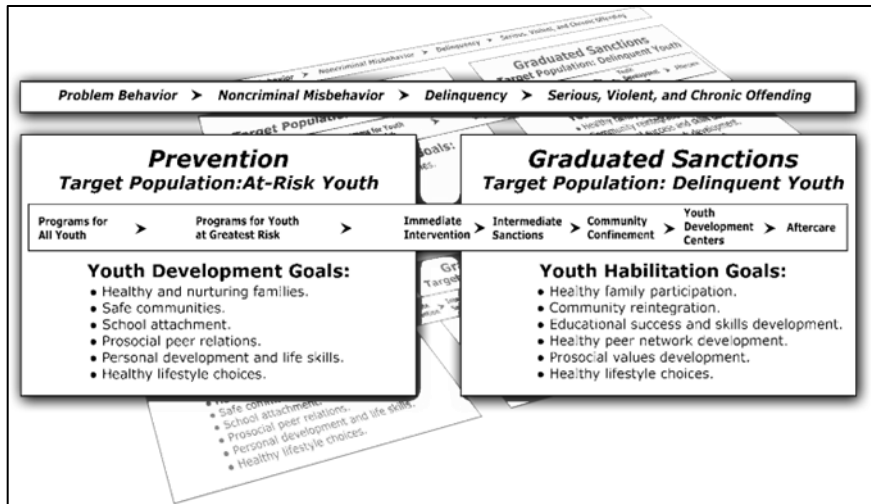
This legislative report is an evaluation of Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)-endorsed intensive intervention services; state contracted non-residential community-based services, which includes functional family therapy and services for youth with problem sexual behavior; and state contracted residential services, which include juvenile crisis and assessment centers, short-term residential male and female sites, multipurpose groups homes, and transitional living homes.

Under G.S. Under 143B-811, the Juvenile Community Programs Section shall conduct an annual evaluation report on intensive intervention services which shall include all localized intensive intervention funds allocated via JCPC endorsement and intensive intervention residential and community-based state-contracted services. This report is divided into distinct sections that comply with the reporting requirements. Following the information introduced within this section, Section II focuses upon Intensive Intervention Services provided by localized non-profits poised to provide services in a regionalized manner through the endorsement of local Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils. Sections III and IV focus upon a variety of Community-based and Residential services that are delivered by non-profit agencies with whom the section contracts via our state e-procurement bid process. The section currently contracts with the following nonprofit service providers to support a variety of programming models: AMI-Kids

North Carolina Family Services, Children’s Hope Alliance, Methodist Home for Children, and Eckerd Connects.

Targeted Approach

The figure below illustrates how Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) funded programs form the foundation of North Carolina’s comprehensive juvenile justice strategy, which allows judges, court counselors, district attorneys, and law enforcement to have access to the right dispositional alternatives, for the right child, at the right time. State contractual services and the newly formed intensive intervention services provide broad reaching community based and residential interventions or behavior-specific targeted interventions in communities where JCPC dollars are not abundant enough to serve higher risk juveniles who need intensive services. This strategy is used to augment existing services in the local service continuum to protect the public and to habilitate the juvenile. Having these separate funding sources is imperative to ensure youth are not forced deeper into the system which comes at a far greater cost to the state.



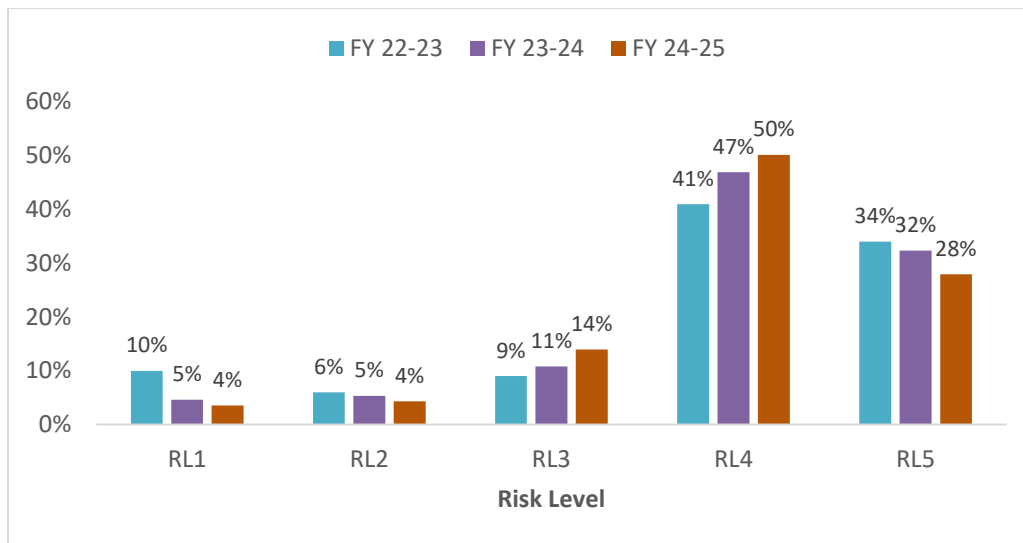
The Department of Public Safety’s Juvenile Community Programs Section contracts with a number of providers engaged to provide a variety of programming as allowed through Session Law 2011-391, Section 41. These contracts and intensive intervention services are designed to target youth who are at greater risk of further involvement in the juvenile justice system, including commitment to a state-operated youth development center. These programs specifically target youth who have received a Level II disposition or demonstrate heightened risk and needs factors that are targeted for intervention to reduce recidivism.

Beginning January 1, 2021, in the Juvenile Court Services section, the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) was implemented to capture risk, needs, and strengths details across a myriad of domains. Community Programs, for purposes of target population evaluation, decided to continue using risk scores and levels obtained from the North Carolina Assessment of Juvenile Risk of Future Offending (NCAR, see Appendix A).

The Department of Public Safety, Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJ) has been utilizing the NCAR tool since 2001. A juvenile’s risk for re-offending is scored into one of 5 distinct risk levels (RL): RL1 (lowest) to RL5 (highest). Graph 1.1 compares risk score percentage totals for FY 22-23, FY 23-24, and FY 24-25 clearly indicating higher risk youth are served by the intensive intervention services evaluated in this report.

The DJJ also recognizes that youth receiving an intensive intervention service may have varying levels of risk for reoffending. Although the majority of youth risk scores are considered medium to high risk for reoffending, there remain some youth (10%), that present with low-risk scores coupled with very high need indicators. The DJJ chooses to take a comprehensive approach to serving our population by matching services not only to a youth’s disposition level, but also the youth’s level of needs as indicated in the YASI. This practice became fully supported by the legislature with the enactment of HB593 (S.L. 2020-83), which allows access to contractual and intensive intervention services based on a juvenile’s criminogenic needs, not solely upon a juvenile’s disposition level.

Graph 1.1 Risk Level for Community Programs Youth by Year



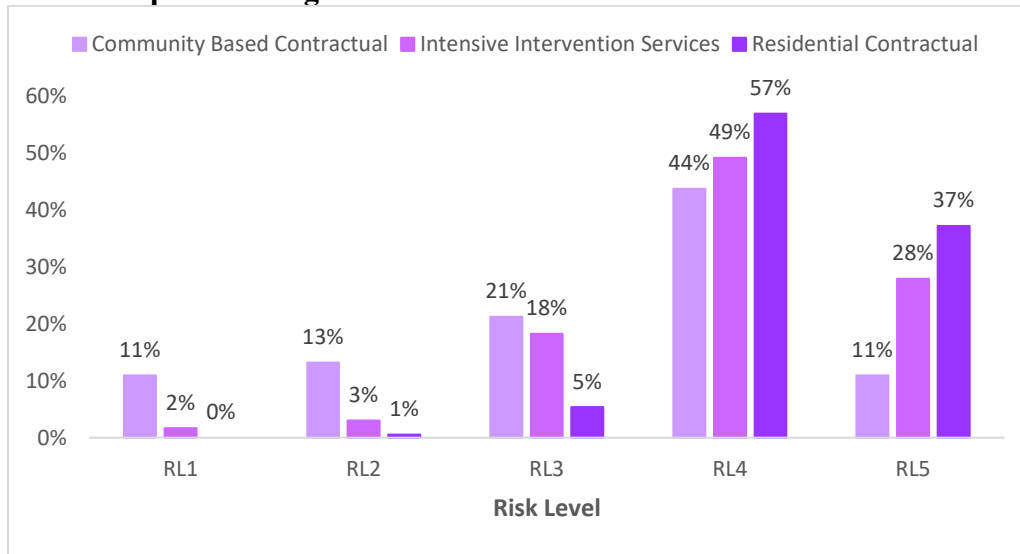
Further examination of all contractual and intensive intervention services funded, including residential and community-based contractual services and localized or regionally based JCPC-endorsed intensive intervention services, indicate that 1,506 youth were served by contractual and intensive intervention services (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 FY 24-25 Youth Served by Funding Source

Funding Source	Youth Served
Community Based Contractual Services	405
JCPC-Endorsed Intensive Intervention Services (IIS)	358
Residential Contractual Services	701
Juvenile Crisis and Assessment – Secure Custody	42
Total	1,506

Graph 1.2 shows similar trends with higher-risk (RL4 and RL5) juveniles being served in all contractual and intensive intervention services programs.

Graph 1.2 Risk Level per Funding Source: FY 24-25



The overall approach remains to serve as many juveniles as possible who fall within the medium to high-risk range by matching their service needs to the most appropriate service, either to cost-effective JCPC-endorsed intensive intervention programs or community-based contractual or short-term residential contractual programming services.

Cost Efficient Alternative

Through the implementation of these contractual services, the DJJ has been able to achieve significant cost savings as compared to youth development centers. Table 1.2 below compares the average cost of serving youth in a contracted service, either residential or community-based, versus serving a youth in a youth development center for FY 24-25.

Table 1.2 Cost Comparison – Intensive Intervention Services vs Annual Youth Development Center Cost

Intensive Intervention Services Program Cost vs Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
Community-Based Programs: JCPC-Endorsed Intensive Intervention Services; AMIkids Community-Based Contractual; and Treatment Alternatives for Sexualized Kids (TASK) Community-Based Contractual	\$8,012
Residential Programs: Methodist Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers, Eckerd Short-Term Residential Programs, Eckerd Kerr Lake Girls Academy, Methodist Multipurpose Group Homes, and Methodist Transitional Living Programs	\$36,199 ¹
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

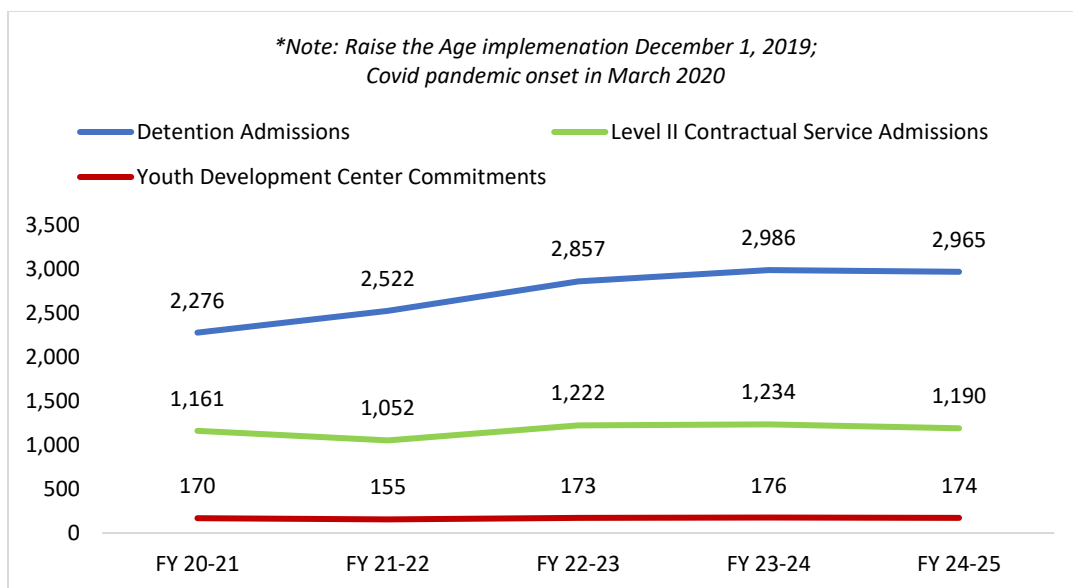
¹ In Fiscal Year 24-25, the department issued a one-time allocation for residential contract providers to lessen the impact of growing economic costs associated with delivering programs to high risk and high needs juvenile populations in a post-inflationary economy. The increased payment to providers results in an artificially high cost per youth for the fiscal year.

