Placing juvenile justice and positive youth development in the same sentence is somewhat like mixing oil and water. The reader may recognize each of these concepts individually but have great difficulty imagining how they could be merged into an integrated whole. On one hand, the juvenile justice system embodies the tension between criminal justice and child welfare, seeking to address youthful misbehavior with a combination of punishment and rehabilitation. On the other hand, positive youth development advocates seek nothing less than a transformation of public consciousness and resource commitments, from a concern with preventing and treating youth problems to a comprehensive approach providing supports and opportunities enabling all children to develop optimally.

This author has attended numerous public meetings highlighted by angry and mistrustful exchanges between positive youth development advocates and traditional service providers, including juvenile justice professionals. The former argue that resources are excessively earmarked for expensive and ineffective interventions with “problem youth” while ignoring basic supports for families and children. In response, the other side expresses fears that redirecting resources toward universal supports and opportunities compounds the privileges already realized by the “best and brightest” while relegating those most “at risk” to what would remain of the juvenile justice (or mental health or child welfare) system. The two sides, both genuinely
concerned with young people, seem to talk past each other. Recalling the oft-repeated line from the movie *Cool Hand Luke*, “What we have here is a failure to communicate.”

This chapter offers an attempt to bridge these two worlds. For its conceptual underpinnings, the bridge rests on a great deal of theory, research, and practice wisdom converging from several disciplines to identify a set of risk and protective factors that influence the course of human development. These factors exist at multiple levels—the individual, family, school, neighborhood, and broader environment—which raise or lower the odds of positive life outcomes (Kirby & Fraser, 1997; Masten, 1994). Attention to these factors, that is, promoting resilience, strengthening protective factors, and reducing or buffering risk factors, is the key both to the promotion of positive youth development and the prevention of youth problems. But identifying conceptual underpinnings is not enough; the political environment and organizational culture of juvenile justice are among the many logistical obstacles to constructing a bridge (Schwartz, 2001). Several progressive approaches to contemporary juvenile justice and other service arenas—community prevention, a balanced approach, a comprehensive strategy with an increased emphasis on evidence-based practice, restorative justice, and systems of care/wraparound services, all to be described later in this chapter—may provide the means to overcome these obstacles.

The chapter begins with an overview of the juvenile justice system, its history, structure, programs, and policies. Juvenile justice is described as one among many distinct service systems traditionally dealing with youth problems. A synopsis of evidence indicates what does and does not work in juvenile justice and the inherent limitations of an approach based on “the medical model.” Recent progressive approaches in juvenile justice are more hospitable to positive youth development principles than are previous approaches. In contrast to the traditional response to youth problems, one embracing positive youth development requires a strengths-based, ecological view that integrates services across systems. The chapter concludes with applications of juvenile justice programs that incorporate positive youth development principles and recommendations for further action to bridge these two seemingly incompatible worlds.

**Overview of the Juvenile Justice System**

The juvenile justice system is responsible for dealing with young people who have allegedly committed a crime or a status offense. A *status offense* is behavior, such as school truancy, running away from home, or “incorrigibility,” that
would not be a crime if committed by an adult. The system consists of two main parts, a judicial component (juvenile court) and a correctional component (probation, training schools, treatment programs, etc.) (Schwartz, 2001). Philosophically, the system is grounded in the belief that children are different from adults—less culpable for their behavior, more salvageable or amenable to treatment, for example—and thus should not be treated in the same manner as adults in the criminal justice system.

Although we speak of “the juvenile justice system,” it is not necessarily a single, coherent entity in every locale. Some juvenile justice functions may be the responsibility of state governments, others of the counties, and still others of private agencies (Schwartz, 2001). Moreover, there is no common jurisdictional definition of juvenile. States vary in the lowest age of juvenile court jurisdiction; many have no statutory lower limit, while others range from 6 (North Carolina) to 10 years (e.g., Arkansas, Colorado) (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). Although most states set the upper age limit at 17 years, in some states the upper age is 15 (e.g., Connecticut, North Carolina) or 16 (e.g., Illinois, South Carolina, Texas) (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). Many states have now passed laws that transfer jurisdiction to the adult criminal courts for young people accused of committing certain crimes (usually extremely violent or drug-related offenses).