With more emphasis on programming designed to serve the medium to high risk/high needs adjudicated youth, the contractual services continue to play an important role in helping reduce the number of youth development center commitments and detention admissions for the last five (5) years. Graph 1.3 indicates how the number of youth development center commitments and detention admissions are impacted by DJJ’s efforts to promote cost-saving community-based programming options to serve youth. Without community programming alternatives available there would be greater numbers of juveniles detained and committed to youth development centers. With the passing of Raise the Age and subsequent laws (H593 effective August 2021, and H834 effective December 2024) there are more serious, violent, chronic and older juveniles processed in the adult criminal justice system instead of the juvenile justice system. These juveniles are generally placed in secure custody (juvenile detention) pending adult court outcome. Prior to the passage of the above-mentioned laws, it was anticipated there would be an increase in detention admissions.

Community-based and residential contractual admissions decreased slightly between FY 23-24 and FY 24-25 due to slowly ramping up services in new programs (Eckerd Yanceyville and the Eastern Area Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Center (JCAC)) and decreased capacity modifications within contracts.

Another method Community Programs employs to serve the needs of youth and the DJJ, is by offering juvenile crisis and assessment center – assessment and/or secure custody beds – for younger juveniles in lieu of placement into a detention center. It should be noted that in the assessment service of the Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers sixty-seven (67) juveniles aged 13 or younger were served, which was 28% of the overall population served by the Centers for FY 24-25. Additionally, the Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers provided secure custody for forty-two (42) youth, thirty-three (33) or 79% of which were youth aged 13 or younger. Focus for the DJJ is to immediately intervene for this younger population, routing them away from the potential harms of secure detention environments and toward more therapeutic environments.

Graph 1.3 Contractual Services Effect on Detention Admissions and Youth Development Center (YDC) Commitments



Recidivism Summary

Table 1.3 below reflects youth terminated by all contractual and intensive intervention services in FY 23-24 and 24-25 and how many of these youth incurred additional juvenile adjudications and/or adult convictions. This analysis shows 14% of those juveniles served by a Juvenile Community Programs Section contractual service or intensive intervention service who could be followed for a full six (6) months post-discharge received an additional adjudication or an adult conviction, while 22% received an additional adjudication or an adult conviction at twelve (12) months post-discharge. Seeing more juveniles recidivating while under juvenile justice jurisdiction indicates an interruption in the trajectory of future offending in the adult criminal justice system.

Table 1.3 All Juvenile Community Programs Recidivism

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6 or 12 Months	1,496	1,068
Distinct Juveniles with Complaints Adjudicated	161	161
Distinct Juveniles Adjudication Recidivism	11%	15%
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	54	77
Adult Recidivism (% of Distinct Juveniles Convicted)	4%	7%
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	214	232
Recidivism: Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	14%	22%
<i>Note: 1 juvenile had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 6-month period</i>		
<i>Note: 6 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 12-month period</i>		

Section II

Intensive Intervention Services

**(Formerly JCPC-Endorsed Level II Programs and
Alternatives to Commitment Programs)**

JCPC-Endorsed Intensive Intervention Services

Overview

Fourteen years ago, the DJJ focused on providing a mechanism by which local communities could address gaps in services for Level II disposition adjudicated youth. To this end, the DJJ established an annual Request for Proposals (RFP) process that engages the local Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) and its stakeholders with seeking those services best matching the needs of youth with a Level II disposition.

Following changes in legislation, the RFP process now allows funded programs to admit youth based on their assessed risk and needs, a shift away from program admission based solely on disposition level. The programs funded are designed as interventions for some of the highest risk and high needs youth in the juvenile justice system. The Section’s annual Request for Proposal process is designed to identify the state’s high-risk and high needs youth, understand their criminogenic needs, and appropriately match them with evidence-based, best-practice models to effectively reduce juvenile delinquency. To effectively scale up intensive intervention services for targeted populations, services are geographically planned to provide services across multiple counties within a judicial district or across multiple judicial districts, a strategy that demonstrates the collaborative efforts of multiple JCPCs to build an effective, local juvenile justice service continuum. The Community Programs Section continues to embrace the local community in its effort to develop effective programming to meet the needs of these targeted youth through Intensive Intervention Services (IIS). Strategic measures are undertaken by the section to seek out state-county partnerships to sustain effective program models through identified “host” counties and JCPC endorsement when regionalized or specialized program services are warranted.

Youth Profile

Table 2.1 indicates the number of youths served by JCPC-supported, regional-based Intensive Intervention Services (IIS). JCPC-endorsed Intensive Intervention Services served 358 youth during FY 24-25. Graph 2.1 represents the percentage of youth served by Intensive Intervention Services by race/ethnicity.

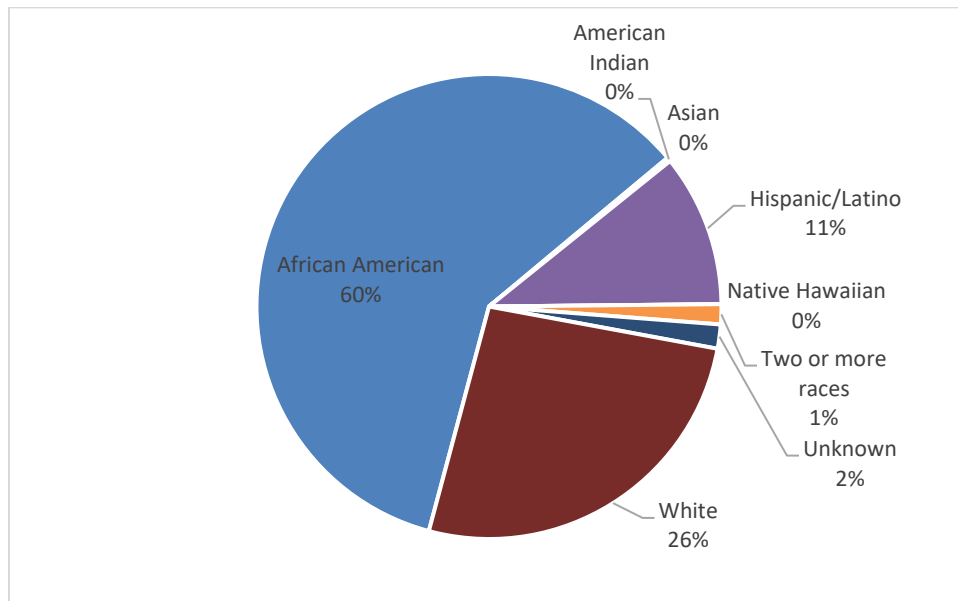
Table 2.1 FY 24-25 Intensive Intervention Services (IIS): Youth served by Program Type

Program Type	Youth Served
Assessments	38
Experiential Skill Building	40
Family Counseling	62
Home Based Family Counseling	60
Individual Counseling	25
Interpersonal Skill Building	50
Mentoring	30
Parent/Family Skill Building	19
Restitution/Community Service	34
Total	358

Demographic Information about Youth Served by Intensive Intervention Services during FY 24-25

- 17% of youth served were female.
- 83% of youth served were male.
- Average length of stay in programming was one hundred ten (110) days or 3.6 months.

Graph 2.1 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by Intensive Intervention Programs



Cost Comparison

Table 2.2 JCPC-Endorsed Intensive Intervention Services (IIS) Programs Cost vs Youth Development Center

IIS Program Cost vs. Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
JCPC-Endorsed IIS Programs	\$6,244
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

Recidivism

This study measured the recidivism rates for youth completing JCPC-Endorsed Intensive Intervention Services programs in FY 23-24 and FY 24-25. Of the four hundred fifty-six (456) youth who could be measured at six (6) months post-discharge, forty-seven (47), or 10%, received a new adjudication, and twelve (12), or 3%, received a new adult conviction. Total recidivism, youth that received either a juvenile adjudication and/or adult conviction at six (6) months post-discharge was 13%.

There were three hundred eight (308) youth who were served by these programs that could be measured at twelve (12) months. Fifty (50) or 16% received a new adjudication and twenty-one (21) or 7% received a new adult conviction. Total recidivism at twelve (12) months post-discharge was 23%. See Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 JCPC-Endorsed Intensive Intervention Services (IIS) Recidivism

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6 or 12 Months	456	308
Distinct Juveniles with Complaints Adjudicated	47	50
Distinct Juveniles Adjudication Recidivism	10%	16%
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	12	21
Adult Recidivism (% of Distinct Juveniles Convicted)	3%	7%
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	59	70
Recidivism: Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	13%	23%
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 6-month period</i>		
<i>Note: 1 juvenile had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 12-month period</i>		

Conclusion

This report demonstrates that localized or regional-based JCPC-Endorsed Intensive Intervention Services programs were able to serve a significant number of high risk and high needs youth in their home communities in a cost-efficient manner preventing deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Section III

Community-Based Contractual Programs

AMIkids North Carolina Family Services: Functional Family Therapy (FFT)

Overview

AMIkids North Carolina Family Services is contracted with FFT LLC to provide Functional Family Therapy (FFT) to all youth/families referred by DJJ. FFT is a highly effective short-term, strength-based model for working with at-risk youth and their families. The guiding principles of FFT include a respect for differences, maintaining family-focused involvement, ensuring non-judgmental professionalism, keeping therapy interventions individualized, and ensuring an overriding relational focus as opposed to problem-focused. FFT therapists are relentless in engaging families and maintain a balanced alliance between all family members throughout treatment. FFT focuses on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors through a phase-based model.

All FFT therapists hold a minimum of a master's degree in a licensable human service field such as Counseling, Psychology, Marriage and Family Therapy, or Social Work. All FFT therapists must complete forty hours of certification training through FFT LLC and participate in weekly clinical supervision with their certified FFT site supervisor to ensure model fidelity. AMIkids North Carolina Family Services serves DJJ referred youth in all 100 counties in the state.

Youth Profile

AMIkids delivers FFT to male and female juveniles who are at medium and high risk of reoffending, while exception is made for some Level I youth with high needs indicators on a case-by-case basis. The inclusion of Level I youth follows risk responsivity practices. The criminogenic needs of juveniles lead to younger juveniles with a higher needs and possible lower disposition level to be admitted to the program, with intervention being offered earlier in the juvenile justice continuum. Typically, youth served were adjudicated for person and/or property offenses and have often been previously served through one or more other types of community-based intervention programs. A majority of youth referred to FFT had histories of school disciplinary problems that resulted in both short and long-term suspensions and family discord. Other frequently noted characteristics of these youth included substance abuse, gang involvement, and mental health diagnosis.

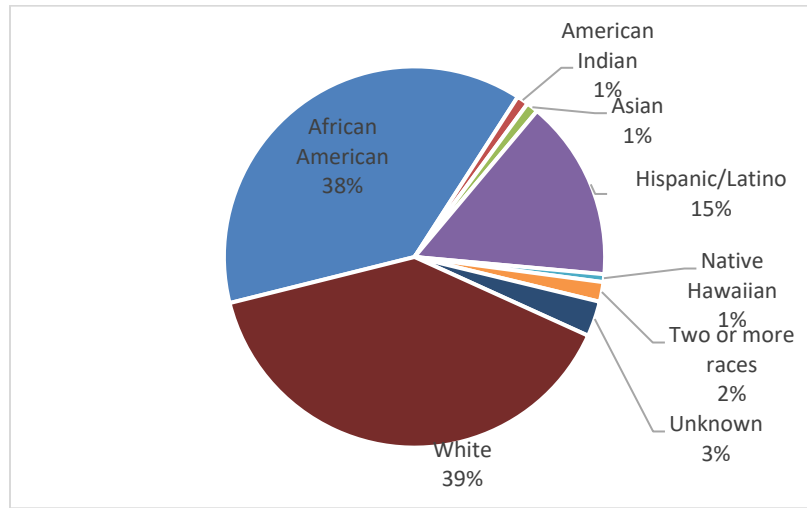
Service Capacity

AMIkids has the capacity to serve one hundred seventy-three (173) youth and their families at any given time. The Piedmont and South teams have the capacity to serve forty (40) youth at any given time. The East, Central, and West teams have the capacity to serve thirty-one (31) youth per region at any given time.

Demographic Information about Youth Served during FY 24-25

- The total number of youth served was three hundred (300).
- The average age of the youth served in the program was 15.3 years.
- 25% of youth served were female, and 75% were male.
- The average length of stay in the service was one hundred twenty-four (124) days, or 4.1 months.

Graph 3.1 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by AMIkids North Carolina Family Services



Cost Comparison

Table 3.1 AMIkids North Carolina Family Services FFT Cost vs Youth Development Center

AMIkids FFT Program Cost vs. Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
AMIkids North Carolina Family Services FFT Program	\$9,592
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

Outcomes

Measurable Objectives

300 youth responses reported.

Clients will have no new adjudications for a complaint with an offense date after the admission date.

Goal is 80% or higher.

<i>East</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Piedmont</i>	<i>West</i>
89%	82%	88%	97%	90%

Clients will reduce specific problem behaviors presented at referral and targeted in the individual service plan.