History of Juvenile Justice

A brief historical review highlights how shifting views of children and the tensions between punishment and rehabilitation have led to the present juvenile justice system. In the 19th century, rapid industrialization and the growth of cities and immigration accompanied a growing and increasingly visible class of urban poor. Children of the poor, viewed as potential paupers, were subject to legal intervention for a variety of behaviors, including activities such as frequenting pool halls and associating with undesirable people. For either such unruly behaviors or for the commission of what would normally be considered crimes, they could be removed from their families and sent to institutions (houses of refuge and, later, reform schools) or “placed out” with rural Midwestern families (Bernard, 1992).

Concerned with the way young people in trouble with the law were treated, child advocates successfully created the first juvenile court in Chicago, in 1899 (Bernard, 1992). By the middle of the 20th century, all states had established juvenile courts. The guiding principle of the juvenile court was parens patriae, that is, the state acting in the place of parents “in the best interests of the child.” Early juvenile court procedures were relatively informal. In place of the criminal court’s notions of trials, verdicts,
and sentencing, the juvenile court instead conducted hearings during which a judge reviewed the facts of the case, came to a decision (a finding not of criminal guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, but of delinquency based on a preponderance of the evidence), and mandated a dispositional plan ostensibly in the best interests of the child.

The early juvenile justice system relied on the discretionary judgment of presumably well-intentioned authorities. As the 20th century progressed, many viewed the unbridled discretion of the juvenile justice system with skepticism, noting inconsistent and harsh treatments afforded to some children. A series of court cases gradually introduced into the juvenile justice system many of the due process protections afforded to adults. These rights included basic due process for a youth being transferred to the adult criminal justice system (Kent v. United States, 1966); the right to notice of charges, legal counsel, questioning of witnesses, and protection against self-incrimination (In re Gault, 1967); and the necessity of establishing guilt beyond a reasonable doubt (In re Winship, 1970). However, the juvenile justice system did not take on all the trappings of the adult system, as other cases upheld some distinctions. Jury trials are not required in juvenile court cases (McKeiver v. Pennsylvania, 1971), and preventive, pretrial detention of juveniles is permitted in some circumstances (Schall v. Martin, 1984). Contemporary critics of the juvenile justice system (e.g., Feld, 1999) argue that despite the increase in due process protections, the juvenile justice system still treats children, especially minority children, inconsistently and ineffectively.

Bernard (1992) has convincingly described the “cycle of juvenile justice,” characterized by periods alternating tough or lenient treatment of delinquents. Because neither approach to juvenile justice appears to solve the problem of delinquency, whichever approach is currently used is blamed for the failure, and the other approach is tried until it, too, is seen as inadequate. And so the cycle continues.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we may be nearing the end of a long “get tough” period of the cycle. The last decade or so has produced “get tough” policies such as transferring increasing numbers of young offenders to the adult criminal justice system, determinate terms of incarceration, and zero tolerance, fueled by fear and an exaggerated sense of the extent of youth violence. Widely publicized events such as the horrendous school shooting at Columbine High School provided the impetus for such retributive approaches.

Stages of the Juvenile Justice System

The juvenile justice system may be best understood as a series of stages at which the fate of a child who has come to the attention of the authorities
is decided by various adults (police, court intake workers, probation officers, prosecutors, judges, correctional administrators, treatment professionals, etc.). Together, these stages constitute the system. Although the options available to various decision makers may vary based on the nature of the complaint and specific state or local policies and resources, some discretion is usually possible. The decision may be to do nothing, to arrive at an informal resolution of some sort, or to proceed to the next stage of the formal juvenile justice system.

Prevention

Delinquency prevention programs, although not part of the juvenile justice system itself, may be usefully discussed as a precursor to the juvenile justice system. Primary prevention programs, such as local parks and recreation activities, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCAs, YWCAs, and many school-based programs, are directed at all young people. Secondary prevention programs target young people “at risk” for delinquency, based on characteristics such as income, neighborhood, or known involvement in minor misbehaviors.