Goal is 80% or higher.

<i>East</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Piedmont</i>	<i>West</i>
72%	85%	85%	87%	93%

Clients and families will demonstrate enhanced family functioning as a result of program services.

Goal is 80% or higher for completed cases.

<i>East</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Piedmont</i>	<i>West</i>
89%	82%	79%	89%	95%

Clients will demonstrate improvement in replacement behaviors targeted in the individual service plan.

Goal is 80% or higher.

<i>East</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Piedmont</i>	<i>West</i>
72%	85%	83%	84%	95%

Clients will demonstrate improvement in targeted skills identified in the individual service plan.

Goal is 80% or higher.

<i>East</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Piedmont</i>	<i>West</i>
72%	85%	77%	82%	95%

Clients will successfully or satisfactorily complete services as intended by the program design/service plan.

Goal is 70% or higher.

<i>East</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Piedmont</i>	<i>West</i>
83%	76%	85%	89%	98%

Clients will have no new complaints with an offense date after the admission date.

Goal is 80% or higher.

<i>East</i>	<i>Central</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Piedmont</i>	<i>West</i>
89%	74%	88%	76%	83%

Program Effectiveness Based on FFT's Youth Outcome Measure Questionnaires

123 youth responses reported.

- 97% of youth reported that, in general, their family has changed for the better since they began counseling.
- 97% of youth reported their family has changed its communication for the better.
- 99% of youth reported their behavior has changed for the better.

- 90% of youth reported that their parents improved their parenting skills.
- 89% of youth reported that their parents changed their ability to supervise them for the better.
- 95% of youth reported a change in family conflict level for the better.
- 99% of youth reported a reduction in their illegal behavior.

Program Effectiveness Based on FFT’s Caregiver Outcome Measure Questionnaires

136 responses reported, some including multiple parent figures per youth.

- 97% of parents reported that, in general, their family has changed for the better since they began counseling.
- 99% of parents reported that their family has changed its communication for the better.
- 94% of parents reported their adolescent’s behavior has changed for the better.
- 97% of parents reported improvement in their parenting skills.
- 92% of parents reported a change in their ability to supervise their adolescent for the better.
- 94% of parents reported a change in family conflict level for the better.
- 93% of parents reported a reduction in their youth’s illegal behavior.

Recidivism

FY 23-24 and FY 24-25 recidivism data compiled by the DJJ shows that of the four hundred twenty-two (422) youth who had been in post-discharged status from AMIkids for six (6) months, thirty-one (31) youth, or 7%, received a new adjudication and fourteen (14) youth, or 3%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at six (6) months post-discharge was 10%.

At twelve (12) months post-discharge, there were two hundred ninety-three (293) youth who could be analyzed for this report. Thirty-one (31) youth, or 11%, received a new adjudication and fourteen (14) youth, or 5%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at twelve (12) months post-discharge was 15%. See Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 AMIkids North Carolina Family Services FFT Recidivism

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6 or 12 Months	422	293
Distinct Juveniles with Complaints Adjudicated	31	31
Distinct Juveniles Adjudication Recidivism	7%	11%
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	14	14
Adult Recidivism (% of Distinct Juveniles Convicted)	3%	5%
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	44	43
Recidivism: Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	10%	15%
<i>Note: 1 juvenile had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 6-month period</i>		
<i>Note: 2 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 12-month period</i>		

Conclusion

The findings reflected in this report demonstrate that AMIkids North Carolina Family Services, through its delivery of the evidence-based service model of Functional Family Therapy, has a positive impact on youth served. Outcome and recidivism data at six (6)- and twelve (12)-months post discharge reflects very positive results with 90% and 85% of youth, respectively, having no new adjudications or adult convictions.

TASK® (Treatment Alternatives for Sexualized Kids)-Community-Based Contract Services

Overview

Treatment Alternatives for Sexualized Kids (TASK®) is a treatment model designed to meet the complex needs of youth who have caused sexual harm. TASK® recognizes that youth have unique developmental and contextual concerns that are different from adults who have caused sexual harm. Therefore, the content and process are individualized, developmentally conscious, and comprehensive.

The model hypothesizes that a youth's problematic behavior is a symptom of a bigger contextual problem, and there are one or more areas where dysregulation occurs. The goal is to discover and address the dysregulation underlying the problematic behavior and for youth and their families to develop healthy sexuality, positive interpersonal skills and relationships, self-regulation, abilities to recognize their own risk factors, and grow their awareness of how their actions impact others. Children's Hope Alliance, the provider of the TASK® program model, utilizes a multi-modal approach in that youth and families have access to family, individual, and/or group therapies in addition to skill-building and case management services. These services are provided by a clinician and case manager, together forming the TASK® team. The change process is broken down into naturally progressive stages and each stage into developmental domains. Milestones are only confirmed once a client demonstrates the ability to use the skills in their daily life. The interventions for each stage and domain are carried out using the four modalities.

The model is a collaborative one. It requires frequent communication, sharing of ideas and obstacles, and reliance on the TASK® team members who interface with the court system, child welfare agencies, child advocates, mental health providers, guardians, and natural supports. The list of individuals and families with whom the team interfaces are only limited by the number of individuals involved in the youth/family's day-to-day life. In situations when there are limited natural and professional resources identified at the beginning of treatment, the team collaborates with the family to develop a treatment team to support the family.

The Juvenile Community Programs Section supports the efforts of Children's Hope Alliance's TASK® program to provide this much needed programming to serve youth and their families whose offenses are related to problem sexualized behavior. TASK® has a long-standing history of working with youth and families in North Carolina (since the 1990s) to improve the understanding of healthy sexual development. Objectives are identified for both the evaluation part of TASK®, the Comprehensive Evaluation of Sexual Harm (CESH) and the treatment part of TASK®. TASK® serves DJJ referred youth in forty (40) counties in the state with the ability to serve a maximum total of one hundred twelve (112) juveniles and families annually.

Youth Profile

The youth served consist of adjudicated and pre-adjudicated youth. It is important to understand that youth are not labeled as "sex offenders" during treatment for many reasons. The term "sex offender" is a legal term referring to a person who has been convicted of a sexual offense. This label carries with it a stigma as well as several negative connotations and triggering mental images. It should be noted that in the early years of treating adolescents who had committed sex offenses, many treatment programs adopted the same strategies used to treat adults. One of those strategies was to have the adolescent admit guilt as a "sex

offender.” This created an environment in which the adolescent adopted the label of sex offender for him/herself, thus creating greater likelihood of additional sexualized behavior. Adolescence is a time when many developmental changes are occurring, including the development of an increased sense of self. The goal of the treatment is to create a culture where the youth can learn to self-identify with the prosocial aspects of their life.

Youth served by the TASK® program include youth adjudicated with a sexual offense or an offense of a sexual nature and pre-adjudicated youth with a sexual harm history. Additionally, adjudicated youth with other delinquent offenses who are found to have a history of sexualized behaviors present are also served by the TASK® program.

Service Capacity

The TASK® program has the capacity to serve eighty (80) youth and their families in active treatment. The program has the capacity to provide Comprehensive Evaluations for Sexual Harm (CESH) for twenty (20) youth at any given time between their seven sites located in Sylva, Asheville, Wilkesboro, Statesville, Charlotte, Lexington and Burlington. TASK® is contracted to serve forty (40) counties.

Comprehensive Evaluations of Sexual Harm (CESH)

- One hundred one (101) youth received CESH evaluations in FY 24-25.
- Fifty-six (56) CESH evaluations were completed either at a request of the court or as part of a youth’s diversion plan.
- 41% or twenty (20) of those fifty-six (56) assessments were completed within thirty (30) days of the referral. (This contributes to timely processing for court-ordered evaluations)

Treatment

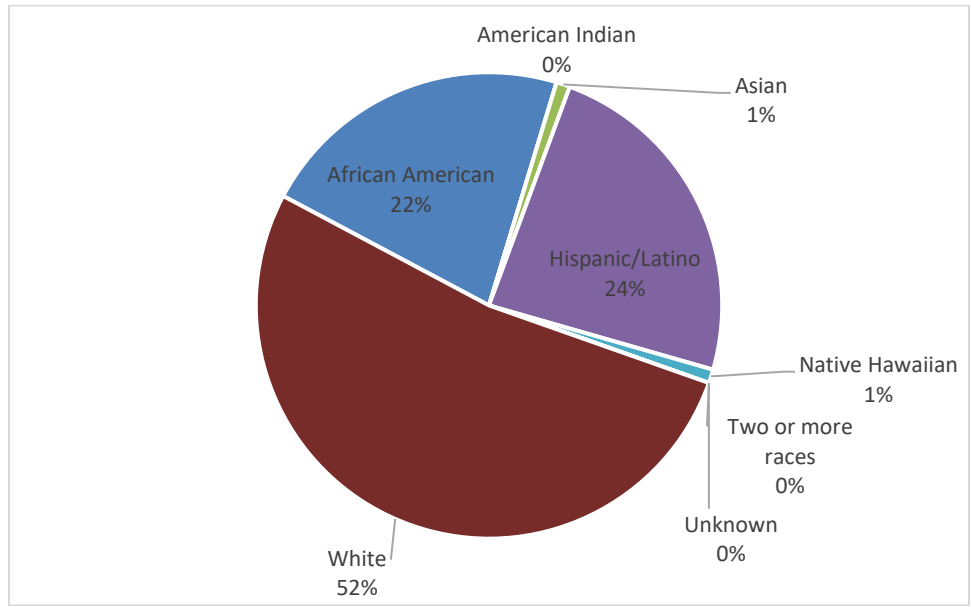
Of the fifty-nine (59) evaluated, forty-nine (49) youth referred by DJJ participated in TASK® treatment. In all aspects of treatment, the program exceeded expectations of 80% of youth satisfying program objectives. The following measures are based upon thirty-two (32) youth who fully completed treatment in the TASK® program and were discharged or terminated from the program during FY 24-25.

- 96.9% of youth improved their use of healthy pro-social behaviors identified in their treatment plans.
- 96.9% of families reported a reduction in problem sexualized behavior and an increase in appropriate behaviors through treatment.
- 90.6% of youth completed treatment successfully according to program expectations.
- 90.32% of youth successfully completed treatment without any additional legal complaints after the original offense date.
- 93.55% of youth had family members actively participated in treatment with their child.
- 96.77% of youth reduced how often they engaged in problem behaviors specific to their treatment focus.

Demographic Information about Youth Served during FY 24-25

- The total number of youths served by the program was one hundred five (105).
- The average age of the youth served in the program was 14.8.
- 7% of youth served were female, and 93% were male.
- The average length of stay in the service was fifty-one (51) days or 1.7 months for assessment services (CESH) and two hundred twenty-seven (227) days or 7.5 months for TASK treatment services.

Graph 3.2 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by TASK



Cost Comparison

Table 3.3 Treatment Alternatives for Sexualized Kids (TASK®) Cost vs Youth Development Center

TASK® Program Cost vs. Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
TASK Program	\$9,524
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

Outcomes

Effectiveness of Care Survey

In addition to these outcomes, Children’s Hope Alliance encourages families to complete an effectiveness of care survey when treatment is completed. These surveys are completed by both the youth and their guardian.

- 100% of youth reported feeling included in their treatment planning and treated with respect.
- 91% of youth reported that TASK® was helpful, and they are better prepared to cope with challenges and stress.
- 96% of guardians reported they felt they were a partner in their child’s treatment.
- 96% of guardians reported feeling helped by the services provided.
- 92% of guardians were able to report a noted improvement in social situations such as at school or work.

Recidivism

Table 3.4 below reflects youth terminated by the treatment program. In FY 23-24 and FY 24-25 of the sixty-two (62) youth who had been in post-discharge status for more than six (6) months, three (3) youth, or 5%, received a new adjudication and zero (0) youth, or 0%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at six (6) months post-discharge was 5%.

At twelve (12) months post discharge, there were forty-eight (48) youth who could be analyzed for this report. One (1) youth, or 2%, received a new adjudication and zero (0) youth, or 0%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at twelve (12) months post-discharge was 2%.

Table 3.4 Treatment Alternatives for Sexualized Kids (TASK®) Program, Treatment Population Recidivism

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6 or 12 Months	62	48
Distinct Juveniles with Complaints Adjudicated	3	1
Distinct Juveniles Adjudication Recidivism	5%	2%
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	0	0
Adult Recidivism (% of Distinct Juveniles Convicted)	0%	0%
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	3	1
Recidivism: Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	5%	2%
<i>Note: Most of these youth were Adjudicated Delinquent Pending Juvenile Disposition at the time of program involvement.</i>		
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 6-month period</i>		
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 12-month period</i>		

Conclusion

The TASK® treatment model is designed to meet the complex needs of youth who have caused sexual harm. Youth who cause sexual harm or engage in sexually problematic behavior come from a variety of backgrounds and are often involved with the justice system. Problem sexual behavior can be symptomatic of underlying mental health issues, including trauma and dysregulation. Many times, these youth and their

families are unable to find the adequate treatment that serves their individualized needs and circumstances. TASK® clinical outcomes continue to demonstrate positive results, not only for reducing sexually harmful behaviors, but for general delinquency and other mental health symptoms.