Court Processing

The juvenile justice system only becomes engaged when the police or juvenile court authorities intervene, either at the request of a complainant or through police detection of an offense (see Figure 4.1). The stages of court processing include intake, detention, adjudication, and disposition. At intake, a court official decides whether or not to file a petition for a formal hearing and whether or not to detain a youth prior to court hearings (preadjudication). If the decision is to detain the youth, a detention hearing is held at which a judge decides whether or not to continue the preadjudication detention. There may be several court hearings, although some of these may be collapsed at times, designed to determine the facts of the case (initial hearing), to render a judgment (adjudication hearing), and to decide what to do with the child (disposition hearing). That decision may be to release, place on probation, or commit to the custody of the state for placement in a residential or nonresidential program.

Both informal and formal resolutions at any stage typically involve assigning the youth to a program of some kind. These programs may be categorized as diversion, preadjudication, probation, placement, and aftercare. In some circumstances, to avoid proceeding further into the formal system, the youth and the youth’s family may agree to voluntarily participate in
Figure 4.1  The Juvenile Justice System
SOURCE: Adapted from Indiana Youth Institute (n.d.).
some kind of diversion program, perhaps counseling, and a court official will then agree to dismiss formal charges. Preadjudication programs deal with the youth between the time of arrest and juvenile court disposition. These include confinement in a secure detention facility, or nonsecure alternatives such as home detention, perhaps augmented with electronic monitoring. The main preadjudication concerns are protection of the youth and the community prior to court processing and guaranteeing that the youth will appear in court.

**Disposition**

If the case proceeds to a formal hearing in juvenile court and the youth is adjudicated ("found delinquent"), a disposition follows. Dispositions range from supervised probation, perhaps supplemented with participation in specific treatment programs and/or community service activities, to placement in residential programs of varying degrees of restrictiveness. These latter may be small, relatively open, community-based programs or large, secure institutions often called training schools.

At the dispositional stage, a youth adjudicated delinquent may be assigned to a nonresidential or residential program. Compared with out-of-home placements, in-home programs have far greater potential for incorporating aspects of positive youth development simply because they permit the youth to remain connected to their communities and families. A considerable body of research suggests that in-home programs are at least as effective as residential placements in reducing recidivism, at far less cost (for a recent review, see Loeber & Farrington, 1998). Among the most effective nonresidential programs for children with serious emotional and behavioral problems is multisystemic therapy (MST) (Henggeler, Schoenwald, Borduin, Rowland, & Cunningham 1998). With its emphasis on involving the family and addressing a range of community factors as well as the individual, MST is consistent with several principles of positive youth development.

**Aftercare**

Following residential placement, aftercare programs may help youth reintegrate back into the community. In an ideal world, aftercare would never, or rarely, be necessary because youth would no longer be incarcerated in institutions separated from their families and communities. In the real world, incarceration will always be with us, at least for some. Interestingly, a by-product of the nation’s prison expansion in the last few
decades is a growing recognition that most of those locked up will eventually return to their communities and that reentry challenges need to be addressed (e.g., Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). In the juvenile justice arena, inadequate aftercare has often been cited as a main reason for the high recidivism rates of residential placements such as training schools.

It may be difficult at first to imagine a juvenile court imbued with positive youth development principles; its adversarial process seems antithetical to them. Yet if the courts were to fully embrace their original charge to act “in the best interests” of the youth, then positive youth development principles would become more salient. In any event, the court must perform its functions of fact-finding and disposition of cases. Regarding the former, youth development is probably best served by a commitment to due process. The latter function is the one most amenable to change in ways consistent with positive youth development. Currently, dispositional decisions are made by judges, based on recommendations of probation officers, from a limited menu of available programs. These decisions tend to be driven by a concern for public safety addressed by the level of behavioral control or restrictiveness mandated, and slots available in specific programs. What if these recommendations were instead developed by community teams? Public safety protection would remain a necessary component, but the individualized recommendations would probably result in fewer residential placements and stronger, more effective collaborative community support networks. Coming full circle, the juvenile court might then return to its roots of acting in the best interests of the child (and family and community).

**What Works and What Doesn’t in Juvenile Corrections**

Recidivism rates of juvenile correctional programs are notoriously high, with practice wisdom suggesting that anything better than 50% is good. In the 1970s, a review of research regarding the effectiveness of juvenile correctional programs (Lipton, Martinson, & Wilks, 1975) was commonly mis-perceived as proving that “nothing works.” This pessimistic view has been challenged by several more recent reviews (Andrews et al., 1990; Howell, Krisberg, Hawkins, & Wilson, 1995; Lipsey, 1992; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Mendel, 2000) suggesting that some approaches, appropriately targeted, can effectively reduce recidivism and promote other positive outcomes as well.