Section IV
Residential Contractual Programs

Methodist Home for Children: Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers

Overview

The Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers operated by Methodist Home for Children provide a comprehensive juvenile assessment in a residential setting with the primary goal of matching the youth to the most appropriate services in their community. There are four (4) centers: Insight Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Center (located in Butner), which serves the Central area; Bridges Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Center (located in Winston-Salem), which serves the Piedmont area; Western Area Multipurpose Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Center (located in Asheville), which serves the Western area; and in January 2024, the DJJ opened the Eastern Area Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Center (located in Kinston), which serves the Eastern area. Assessments take place under the supervision of a licensed psychologist and licensed clinical case managers. The length of stay is between twenty-one (21) and forty-five (45) days.

Youth Profile

The Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers serve juvenile offenders between the ages of ten (10) and seventeen (17). The service includes a systematic evaluation that includes testing in the areas of education, behavior, personality, and intelligence. As indicated, additional testing is provided areas such as sexual predation, substance abuse, and trauma. Testing information is combined with information obtained through the daily living aspects of the program. This combination allows for a more complete look at the youth's strengths, areas of concern, and goals. At discharge the youth, family, and court counselor are provided with a comprehensive and user-friendly evaluation report accompanied by clear and actionable plan of care including specific recommendations.

Service Capacity

The centers also provide crisis care/respice stays for youth in need of a short-term residential intervention. Crisis care/respice stays are usually between five (5) and fourteen (14) days.

In addition to assessment and crisis care, the Western Area Multipurpose JCAC has four (4) and the Eastern has three (3) secure custody beds for short-term secure custody stays. The center poses a viable placement option for juveniles twelve (12) and younger who need an alternative to detention secure placement.

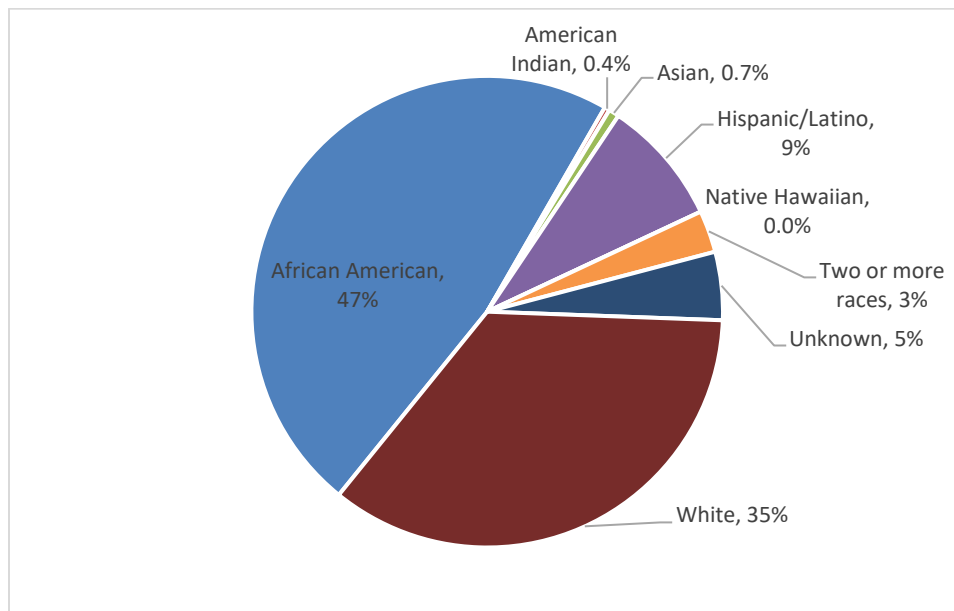
Each center utilizes the Model of Care in addition to crisis and assessment services and provides a structured environment which includes recreation, personal hygiene, self-care, school, meals, individual rooms, group interaction, socialization skill-building activities, independent living skills, and crisis counseling.

Demographics for youth served in FY 24-25

- The total number of youths served by the program was two hundred seventy-eight (278).
- Forty-two (42) youth were placed in the center's secure custody beds by court order.

- 13.1 was the average age of youth in secure custody.
- 79% or thirty-three (33) secure custody youth were 13 years of age or younger.
 - 33% of the secure custody youth were female, 67% were male.
 - The average secure custody length of stay was thirty-three (33) days.
- Two hundred thirty-six (236) youth were placed in the center’s crisis and assessment services.
 - 14.5 was the average age of youth receiving assessment or crisis services.
 - 34% of crisis and assessment youth were female, 66% were male.
 - The average crisis or assessment length of stay was twenty-five (25) days.

Graph 4.1 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by Crisis and Assessment Centers



Cost Comparison

Table 4.1 Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers Cost vs Youth Development Centers

Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers Program Cost vs. Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers Program	\$21,741 ²
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

Outcomes

The Youth Outcome Questionnaire-Self Report (YOQ-SR) is a 64-item self-report tool used to measure changes in social and emotional functioning in adolescents aged twelve (12) to eighteen (18) who are receiving mental health treatment. Rather than focusing on diagnoses, the YOQ-SR tracks changes in

² Ibid.

functioning from the youth’s perspective throughout their care. The intake score also helps identify immediate clinical concerns and guides the assessment plan.

The assessment evaluates six (6) key domains: intrapersonal distress, somatic distress, interpersonal relations, critical items, social problems, and behavioral dysfunction, producing a comprehensive total score. Total scores equal to or greater than forty-seven (47) are considered clinically significant and indicate that the youth are experiencing a higher level of stress. Clinically significant scores are categorized as follows:

- Moderately high distress: Greater than sixty-seven (67)
- Moderate distress: Between sixty-seven (67) and forty-eight (48)
- Low distress: Less than forty-eight (48)

Data analysis shows that 67% of youth entering care at assessment centers have a total score above forty-seven (47), indicating clinically significant levels of distress at admission. By discharge, the average score drops to an average of twenty-seven (27), reflecting substantial improvement. Furthermore, 95% of youth leave care with scores indicating low distress levels. These findings demonstrate the positive impact of the centers' environment and interventions on the social and emotional well-being of the youth served.

Primary Recommendations Based on Assessments

Juvenile Crisis and Assessment Centers make primary treatment/service recommendations based on individualized assessments. Secure custody and crisis youth do not receive assessments; however, there are situations whereby the centers initially respond as crisis caregivers and then juveniles remain at the center to obtain assessments as more information is gathered about the juvenile’s needs. The primary recommendations for assessment youth served FY 24-25 who completed the assessment process are noted in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Crisis and Assessment Center Primary Recommendations

Therapy Services	32%
<i>Multisystemic Therapy</i>	41%
<i>Outpatient Services (e.g., Individual Therapy)</i>	32%
<i>Dialectical Behavior Therapy</i>	6%
<i>Group based Therapy</i>	6%
<i>Individual Cognitive Behavior Therapy</i>	6%
<i>Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy</i>	6%
<i>Occupational Therapy</i>	2%
Family Therapy Services	10%
<i>Functional Family Therapy</i>	82%
<i>Family Centered Therapy</i>	18%
Level 3 Mental Health Group Home	10%

Therapeutic Foster Care	10%
Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility	8%
In-Home Services	7%
<i>Intensive In-Home</i>	<i>57%</i>
<i>Intensive Alternative Family Treatment</i>	<i>29%</i>
<i>Intensive Outpatient Services</i>	<i>14%</i>
JJ Level 2 Programs (MHC MPH Group Home)	7%
Short-Term Residential Program (Eckerd, etc)	7%
Transitional Living	4%
Outpatient Substance Abuse Treatment	3%
Level 2 Mental Health Group Home	3%

Conclusion

Methodist Home for Children’s Value-Based Therapeutic Environment (VBTE), including its Model of Care, is the treatment model utilized within crisis and assessment centers; however, assessment services are not considered a therapeutic treatment intervention intended to effect recidivism. Due to the typical length of stay of less than thirty (30) days and use of assessments in service delivery, recidivism is not tracked for this service.

Eckerd Connects (Eckerd) Short-Term Residential Programs: Male Short-Term Residential

Overview

FY 24-25 marked the thirteenth year of a contractual partnership with Eckerd Connects (Eckerd) to provide short-term residential programming as a Level II court ordered disposition. Eckerd's residential program model offers a complete rehabilitative experience delivered in an average of four (4) to six (6) months to adjudicated male youth ages thirteen (13) to seventeen (17) referred by the DJJ. These services are delivered on three (3) campuses: Candor, located in Montgomery County; Boomer, located in Wilkes County; and in August 2024 the Division opened the third location Yanceyville, located in Caswell County.

Eckerd's short-term residential treatment concept combines promising and evidence-based practices with a strong family transition component. Intensive, short-term services include individualized treatment and academic plans that combine formal and experiential education, vocational education, community service, behavioral health, and family counseling designed to address the youth's behavioral challenges through a strength-based approach. Youth also receive accredited education on-site and work together in small group settings with assigned counselors.

Youth Profile

Most referrals made to these short-term residential programs are males possessing a Level II disposition. All males referred are assessed as medium or high risk and typically have high needs. These youth have had multiple adjudications for person and property offenses and have received multiple community-based interventions. These youth also have histories of significant school discipline problems, often resulting in short- and long-term suspensions. Other indicators found in these youth include histories of substance abuse, gang involvement, unmet mental health needs, and family discord.

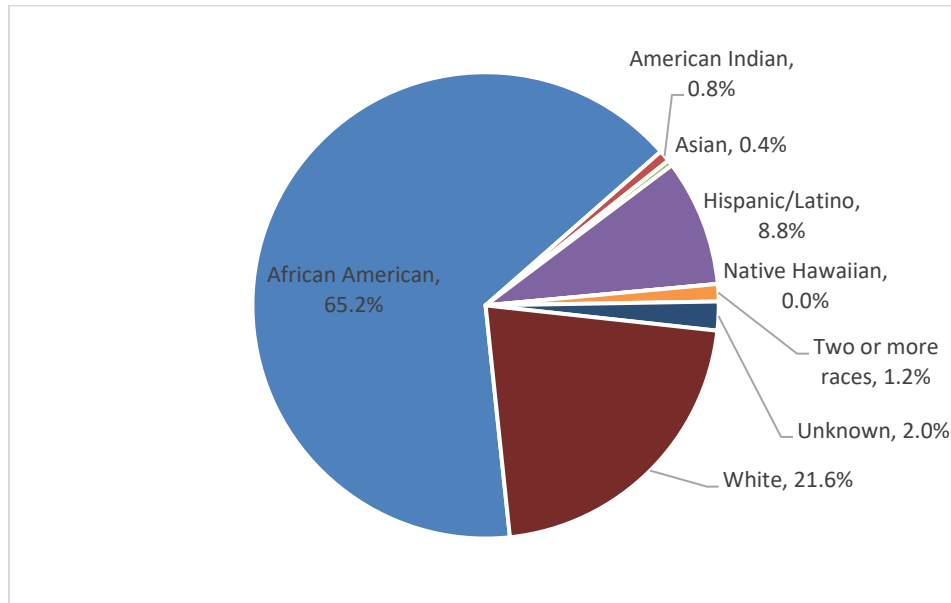
Service Capacity

The Eckerd campuses at Boomer, Candor and Yanceyville are contracted to serve one hundred twenty (120) youth at a time and approximately two hundred eighty-three (283) youth annually. The campuses are designed to serve juveniles referred statewide. Eckerd Boomer primarily serves youth referred from the Piedmont and Western region while Eckerd Candor primarily serves youth referred from the Central and Eastern region of the state. Eckerd Yanceyville is a more specialized program option that serves males statewide. However, the sites are not restricted to only accepting referrals from their primary catchment.

Demographics for youth served in FY 24-25

- Two hundred fifty (250) youth were served.
- 100% of the youth served were males.
- The average length of stay in the program was one hundred forty-seven (147) days or 4.9 months.
- Average age at admission was 15.3.

Graph 4.2 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by Eckerd



Cost Comparison

Table 4.3 Eckerd Short-Term Residential Services Cost vs Youth Development Center

Eckerd Short-Term Residential Services Program Cost vs. Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
Eckerd Short-Term Residential Program	\$46,448 ³
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

Outcomes

Academic Growth

Most of the youth served by Eckerd in FY 24-25 achieved academic progress through experiential learning. Eckerd administers the STAR Reading and Math Assessment to measure academic progress in reading and math. Youth are given a pre-test upon their arrival and post-test at their completion. For youth successfully completing the program in FY 24-25, results show an average increase in reading scores of 1.8 grade levels and an average increase in math scores 1.8 grade levels. See Table 4.4 below, which represents the youth who completed the program successfully and who, at intake, presented below average scoring.

³ Ibid.

Table 4.4 Academic Growth – STAR Reading and Math Assessment Average Test Score

Subject	Average Grade Level at Intake	Average Grade Level at Exit	Average Grade Level Improvement
Reading	5.2	7.0	1.8
Mathematics	5.5	7.4	1.8

Mental Health Gains

Mental health gains are measured by the Youth Outcome Questionnaire-Self Report (YOQ-SR), a brief 64-item self-report measure of treatment progress for adolescents (ages twelve (12) to eighteen (18)) receiving mental health intervention. The YOQ-SR is meant to track actual change in functioning as opposed to assigning diagnoses. The YOQ-SR is completed at intake, at discharge, and as needed throughout the course of services. The instrument domains address intrapersonal distress, somatic complaints, interpersonal relations, social problems, behavioral dysfunction, and suicidal ideation. The YOQ has very strong reliability with a .79-.84 test/retest rate (OQ Analyst, 2007). Of youth who presented in the clinical range at intake and successfully completed the program in FY 24-25, 90% showed mental health gains.

Skill Gains

Skills gains are measured by Pre/Post Skills Inventory. Inventory categories assessed are as follows: Boys Council Engagement Certificate, C-Tech Certification, Community Service Completion Certificate (25 hours), CPR/First Aid Certification, Drivers Ed Certification, Father/Parenting Curriculum, Health Education/Sex Education Course Completion, Interactive Journaling Pre/Post Gains, NCWorks Employability Course, OSHA 10 Certification, ServSafe. Of those youth who successfully completed the Eckerd Short-Term Residential programs, 100% achieved skills gains.

Recidivism

FY 23-24 and FY 24-25 recidivism data shows that of the three hundred fourteen (314) youth who had been in post-discharge status from Eckerd Short-Term Residential for more than six (6) months, sixty-one (61) youth, or 19%, received a new adjudication and eleven (11) youth, or 4%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at six (6) months post-discharge was 23%.

At twelve (12) months post discharge, there were two hundred eight (208) youth who could be analyzed for this report. Fifty-five (55) youth, or 26%, received a new adjudication and nineteen (19) youth, or 9%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at twelve (12) months post-discharge was 35%. It is worth noting that youth served by Eckerd have very low adult conviction rates per the recidivism study analysis.

Table 4.5 Eckerd Male Short-Term Residential Recidivism

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6 or 12 Months	314	208
Distinct Juveniles with Complaints Adjudicated	61	55
Distinct Juveniles Adjudication Recidivism	19%	26%
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	11	19
Adult Recidivism (% of Distinct Juveniles Convicted)	4%	9%
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	72	72
Recidivism: Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	23%	35%
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 6-month period</i>		
<i>Note: 2 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 12-month period</i>		

Conclusion

Eckerd Short-Term Residential facilities provide intensive, residential services to Level II serious and/or chronic juvenile offenders with elevated risks and needs. Programming offers an experiential learning environment that promotes academic improvement and pro-social skill building through the use of evidence-based, cognitive behavioral interventions. This residential program often serves as the final intervention before a youth is committed to a youth development center. Ultimately, some of the highest risk male youth in the state are served at the Eckerd Short-Term Residential Programs. The results of this analysis show that these short-term residential programs are achieving positive outcomes for youth who are served, with 65% of those participating in the program not recidivating at twelve (12) months post completion, most of which is seen in the juvenile justice system, not the adult criminal justice system.

Eckerd Connects Short-Term Residential Programs: Female Short-Term Residential

Overview

The Eckerd Girls Academy at Kerr Lake, also referred to as Eckerd Kerr Lake, is a gender responsive, short-term, residential treatment option for adolescent females between thirteen (13) and seventeen (17) years of age. The primary goal of the Eckerd Kerr Lake Program is to assist adolescent females with learning the skills and developing the tools needed to successfully transition back to their families and re-integrate into their communities. Individualized service plans guide the development of the services based on the need to facilitate the social and emotional growth within each adolescent. The program utilizes Girls Circle, a structured support group that addresses the needs of girls, and Seeking Safety, a therapeutic program for females suffering from trauma, substance abuse, and/or post-traumatic stress disorder.

Youth Profile

Most referrals made to this short-term residential program are females possessing a Level II disposition, however, the program also serves female youth released from youth development centers. All females referred are assessed as medium- or high-risk and typically have high needs and exposure to severe traumatic events. These youth have had multiple adjudications for person and property offenses and have received more than one (1) community-based intervention prior to referral. In some cases, juveniles come with a history of prior unsuccessful residential placements. A significant number of these adolescents have also experienced school discipline problems resulting in both short and long-term suspensions. Other indicators found in the referred population include trauma, substance abuse, gang involvement, mental health diagnosis, and family discord.

Eckerd Crisis Team

Eckerd, in a joint initiative between DPS Community Programs Section, the Department of Health and Human Services, and Vaya Managed Care Organization, created an on-campus Crisis Team that was available on a 24/7 basis to intervene with girls who experience behavioral health crisis while being served within the program. The goal was to prevent Involuntary Commitments (IVCs) and to enhance treatment at Eckerd in a trauma-informed manner. The Crisis Team consisted of four (4) direct service staff, and one (1) licensed mental health professional. The Crisis Team staff received specialized training in Trauma Informed Care, Motivational Interviewing (MI), crisis de-escalation, and other specialty fields as appropriate. Crisis Team staff offer one-on-one supervision, counseling, and coaching during a mental health crisis until the crisis is resolved. Funding for the Crisis Team staffing has concluded. However, due to the successful reduction in IVC's, Eckerd incorporated elements of this staffing and training into their current programming. The team provides on-going intervention services to effectively engage in safety planning and to intervene immediately to sustain safety while simultaneously reducing the likelihood of hospitalization. Supportive services may range from a few hours to several days. This Crisis Team model enables youth to be less traumatized by removal from campus to hospital settings, with an added benefit of creating stabilization in a familiar, and safe environment. In FY 24-25, one (1) youth received an IVC.

Service Capacity

Youth accepted into the twenty (20)-bed program are typically adjudicated Level II offenders referred by Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The average length of stay ranged between four (4) and six (6) months and the site has the ability to serve approximately sixty (60) youth annually. The program is licensed as a Residential Treatment Facility by the North Carolina DJJ of Health and Human Services and sits on an expansive lake-front property leased from the Army Corp of Engineers. The Eckerd Kerr Lake program accepts referrals from all one hundred (100) counties in the state.

Demographics for youth served in FY 24-25

- A total of fifty-four (54) clients were provided services.
- 100% of the youth served were female.
- The average length of stay in the program was one hundred fifty-four (154) days or 5.1 months.
- The average age of this female population was 14.9 years old.

Graph 4.3 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by the Kerr Lake Girls Academy Program

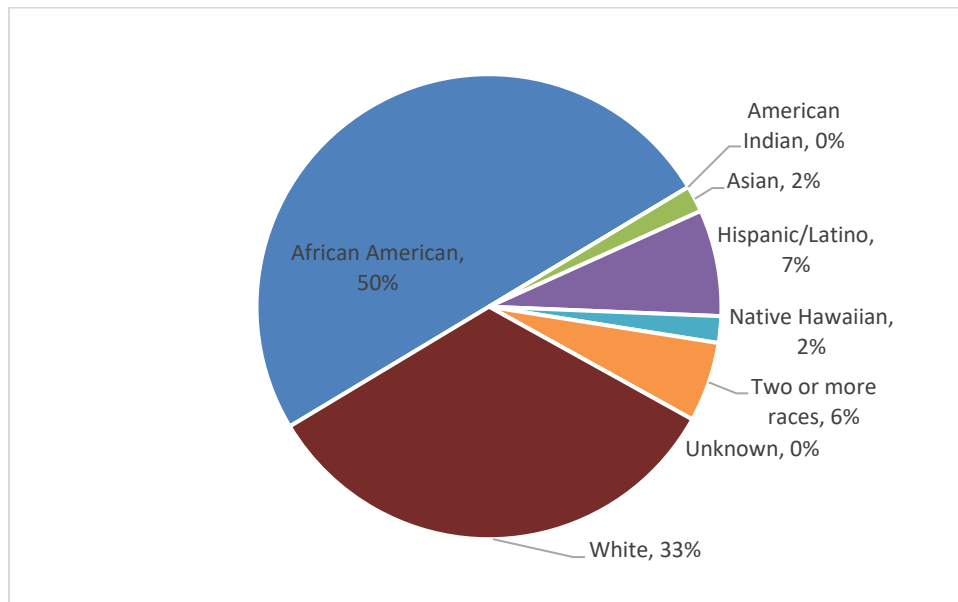


Table 4.6 Eckerd Kerr Lake Girls Academy Cost vs Youth Development Centers

Eckerd Kerr Lake Girls Academy Program Cost vs. Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
Eckerd Kerr Lake Girls Academy Program	\$52,235 ⁴
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

⁴ Ibid.

Outcomes

Academic Growth

Most of the youth served by Eckerd in FY 24-25 achieved academic progress through experiential learning. Eckerd administers the STAR Reading and Math Assessment to measure academic progress in reading and math. Youth are given a pre-test upon their arrival and post-test at their completion. For youth successfully completing the program in FY 24-25, results show an average increase in reading scores of 1.5 grade levels and an average increase in math scores of 1.2 grade levels. See the table below.

Table 4.7 Academic Growth – STAR Reading and Math Assessment Average Test Score

Subject	Average Grade Level at Intake	Average Grade Level at Exit	Average Grade Level Improvement
Reading	5.4	7.0	1.5
Mathematics	4.9	6.1	1.2

Mental Health Gains

Mental health gains are measured by the Youth Outcome Questionnaire-Self Report (YOQ-SR), a brief 64-item self-report measure of treatment progress for adolescents (ages twelve (12) to eighteen (18)) receiving mental health intervention. The YOQ-SR is meant to track actual change in functioning as opposed to assigning diagnoses. The YOQ-SR is completed at intake, at discharge, and as needed throughout the course of services. The instrument domains address intrapersonal distress, somatic complaints, interpersonal relations, social problems, behavioral dysfunction, and suicidal ideation. The YOQ has very strong reliability with a .79-.84 test/retest rate (OQ Analyst, 2007). Of youth who successfully completed the program in FY 2024-2025, 89% showed mental health gains. These are youth who presented in the clinical range at intake and successfully completed the program.

Skills Gains

Skills gains are measured by Pre/Post Skills Inventory. Inventory categories assessed are as follows: Community Service Completion Certificate (25 hours), Health Education/Sex Education Course Completion, Botvin Life Skills Course Completion, Before Baby Arrives Course Completion, Seeking Safety Course Proficiency, Vance Granville Employability Course. Of those youth who successfully completed the Eckerd Short-Term Residential programs, 100% achieved skills gains.

Recidivism

FY 23-24 and FY 24-25 recidivism data (Table 4.8) shows that of the eighty-eight (88) youth who had been in post-discharge status from Kerr Lake for six (6) months, nine (9) youth, or 10%, received a new adjudication and one (1) youth, or 1%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at six (6) months post-discharge was 11%.

At twelve (12) months post-discharge, there were sixty-five (65) youth who could be analyzed for this report. Eight (8) youth, or 12%, received a new adjudication and one (1) youth, or 1%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at twelve (12) months post-discharge was 14%.

Table 4.8 Eckerd Girls Academy at Kerr Lake- Female Short-Term Residential Recidivism

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6 or 12 Months	88	65
Distinct Juveniles with Complaints Adjudicated	9	8
Distinct Juveniles Adjudication Recidivism	10%	12%
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	1	1
Adult Recidivism (% of Distinct Juveniles Convicted)	1%	2%
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	10	9
Recidivism: Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	11%	14%
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 6-month period</i>		
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 12-month period</i>		

Conclusion

The outcome and recidivism data from the Eckerd Kerr Lake program is positive and reflects noteworthy change in youths’ adjustments, indicative of effective services addressing trauma-related issues, despite the small number of youths who were analyzed.

Methodist Home for Children: Multi-Purpose Group Homes

Overview

The DJJ currently contracts with Methodist Home for Children to operate five (5) multi-purpose group homes that provide secure non-institutional alternatives to secure detention and youth development centers. The five (5) homes are located in the following counties: Chowan, Hertford, Macon, Robeson and Wayne. These eight (8)-bed facilities feature the Model of Care program, recognized by the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention as a Promising Practice, which addresses antisocial behaviors by implementing a social and life skills curriculum that has been individualized for each youth. Implementation involves consistent and continuous behavioral teaching and the practice of selected skills. This focus on practice and skills meets the learning style needs of each youth and leads to an internalization of skills and the values of honesty, respect, responsibility, empowerment, compassion, and spirituality. Each home is staffed with a program manager, residential counselors, a certified teacher, and a family services specialist that works with youth and their families. The homes serve court-ordered adjudicated youth in the judicial districts where the homes are located but also offer flexibility to address the needs of juveniles from other judicial districts and counties.