A brief summary of recent research on juvenile justice programs reveals the following findings:
• Less than half of juveniles in secure facilities are serious and/or chronic offenders (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).
• Transfers to the adult system are not effective in most cases (Bishop, Frazier, Lanza-Kaduce, & Winner, 1996; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).
• Boot camps (Peters, Thomas, & Zamberlan, 1997) and other “shock incarceration” programs (Lipsey, 1992; Parent, 1989) are not effective for juveniles.
• Probation is more effective than commonly assumed: 54% of males and 73% of females who enter the juvenile justice system never return on new referrals (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).
• Less restrictive settings are at least as effective as incarceration for most offenders, even serious offenders, and cost less (Lipsey, 1992; Loeber & Farrington, 1998).
• Effective intervention programs exist, even for serious offenders; these include interpersonal skills training, cognitive-behavioral treatment and teaching family home programs (Lipsey & Wilson, 1998). Community and family-focused interventions, especially multisystemic therapy (Henggeler et al., 1998), have strong empirical support of effectiveness. When out-of-home placement is necessary, treatment foster care has demonstrated effectiveness, even for children with severe emotional and behavioral disorders (Chamberlain, 2002).
• Aftercare is currently a weak link in the system, although the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) is emerging as a promising national model (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1991; 1998; Altschuler, Armstrong, & MacKenzie, 1999). This model features close collaboration with community service providers, small caseloads, services integrated into the facilities prior to release, and a system of graduated sanctions upon release.

Juvenile Justice and the “Medical Model”

The juvenile justice system is but one of several created to address selected “youth problems.” Other systems include child welfare, mental health, and special education. Each has its perspective on problem assessment and its interventions of choice. Just as physicians diagnose illness and prescribe treatment, human service professionals often see each kind of problem behavior as the manifestation of a specific deficit or dysfunction within the individual, with occasional recognition of environmental influences. Research is designed to isolate specific causes (etiological pathways) of the deficit or dysfunction. Once these are discovered, appropriate “treatments” can be developed and administered. This approach is often termed the medical model.

Sometimes, the particular system that becomes involved seems to be mostly an accident of where the disturbing behavior or condition was observed and/or a function of the family’s resources and awareness of
service options. For example, a child who acts out aggressively at home may be more likely to end up in the mental health system (possibly assigned to special education) than one who behaves similarly in school or in a public place (possibly handled in the juvenile justice system). Depending on the system that is “managing” the case, a young person whose aggressive behavior precipitated intervention may receive one or more of the following: prescribed medication, placement in a psychiatric residential program, placement in a special-needs classroom, or adjudication as delinquent followed by placement on probation or confinement in a juvenile correctional institution.

All traditional human service systems that address youth problem behaviors through this medical model approach serve to further isolate youth from conventional influences. The isolation is often physical (spatial removal from the home or classroom), and it is always at least symbolic in terms of labeling (i.e., the “problem” becomes a pivotal lens through which others think of the youth). Is it really any wonder that positive youth development, which results from positive connections among individuals and between individuals and institutions in the community, is not well served by these systems?

Applications of Progressive Approaches Into the Juvenile Justice System

Researchers who have investigated the causes of youth “problem behaviors” (e.g., delinquency, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, school dropout) over the last few decades have concluded that most of these behaviors have a common or overlapping set of causal influences (Dryfoos, 1990; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). Moreover, the identified causes are not only within the individual but also reflect the influence of family, school, neighborhood, and the broader community. In contrast to the study of medicine, in which most physical diseases are traceable to specific pathogens such as viruses or bacteria, investigation of problem behaviors involves causal influences that operate with less certainty and specificity. Rather than following the medical model, it is more helpful to view problem behaviors ecologically, as occurring in a web of risk and protective factors, in which the presence of risk factors increases the probability of problem behaviors and the presence of protective factors decreases that probability. The presence or absence of problem behaviors, then, is the result of combinations of these factors, which may not have the exact same effect on all individuals at all times.
Risk and Protective Factors