Youth Profile

Youth being referred to the multi-purpose group homes have received a Level II court-ordered disposition. Typically, these males and females have had multiple adjudications for person and property offenses and have received multiple community-based interventions. These youth have also experienced significant school discipline problems resulting in short and long-term suspensions. Other indicators found in these youth include substance abuse, gang involvement, mental health needs, and family discord.

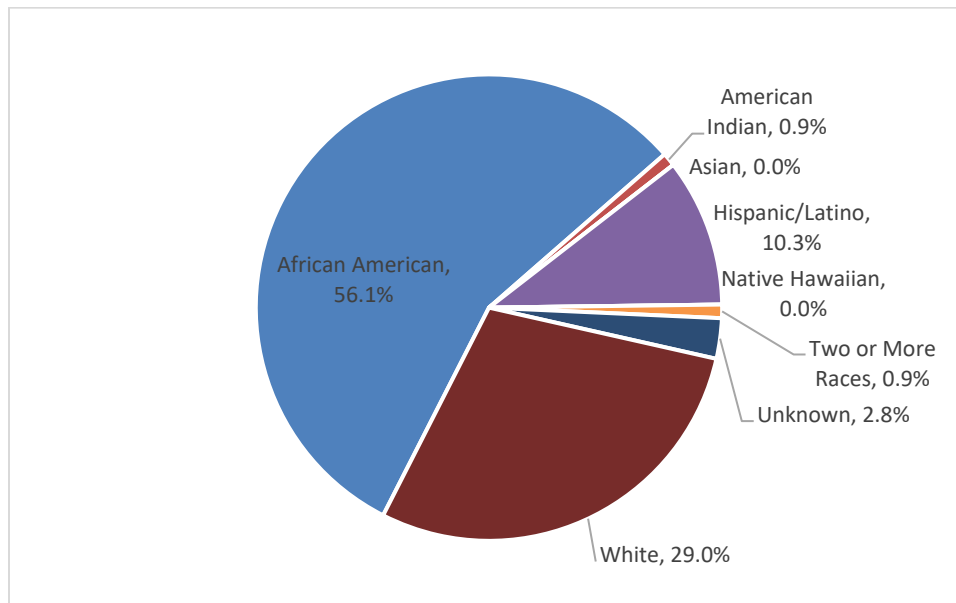
Service Capacity

In FY 24-25, there were five (5) multi-purpose group homes with a capacity to serve forty (40) youth at a time and approximately ninety-six (96) youth annually. Due to demonstrated demand for additional transitional beds, DJJ collaborated with Methodist Home for Children, and modified one Multi-purpose Group Home (Chowan) into a Transitional Living Home. The capacity for FY 25-26 is therefore thirty-two (32) beds able to serve eighty-five (85) youth annually. The homes are located in rural judicial districts and serve as an alternative to detention and youth development centers.

Demographics for youth served in FY 24-25

- One hundred seven (107) youth were served
- 27% of youth served were female, 73% were male.
- The average length of stay in the program was one hundred thirty-seven (137) days or 4.5 months.
- 15.1 was the average age of youth being served in the multi-purpose group homes.

Graph 4.4 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by Multi-Purpose Group Homes



Cost Comparison

Table 4.9 Multi-Purpose Group Home Services Costs vs Youth Development Centers

Multi-Purpose Group Home Program Cost vs. Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
Multi-Purpose Group Home Program	\$40,601 ⁵
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

Outcomes

Academic Growth

Teachers administer the Academic Achievement Battery (AAB) in all multipurpose group homes at admission, every three months, and at discharge. The AAB is a user and student-friendly academic assessment that measures four academic areas: word reading, spelling, reading comprehension, and math computation. The Pari Connect feature of the AAB process provides clear and easy-to-read reports for each youth and a growth report at discharge.

The table is a snapshot of the data gathered from the administered AAB. At admission, students’ average reading level was at the 5th-grade, 6-month level, with a broad range spanning from 1st to 12th grade. By discharge, the average reading level increased to the 6th-grade, 5-month level, and the range narrowed slightly to 2nd through 12th grade. In math, the admission average was at the 4th-grade level, with student

⁵ Ibid.

performance ranging from 2nd to 7th grade. At discharge, the math average improved to the 4th-grade, 7-month level, with the range expanding from 2nd to 9th grade, indicating overall academic growth in both subject areas.

Table 4.10 Academic Achievement Battery (AAB) Data

	Reading	Math
Admission Average	5th grade 6th month	4th Grade
Range	1st grade to 12th grade	2nd grade to 7th grade
Discharge Average	6th grade 5th month	4th grade 7th month
Range	2nd grade to 12th grade	2nd grade to 9th grade

Table 4.11 Academic Growth – Academic Achievement Battery (AAB)

	Reading Comprehension Grade Equivalent	Math Computation Grade Equivalent
Average grade level of youth at admission	5.6	4
Average grade level at discharge	6.5	4.7
Overall Grade level improvement	1	1

Skill Development

Youth work with staff to determine their service plan goals while in care. Staff help the youth to understand what has led them to this point in their lives and identify key skills that will help them in the future. In Multipurpose Programs, the skills youth use are applied in the program setting as well as in the community during outings and home visits.

Table 4.12 Multi-purpose Group Home Skills Curriculum: Discharging Skill Achievement

Top 10 Achieved Skills	% of Youth
Accepts No for an Answer	94%
Asks Permission	92%
Accepts Feedback	91%
Follows Instructions	88%
Conversation Skills	83%
Follows Rules	77%
Greeting/Departure Skills	62%
Ignores Minor Inappropriate Behavior	57%
Emotional/Impulse Control	55%
Shows Respect for Others	53%

Family Engagement

Family Services Specialists work directly with the families of the youth served in multipurpose group homes. These Specialists worked with one hundred nineteen (119) guardians across all programs. The process of empowering guardians through teaching and honing parenting skills is a collaborative process with youth attending home visits. This allows for a more person-centered approach that works with the family as a team. Families work on a variety of goals to move through Families First, an evidence-based program, with the goal most needed by families this year being Increasing Positive Discipline Practices. The skills integrated in the plans for families' goals are individualized to each family's needs. Youth are active participants in the family's plan as they work together as a unit on home visits to implement their skills. About 80% of youth were able to routinely earn and participate in home visits as part of their plan. Youth who participated in home visits earned an average of about 21 visits while in care.

Families can participate in parent training and family day events held at multipurpose group homes on a quarterly basis. These events allow the parents as a group to work on common parent skills during the parent training.

Topics of focus this year were staying calm, effective communication, and quality time. Each family that attended was able to share with others and take away tips on how to utilize these topics in their home. A total of fifty-four (54) parent training sessions took place this past year.

Top Three Parenting Goals Addressed with families this year:

- Increasing Positive Discipline Practices

- Improving Reintegration of the Child into the Family
- Increasing Positive Caregiver Strengths and Self-sufficiency

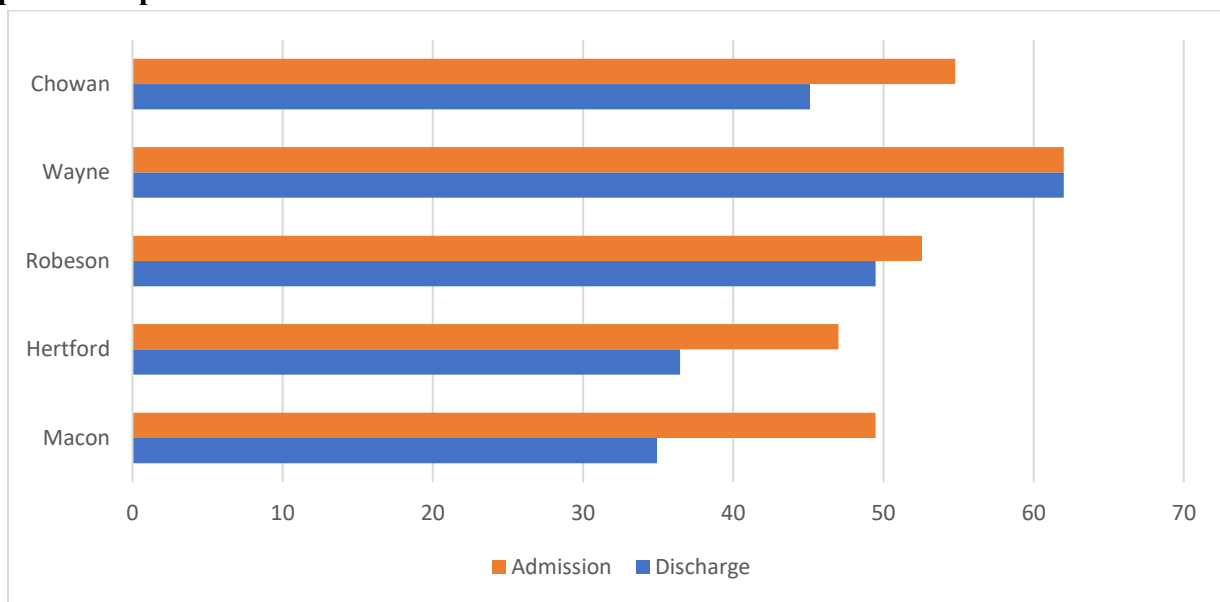
Outcomes

The Youth Outcome Questionnaire-Self Report (YOQ-SR) is a sixty-four (64)-item self-report tool used to measure changes in social and emotional functioning in adolescents aged twelve (12) to eighteen (18) who are receiving mental health treatment. Rather than focusing on diagnoses, the YOQ-SR tracks changes in functioning from the youth’s perspective throughout their care. The intake score also helps identify immediate clinical concerns and guides the service plan.

The tool evaluates six (6) key domains: intrapersonal distress, somatic distress, interpersonal relations, critical items, social problems, and behavioral dysfunction, producing a comprehensive total score.

Data analysis shows that youth come into care with a higher-than-average score of fifty-three (53) which shows that the youth are experiencing clinically high levels of distress at a time of admission. This score drops to an average of forty-five (45) by the time of discharge, which is a normal stress level for an adolescent. The reduction in score demonstrates the positive impact of the program environment on the youth served.

Graph 4.5 Youth Outcome Questionnaire-Self Report (YOQ-SR) Changes at Multi-Purpose Group Homes



Change in Risk & Protective Factors

The information provided in the table below reflects data from the *Risk and Protective Factors Worksheet* for youth served during FY 24-25. Risk factors are evidence-based characteristics that increase the likelihood of a youth being at high risk for committing delinquent acts and therefore needing continuous services to manage functioning. Likewise, protective factors are characteristics that

protect the youth and reduce this risk. This assessment is completed for each youth at admission and at discharge. The categories listed in the table below represent a set of protective factors that have a positive correlation to youth resiliency and success. The data show a significant positive increase in critical protective factors for youth while in care.

Table 4.13 Multi-purpose Group Home: Risk and Protective Factors Worksheet Data

Risk and Protective Factors	Reduction %	Admitting Risk Factor	Discharging Risk Factor
Adult Mentor Involvement	36%	64	41
Regular Contact with Parent	5%	20	19
Acceptance of Authority	53%	55	26
Grade Level School Performance	55%	58	26
Age-appropriate social behavior	62%	53	20
Positive self-image	71%	52	15
School / Community Involvement	27%	77	56
Religious Community Involvement	6%	67	63
Personal Health Habits	80%	46	9
Decision-making Skills	41%	74	44
Honesty Behavior	35%	72	47
Personal Development	57%	35	15
Grade-level Reading Ability	70%	64	19
Empathetic towards others	55%	69	31
Positive goal oriented	54%	56	26

Youth Outcome Survey

To follow the progress of program-served youth, the contracted provider conducts outcome surveys up to twelve (12) months post discharge from the continuing care program. These surveys help all parties understand the success of post-discharged youth served through a multi-purpose group home. Listed in Table 4.14 below are data from the surveys that were completed during FY 24-25.

Table 4.14 Multi-purpose Group Home: Youth Outcome Survey 12-Months Follow Ups

Measure	% Achieved
Living in a Safe Home Environment, either the child's permanent home or the next logical, most appropriate setting toward a permanent home	90%
Having an Ongoing Relationship with a caring, responsible adult other than family or staff	67%
Regularly attending School or Work	80%
Regularly participating in pro-social community activities (group; social/relational) e.g., clubs, youth groups, church groups, etc.	88%
Regularly involved in positive development activities (individual competencies) e.g., pursuit of personally/socially constructive individual activities	100%
Maintaining optimal health functioning with needed and appropriate supports	100%
Maintaining optimal mental health functioning with needed and appropriate supports	89%
Regularly following substance use recovery plan	50%

Recidivism

FY 23-24 and FY 24-25 recidivism data in Table 4.15 shows that of the one hundred and thirty-nine (139) youth who had been in post-discharged status from multi-purpose group homes for six (6) months, sixteen (16) youth, or 12%, received a new adjudication and four (4) youth, or 3%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at six (6) months post-discharge was 14%.

At twelve (12) months post-discharge, there were ninety-seven (97) youth who could be analyzed for this report. Twenty (20) youth, or 21%, received a new adjudication and eight (8) youth, or 8%, received a new adult conviction. The total recidivism rate at twelve (12) months post-discharge was 29%.

Table 4.15 Multi-Purpose Group Home Recidivism

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6 or 12 Months	139	97
Distinct Juveniles with Complaints Adjudicated	16	20
Distinct Juveniles Adjudication Recidivism	12%	21%
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	4	8
Adult Recidivism (% of Distinct Juveniles Convicted)	3%	8%

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	20	28
Recidivism: Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	14%	29%
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 6-month period</i>		
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 12-month period</i>		

Conclusion

Multi-purpose group homes continue to be an invaluable, cost-effective resource to judicial districts and local communities serving as an alternative to committing youth to a youth development center.

Section V

Transitional Services

Methodist Home for Children: Transitional Living Programs

Overview

For almost thirteen (13) years, Methodist Home for Children has operated transitional living programs (TLP). In Fiscal Year 24-25, there were three (3) transitional living programs. Craven transitional living program in New Bern (the initial and longest standing of the transitional programs); the North Hills transitional living program for females located in Raleigh; and the Goldsboro transitional living program, known as the Farm in Goldsboro. Transitional living programs are six (6) to twelve (12) month residential programs that help youth leaving a youth development center or a residential program build the skill sets they need to transition back to the community and live independently. Programs can also serve youth who are designated as in need of intensive intervention services; however, the youth must be at least sixteen (16) years of age.

Youth Profile

All referrals made to the transitional living programs are under post-release supervision as a youth exits a youth development center, on probation transitioning from a residential program, or youth at least sixteen (16) years of age who have a demonstrated need to acquire independent living skills. Typically, youth served have significant juvenile court involvement including multiple adjudications for person and property offenses prior to their commitment to a youth development center and multiple residential placements, including mental health residential programs or other residential services. Other characteristics found in these youth include substance abuse, gang involvement, and family discord. Youth selected are invested in their placement and have expressed a desire to make significant life changes. Some youth receiving services cannot return to their home communities due to safety concerns and are learning independent living skills to become self-sustaining.

Service Capacity

The Craven transitional living programs has the capacity to serve eight (8) male youth, and the North Hills site has the capacity to serve five (5) female youth, and The Farm offers a four (4) bed capacity.

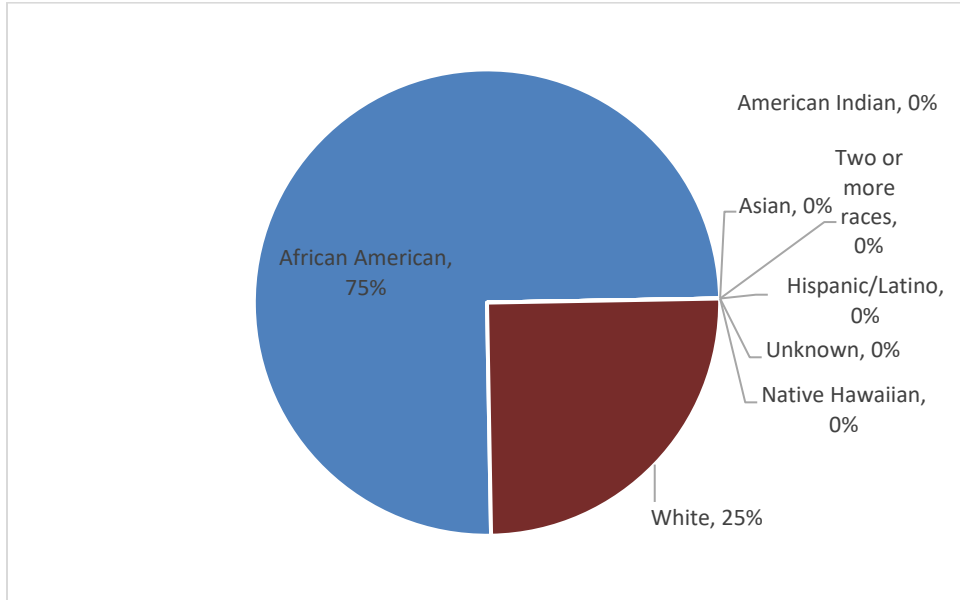
Major program components of the transitional living homes include education, vocational training, employment, group activities, money management, mental health services, substance abuse counseling, community volunteering, and independent living group activities. With the assistance of on-site staff and community partners, the youth learn how to budget, meal plan, develop a resume, interview for a job, negotiate salary, manage a cell phone, earn their driver's license, and open a bank account.

Demographics of youth served during FY 24-25

Craven

- Twenty-four (24) male youth were served.
- The average age of youth served was 17.5 years of age.
- The average length of stay was one hundred nine (109) days or 3.6 months.

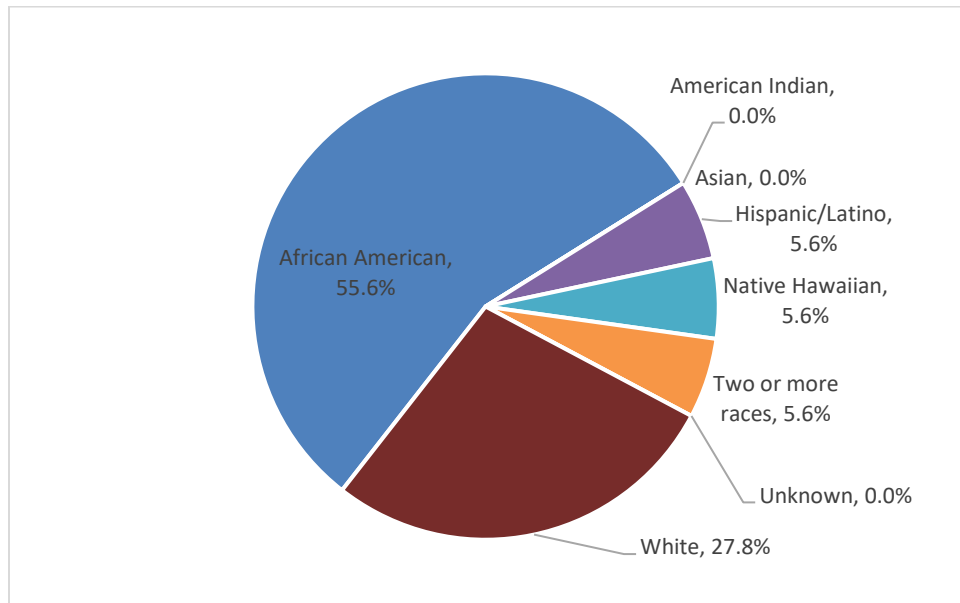
Graph 5.1 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by Craven Transitional Living Program



North Hills

- Eighteen (18) female youth were served.
- The average age of youth served was 16.7 years of age.
- The average length of stay was seventy-five (75) days or 2.5 months.

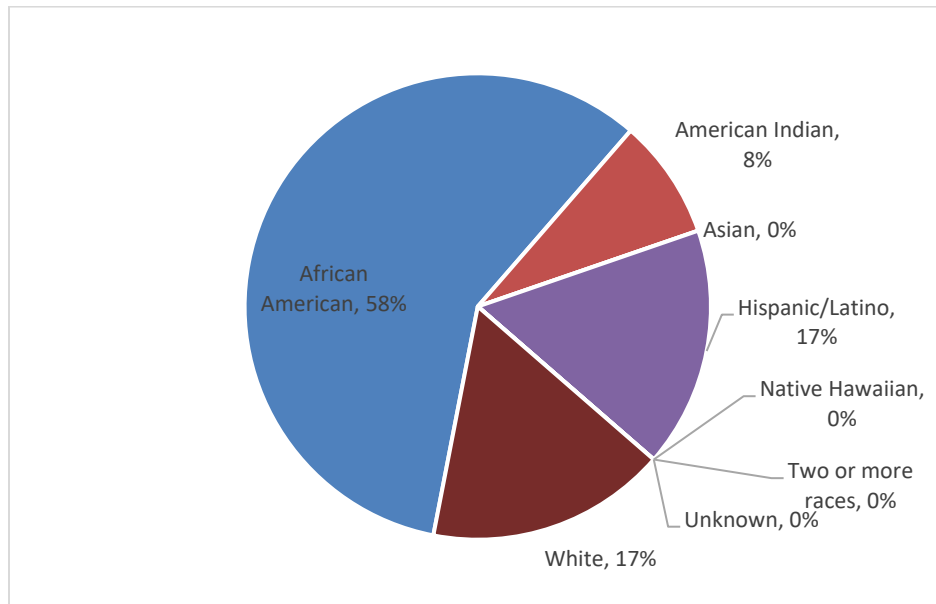
Graph 5.2 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by North Hills Transitional Living Program



Goldsboro (The Farm)

- Twelve (12) male youth were served.
- The average age of youth served was 17.3 years of age.
- The average length of stay was one hundred twenty-six (126) days or 4.2 months.

Graph 5.3 Race/Ethnicity of Youth Served by Goldsboro Transitional Living



Cost Comparison

Table 5.1 Transitional Living Programs Cost vs Youth Development Centers

Transitional Living Home Program Cost vs. Youth Development Center Cost	FY 24-25 Cost per Child
Transitional Living Home Program	\$37,431 ⁶
Youth Development Center	\$132,505

Outcomes

Academic Achievement

During their stay at Craven, North Hills, and the Farm, youth have a choice of four (4) educational tracks that include community college classes, vocational trade, GED, or high school. Youth who are participating in a vocational trade can also simultaneously complete their GED/HiSET or high school curriculum. The education track is determined after interviewing youth to determine their career goals and

⁶ Ibid.

interests and assessment of the youth's previous academic achievements. The Transitional Living Specialist will monitor the progress youth are making on their decided tracks to ensure youth are able to make their discharge plans.

Craven Transitional Living Program and Craven Community College (CCC) have developed an effective relationship by allowing the youth partner with CCC in certain trades at the VOLT Center while obtaining their GED or high school diploma. For North Hills, effective partnerships have been established with Wake Technical College and Dress for Success. The Farm has formed relationships with Wayne Community College as well as the local Cooperative Extension offices for agriculturally based learning. All programs have access to Edgenuity, Britain Academy, and Penn Foster online programs.

Education Participation

Craven

100% of eligible youth participated in educational programming. Eleven (11) youth had already completed their primary education before entering the program.

Youth completed the following educational tracks with some youth completing more than one.

- Three (3) youth enrolled in Britain Academy program
- Four (4) youth completed and graduated from Penn Foster
- Eleven (11) youth graduated high school/completed HiSet prior to admission

Craven has a partnership with Craven Community College's VOLT Center (workforce development). 100% of youth participated in the Core Curriculum Classes.

- Twenty (20) youth participated in the Core Curriculum Class
- Seven (7) youth graduated the Core Curriculum Class
- Five (5) youth took trade courses
 - Two (2) youth completed the Forklift class and earned a certificate
 - One (1) youth completed the ServSafe course and earned a certificate
 - Two (2) youth completed the Baking/Catering course and earned a certificate
 - One (1) youth completed the Construction class and earned a certificate
 - One (1) youth completed the Small Engine repair class and earned a certificate

North Hills

100% of eligible youth participated in educational programming.

Youth participated in the following educational tracks with some participating in more than one:

- Seven (7) youths were enrolled in Penn Foster
- Six (6) youth obtained their high school diploma while in the program through Penn Foster
- Two (2) youth participated in public alternative school
- Three (3) youth graduated prior to admission
- Two (2) of the three (3) with prior graduation were enrolled in Wake Tech Community College

Youth were able to take certificate courses and earn the following:

- Three (3) youth completed certification programs
 - One (1) ServSafe
 - Two (2) Drivers Education

Farm

100% of eligible youth participated in educational programming.