Kirby and Fraser (1997, p. 29) have summarized these risk and protective factors well. At the individual level, psychosocial and biological risk factors include biomedical problems and gender (males are at greater risk). An “easy” temperament, high self-esteem, competence in normative roles, and high intelligence serve as protective factors. Mesolevel (family, school, and neighborhood) risk factors include child maltreatment, interparental conflict, parental psychopathology, and poor parenting, whereas social support, presence of caring adults, positive parent-child relationships, and effective parents provide protection. Macrolevel risk factors include limited educational or employment opportunities, racial discrimination, and poverty; protective factors include the presence of opportunities for education, employment, growth, and achievement. Additional research has demonstrated the cumulative effect of these risk and protective factors on youth outcomes (Pollard, Hawkins, & Arthur, 1999).

Resilience

Interestingly, another set of researchers investigating resilience, or why some people’s life outcomes seem positive despite apparent disadvantages or stresses, have come to similar conclusions about the multiple levels of influences on behavior. In a landmark longitudinal study, for more than 30 years, researchers followed the development of a cohort of children born on the island of Kauai, to trace their pathways from birth to various adult outcomes (Werner & Smith, 1992). These researchers identified many of the same risk factors discussed above. They were also able to identify early influences that enabled some of the high-risk children to succeed, or to “overcome the odds.” These factors included several personal characteristics (e.g., a more easygoing temperament as an infant; more alertness, autonomy, and social orientation as toddlers; more interests and better academic attitudes, effort, and performance; more achievement orientation, assertiveness, and independence) but also included family factors (fewer siblings, fewer prolonged separations from a primary caretaker, a close bond with at least one caregiver) and outside influences as well (e.g., at least one close friend, participation in extracurricular activities).

Other resilience research has examined children who succeeded despite the presence of a variety of risk factors: having parents with mental illness (Anthony, 1987; Worland, Janes, Anthony, McGinnis, & Cass, 1984); experiencing child abuse (Egeland, Jacobvitz, & Sroufe, 1988); and growing up in impoverished and disorganized neighborhoods (Furstenberg, Cook,
Eccles, Elder, & Sameroff, 1999; Gordon & Song, 1994; Long & Vaillant, 1989; Luthar, 1991). Masten (1994) summarizes the resilience research, listing the following factors as promoting resilience:

- Effective parenting; connections to other competent adults; appeal to other people particularly adults; good intellectual skills; areas of talent or accomplishment valued by self and others; self-efficacy, self-worth and hopefulness; religious faith or affiliations; socioeconomic advantages; good schools and other community assets; and good fortune. (p. 14)

The reader will recognize the congruence of these factors with positive youth development.

**Progressive Approaches**

This ecological perspective combined with the cumulative evidence summarized above of what does and does not work have led many to question reliance on incarceration and other “get tough” measures, such as boot camps or “scared straight” deterrence approaches. As alternatives, at least five major progressive approaches have emerged in recent years that are relevant for juvenile justice and potentially amenable to positive youth development principles. Progressive approaches that permit the infusion of youth development principles are not all of the same kind, nor have they all originated from within juvenile justice. They are like paradigms, or narratives, through which juvenile justice professionals and others may view issues and problems and seek solutions in contrast to the prevailing “get tough” narratives.

**Community Prevention**

Community prevention addresses risk and protective factors. Communities That Care (CTC) exemplifies this approach. CTC provides communities with a framework for community mobilization, local assessment of risk and protective factors, and a collection of empirically proven or promising programs that can be tailored to meet specific communities’ needs (Hawkins, Catalano, & Associates, 1992; Hawkins et al., 1992). CTC has been adopted by several communities, including several counties in Pennsylvania. A recent evaluation of the Pennsylvania trial showed CTC counties with modestly reduced delinquency rates, with the caveats that implementation was inconsistent and that longer follow-up times may provide a better test (Greenberg & Feinberg, 2002). The CTC model of
prevention also serves as an integral part of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP) comprehensive strategy (Howell, 1995; Wilson & Howell, 1993) discussed earlier in this chapter. CTC, with its emphasis on risk and protective factors at the micro-, meso-, and macrolevels, is highly compatible with a positive youth development perspective. Other examples of specific prevention programs with empirical support may be found in the Blueprints for Violence Prevention (Mihalic, Irwin, Elliott, Fagan, & Hansen 2001).

Some feel that targeted prevention and diversion programs have limited prospects for success due to the unintended consequences of “net widening,” that is, expansion of formal justice system intervention to lower-risk populations (Austin & Krisberg, 1981; Macallair & Roche, 2001). Early intervention, prevention, and diversion, then, may unwittingly make it more likely that young people in such programs will have further contact with the juvenile justice system. Nevertheless, communities that adopt a strategy such as CTC can avoid these negative side effects by actively applying the positive youth development perspective. Their programming then will be directed at reducing risks and enhancing protection at the community level, rather than at monitoring and changing individuals. The CTC community mobilization strategy parallels that used in many other comprehensive initiatives promoting positive youth development. Although this strategy is time-consuming and laborious, it offers an opportunity for inclusion of a full range of community participants. Thus, a community that mobilizes initially for delinquency prevention may have taken the first steps in the paradigm shift towards the positive youth development perspective.

**Balanced Approach**

The “balanced approach” (Maloney, Romig, & Armstrong, 1988) seeks to transcend the debate over punishment versus rehabilitation by recognizing that the juvenile justice system must pursue a balance among three goals: accountability, competency development, and public safety protection. Although it was originally developed for probation, the balanced approach can be applied to juvenile justice more generally.

**Comprehensive Strategy**

In the mid-1990s, the OJJDP issued a comprehensive strategy that incorporated both delinquency prevention and evidence-based juvenile justice interventions (Howell, 1995; Wilson & Howell, 1993). This strategy includes using validated risk and needs assessments, developing a continuum
of evidence-based program alternatives, limiting the use of incarceration, and investing the resulting cost savings into prevention. A number of jurisdictions have followed the lead of federal funding to implement elements of this strategy.

**Restorative Justice**

Drawing on work initiated in Australia and New Zealand, restorative justice advocates have proposed an alternative paradigm for justice (Bazemore & Terry, 1997; Bazemore & Walgrave, 1999). In the current retributive system, the state acts on behalf of the community by punishing offenders. In contrast, a restorative justice approach seeks a mediated solution between offenders and victims to restore the community as far as possible to its condition prior to the transgression.

In a restorative approach, dispositions are more accurately viewed as mediated resolutions in which the offender, victim, and their representatives all have input into the outcome. An example may be found in Denver’s Community Accountability Board, described in Box 4.1.

**Box 4.1 Community Accountability Board, Denver (CO) District Attorney’s Office**

The Community Accountability Board (CAB) Program implements restorative justice values and principles by providing a forum for neighborhood residents to meet with juvenile offenders who commit property-related crimes in six target areas encompassing 26 Denver neighborhoods. Through the CABS, community stakeholders conduct group conferences with the juvenile, his or her parents, and other interested parties to develop ways of repairing the harm caused by the offense, holding the youth accountable to the communities that have been victimized by their crimes and building on the strengths and competencies of the juvenile.

Community representatives gain a sense of justice through participation. By personalizing the victim, The CAB program gives the offender a sense of the degree of damage the offense caused. The CAB then works with the youth and his or her family to develop solutions that not only hold the youth accountable but also build his or her sense of belonging in the community. These solutions are formalized
in a CAB agreement that is signed by the youth, parents, and the CAB members present.

The solutions recommended by the CAB go beyond traditional punitive sentences to plans that increase the youth’s competency and attachment to the community. CAB volunteers share in the responsibility of supporting the juvenile’s completion of the CAB agreement and often work directly with the juvenile as part of the agreement. Everyone, including the juvenile, agrees to the terms of the CAB agreement.

**Teen courts** represent another promising way of incorporating some positive youth development and restorative justice principles (Butts, Buck, & Coggeshall, 2002). In these programs, young, usually first-time offenders charged with nonviolent offenses may be diverted from formal court processing. The offender and his or her family agree to abide by the “sentence” imposed by a teen court; in return, the formal delinquency charge is dropped. In teen courts, young people, either volunteers or former offenders themselves, fill roles analogous to jurors, bailiff, court clerk, prosecutor, defense attorney, and sometimes even judge. Acknowledging that teen courts have potential value in encouraging volunteerism and enhancing skills in the teen volunteers, a national evaluation of teen courts in four sites also reported moderately favorable results in terms of offender recidivism (Butts et al., 2002).

**System of Care/Wraparound Services**

Perhaps the best examples of assessments and interventions based on the ecological framework are *system of care* and *wraparound* services. Some professionals in several service arenas began to recognize the similarities between children who had appeared in the various service systems and noticed that the same children and families often appeared in more than one system. The National Institute of Mental Health funded the Child and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP), the first major attempt to integrate services across systems. The system of care approach (Stroul & Friedman, 1986) emerged from this initiative. Services in this approach are (a) strengths based, driven by the needs and preferences of the child and the family; (b) provided through a multiagency collaborative environment; and (c) culturally competent (Duchnowski, Kutash, & Friedman, 2002).
Whereas payments for traditional services come from system-specific funding streams, a system of care approach pools monies from these streams and makes them accessible to a case manager according to the needs identified by the collaborative plan.

Wraparound services, developed over the last 15 years, take the system of care elements even further (Burchard, Bruns, & Burchard, 2002; Goldman, 1999; VanDenBerg & Grealish, 1996). In the words of Burchard and colleagues (2002), “The philosophy that spawned wraparound is relatively simple: Identify the community services and supports that a family needs and provide them as long as they are needed” (p. 69). Wraparound places an even greater emphasis on involving children and families as partners in intervention planning, building on strengths, drawing on informal supports as well as the professional service community, and maintaining an unconditional commitment to provide support as long as needed (Goldman, 1999). Although developed initially by mental health systems, wraparound in practice has often involved the juvenile justice system as well (Franz, 1994; 2001; Northey, Primer, & Christensen, 1997). Indeed, wraparound may be one of the most promising ways to incorporate positive youth development principles into juvenile justice practice. The history, structure, and culture of juvenile justice, however, present challenges to those who would introduce wraparound or other progressive approaches into juvenile justice.

Taken together, these approaches signal a potential shift in juvenile justice toward a more ecological view of the causes and correlates of delinquency, an emphasis on competency development, and recognition that the evidence base favors community-based, strengths-focused, integrative services. It is no accident that the most effective or promising programs involve the families of the youth, maintain or reestablish connectedness to the community, provide some continuity in relationships, and help youth develop social skills. These characteristics echo the themes and principles of positive youth development. Herein lies the opportunity for building the bridge between juvenile justice and positive youth development.

Nonresidential programs are amenable to the wraparound approach. Probation departments could adopt or be a collaborative participant in a wraparound approach that tailors interventions to the unique individual and incorporates many of the principles of positive youth development. Several communities have developed wraparound programs in recent years. An example is the Dawn Project in Indianapolis, described in Box 4.2, which draws about one third of its referrals from the juvenile court.

There are also creative ways to engage probation youth in activities or settings promoting positive youth development. A study in Pennsylvania suggests
Box 4.2  The Dawn Project, Indianapolis (IN)

“Cal” spent most of his young life in the “system,” including more
than 30 placements and a long history with juvenile court. Although
a previous independent living program had been unsuccessful, the
Dawn Project\textsuperscript{2} team realized during its strength-based discovery
process that Cal was determined to live independently; the team also
knew that it would be able to offer any support needed to help the
transition go smoothly. Cal did move into his own apartment and,
since then, has learned to use public transportation, is gainfully
employed, and is building relationships with people in the community
who will continue to be supportive in his life. Cal knows how to
access Dawn team members in an emergency; he’s been staying out of
trouble and enjoying his independence.

The Dawn Project is a wraparound service program in Indianapolis
responsible for developing a coordinated, family-centered, community-
based system of services that builds and enhances the strengths
already possessed by families and surrogate families of children with
serious emotional disturbances. It involves a collaboration among
three state and three county agencies: the state Division of Mental
Health and Addiction (DMHA), Division of Family and Children
(DFC), Department of Education, the Marion County Office of
Family and Children, Superior Court (Juvenile Division), and Mental
Health Association.

A managed care organization created specifically for this project
assigns a service coordinator to each family, who convenes a service
coordination and planning team (including the family and other
involved individuals). The team develops a service plan tailored to the
individual needs of each child and family. The service coordinator is
responsible for authorizing payment and assessing progress toward
the goals of the service plan. Services are paid from a pool of funds,
available on a capitated rate basis, from three of the participating
agencies. About one third of the referrals to the