Youth participated in the following educational tracks, with some participating in more than one:

- One (1) youth obtained their high school diploma while in the program through Britain Academy
- Six (6) youth obtained their high school diploma while in the program through Penn Foster
- One (1) youth was enrolled in HiSET

Youth participated in certificate courses at Craven Community College VOLT Center and earned the following:

- Two (2) completed courses and earned a certificate in Forklift

Employment

Craven, North Hills Transitional Homes and The Farm strive to have every youth gain employment skills, learn about jobs and careers, and become employed during their residency in the program. The programs teach and enhance job-seeking skills from the moment a youth enters the home. During the first level of the program, youth learn how to search for appropriate job placements. The Transitional Living Specialist actively engages with each youth to foster skills needed to navigate search engines, build resumes, complete online applications, and understand business etiquette and appropriate attire for local employment opportunities. The Specialist facilitates mock interviews to assist youth enhance interview skills and ask pertinent questions about the work environment and salary negotiations. As part of the youths' stay at the Farm, they participate in tasks centered around agricultural training as that is part of the experience of living at the Farm. Youth work in the greenhouse and learn about the aspects that go in to planning and cultivating crops. Additionally, the site offers hands-on opportunities to raise and care for animals with the introduction of three (3) new fainting goats on the Farm.

After a youth gains employment, staff provide ongoing individual sessions to ensure they are utilizing the skills acquired during their participation in the program. Employment is a core component of the transitional home as it empowers the youth by giving them confidence and improving their self-esteem as well as allowing them to be positive contributors to the community and workforce.

Employment Results

Craven

63% of eligible youth were able to obtain and maintain employment

- Eight (8) youth worked in the food service industry

- Two (2) youth worked retail

North Hills

64% of eligible youth were able to obtain and maintain employment

- Six (6) youth were employed in the food service industry
- One (1) youth was employed in retail

The Farm

100% of eligible youth were able to obtain and maintain employment.

100% of youth participated in agricultural activities at the Farm.

- Six (6) youth worked in the food service industry

The Farm grew the following: sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, blueberries, kale, spinach, as well as various herbs.

The youth at the Farm also provided care to three (3) fainting goats.

Program Goal Progress and Achievement

Skill Development

Youth participate in goal planning to determine goals and plans for service for themselves while in care. Staff work with the youth to understand what led them to this point in their lives and identify key skills that will help them in the future. The skills are also applied in the program and in the community through volunteering, educational pursuits on campus, work, and use of free time. The most used skills in these programs reflect a more independent skill set. The top two (2) selected skills for Transitional Living are Conversation Skills and Emotional Impulse Control.

Table 5.2 TLP Skills Curriculum: Discharging Skill Achievement

Top 10 Achieved Skills	% of Youth
Accepts Feedback	88%
Accepts No for an Answer	88%
Asks Permission	88%
Follows Instructions	86%
Greeting/Departure Skills	81%
Conversation Skills	70%
Emotional/Impulse Control	60%
Follows Rules	60%
Self-Management	51%
Stays on Task	51%

Independent Living Skills at Transitional Living Programs

Transitional Living Programs staff work diligently with the youth to ensure their preparedness for the day they are ready to move out on their own. This happens with the incorporation of lessons and skills related to independent activities. Looking at the youth served this year, Transitional living staff worked with the most youth on hygiene and personal appearance, food management, health, and housekeeping. This encompasses skills such as how to make and follow appointment recommendations, dress for your environment, prepare food safely, and use problem-solving skills in interpersonal relationships.

Table 5.3 Independent Living Skills

Top 5 Independent Living Skills Categories	Percent of youth needing and receiving education in each skill
Food Management	95%
Personal Appearance and Hygiene	98%
Health	88%
Housekeeping	90%
Job Seeking	85%

Casey Life Skills are used in programs to help strengthen skills towards adulthood. Each home provides has youth complete an assessment at admission and discharge to gauge their current knowledge of important areas such as career and civic engagement. The assessment is scored on a 0-5 scale, with 5 being an expert level of knowledge. All youth receive Casey Life Skills group, with additional support added to their individual plan for youth needing extra help to gain the knowledge needed in a certain area.

Table 5.4 Casey Life Skills Improvements

Casey Life Skills Categories	Percentage of youth demonstrating improvement
Daily Living	78%
Self-Care	74%
Relationship & Communication	84%
Housing & Money Management	66%
Work & Study Life	70%
Career & Education	66%
Navigating the Child Welfare System	66%
Civic Engagement	66%
Looking Forward	86%

Change in Risk & Protective Factors

The information provided in the table below reflects data from the Risk and Protective Factors Worksheet for youth served during FY 24-25. Risk factors are evidence-based characteristics that increase the likelihood of a youth being at high risk for committing delinquent acts and therefore needing continuous services to manage functioning. Likewise, protective factors are characteristics that protect the youth and

reduce this risk. This assessment is completed for each youth at admission and at discharge. The categories listed in Table 5.5 represent a set of protective factors that have a positive correlation to youth resiliency and success. The data show a significant positive increase in critical protective factors for youth while in care.

Table 5.5 Change in Risk and Protective Factors from Admission to Discharge

TLH Risk and Protective Factors	Reduction %	<i>Admitting Risk Factor</i>	<i>Discharging Risk Factor</i>
Adult Mentor Involvement	9%	34	31
Regular Contact with Parent	43%	7	4
Acceptance of Authority	31%	13	9
Grade Level School Performance	67%	12	4
Age-appropriate social behavior	42%	19	11
Positive self-image	58%	24	10
School / Community Involvement	90%	39	4
Religious Community Involvement	25%	36	27
Personal Health Habits	72%	18	5
Decision-making Skills	14%	28	24
Honesty Behavior	45%	29	16
Personal Development	88%	8	1
Grade level Reading Ability	83%	18	3
Empathetic towards others	56%	27	12
Positive goal oriented	33%	6	4

Youth Outcome Survey

To follow the progress of program-served youth, the contracted provider conducts outcome surveys up to twelve (12) months post-discharge from the aftercare program. These surveys help all parties understand the success of post-discharged youth served through a transitional living program. Table 5.6 below shows the data from the surveys completed during FY 24-25.

Table 5.6 Youth Outcome Survey

Measure	% Achieved
Living in a Safe Home Environment, either the child's permanent home or the next logical, most appropriate setting toward a permanent home	90%
Having an Ongoing Relationship with a caring, responsible adult other than family or staff	67%
Regularly attending School or Work	80%
Regularly participating in pro-social community activities (group; social/relational) e.g., clubs, youth groups, church groups, etc.	88%
Regularly involved in positive development activities (individual competencies) e.g., pursuit of personally/socially constructive individual activities	100%
Maintaining optimal health functioning with needed and appropriate supports	100%
Maintaining optimal mental health functioning with needed and appropriate supports	89%
Regularly following substance use recovery plan	50%

Recidivism

The data provided in Table 5.7 below represents promising results. Of the seventy-six (76) youth, six (6) months post discharge recidivism data show that one (1) youth or 1% recidivated with juvenile adjudications and twelve (12) youth, or 16%, obtained an adult conviction. The overall recidivism rate at six (6) months post discharge was 17%.

Overall, recidivism at twelve (12) months post-discharge showed that out of the fifty-six (56) youth, one (1) youth or 2% had a juvenile adjudication and fourteen (14) youth, or 25%, had an adult conviction. The recidivism rate at post discharge twelve (12) months was 27%.

Table 5.7 Transitional Living Home Program Recidivism

Post-Discharge Time Frame	0 to 6 Months	0 to 12 Months
Distinct Juveniles in the Community for At Least 6 or 12 Months	76	56
Distinct Juveniles with Complaints Adjudicated	1	1
Distinct Juveniles Adjudication Recidivism	1%	2%
Adult Convictions (Distinct Juveniles)	12	14
Adult Recidivism (% of Distinct Juveniles Convicted)	16%	25%
Distinct Juveniles with Adjudications or Convictions	13	15
Recidivism: Juvenile Adjudications + Adult Convictions	17%	27%
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 6-month period</i>		
<i>Note: 0 juveniles had both a juvenile adjudication and an adult conviction in the 12-month period</i>		

Conclusion

The transitional living homes are a four-level program based on the Teaching-Family Model that is also used in some youth development centers. These residential programs help youth build the skill sets they need to live independently. This residential model allows youth to take on new responsibilities and demonstrate positive behavior change. Youth earn their independence and develop the skills necessary to sustain independence. Youth who are internally motivated and goal-orientated demonstrate success in this program model which significantly reduces the likelihood of recidivism. Additionally, the outcome data for academic achievement and employment placement demonstrates that the program model significantly improves independent living skill development, enabling youth to become productive, law-abiding members of society.

Appendix A
North Carolina Assessment of Risk
(NCAR)

NORTH CAROLINA ASSESSMENT OF RISK (NCAR)

Juvenile Name: _____	DOB: _____
County of Residence: _____	
Juvenile Race: <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> Latino <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Juvenile Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	
Date Assessment Completed: _____	Completed by: _____

Instructions: Complete each assessment item R1 to R9 using the best available information. Circle the numeric score associated with each item response and enter it on the line to the right of the item. Total the item scores to determine the level of risk and check the appropriate risk level in R10. Assessment items R1-R5 are historical in nature and should be answered based on the juvenile's lifetime. Items R6 and R7 should be evaluated over the 12 months prior to the assessment. R8-R9 should be evaluated as of the time of the assessment. Use the Comment section at the end as needed for additional information or clarification.

- R1. Age when first delinquent offense alleged in a complaint:** Circle appropriate score and enter the actual age.
- | | Score |
|--|-------|
| a. Age 12 or over or no delinquent complaint | 0 |
| b. Under age 12 | 2 |
| Actual age: _____ | |
- R2. Number of undisciplined or delinquent referrals to Intake** (Referrals are instances of complaints coming through the Intake process. A referral may include multiple complaints; for example, breaking or entering and larceny, or multiple larcenies or other offenses that occur at one time.)
- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| a. Current referral only | 0 |
| b. 1 Prior referral | 1 |
| c. 2-3 Prior referrals | 2 |
| d. 4+ Prior referrals | 3 |
- R3. Most serious prior adjudication(s).** Enter the actual number of prior adjudications for each class of offense shown in b through e then circle the score for only the most serious offense for which there has been a prior adjudication. **The maximum possible score for this item is 4.**
- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| a. No Prior Adjudications | | 0 |
| b. Prior Undisciplined | # of adjudications: _____ | 1 |
| c. Prior Class 1-3 misdemeanors | # of adjudications: _____ | 2 |
| d. Prior Class F-I felonies or A misdemeanors | # of adjudications: _____ | 3 |
| e. Prior Class A-E felonies | # of adjudications: _____ | 4 |
- R4. Prior Assaults:** "Assault" is defined as any assaultive behavior, whether physical or sexual, with or without a weapon as evidenced by a prior delinquent complaint. Record the number of complaints for each assault category shown. Then circle the score for the assault category with the highest numerical score. **The maximum possible score for this item is 5.**
- | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|
| a. No assaults | | 0 |
| b. Involvement in an affray | # of complaints: _____ | 1 |
| c. Yes, without a weapon | # of complaints: _____ | 2 |
| d. Yes, without a weapon, inflicting serious injury | # of complaints: _____ | 3 |
| e. Yes, with a weapon | # of complaints: _____ | 4 |
| f. Yes, with a weapon inflicting serious injury | # of complaints: _____ | 5 |
- R5. Runaways (from home or placement):** "Runaway" is defined as absconding from home or any placement and not voluntarily returning within twenty-four (24) hours as evidenced by a complaint, motion for review, or from reliable information. Circle appropriate score.
- | | |
|--|---|
| a. No | 0 |
| b. Yes | 2 |
| Actual number of runaway incidents _____ | |
- R6. Known use of alcohol or illegal drugs during past 12 months:** Do not include tobacco in scoring this item. Circle appropriate score.
- | | |
|--|---|
| a. No known substance use | 0 |
| b. Some substance use, need for further assessment | 1 |
| c. Substance abuse, assessment and/or treatment needed | 3 |

R7. **School behavior problems during the prior 12 months:** Circle appropriate score.

a. No problems (Enrolled, attending regularly)	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Minor problems (attending with problems handled by teacher/school personnel, or 1-3 unexcused absences/truancy)	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Moderate problems (4 to 10 unexcused absences /truancy, or 1 or more in-school suspensions or 1 short-term suspension – up to 10 days)	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Serious problems (more than 1 short-term suspension, or 1 or more long-term suspension, or more than 10 unexcused absences or expelled/dropped out)	3	<input type="checkbox"/>

R8. **Peer relationships:** Circle appropriate score. Put check in the line following appropriate information.

a. Peers usually provide good support and influence	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Youth is rejected by pro-social peers _____, or youth sometimes associates with others who have been involved in delinquent/criminal activity but is not primary peer group	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Youth regularly associates with others who are involved in delinquent/criminal activity	3	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Youth is a gang member _____ or associates with a gang _____	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

R9. **Parental supervision:** (Score the current responsible parental authority) Circle appropriate score.

a. Parent, guardian or custodian willing and able to supervise	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Parent, guardian or custodian willing but unable to supervise	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Parent, guardian or custodian unwilling to supervise	3	<input type="checkbox"/>

R10.

TOTAL RISK SCORE/LEVEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Check Risk Level: Low risk (0 - 2)

Medium risk (3 – 12)

High risk 13- 30

COMMENT:
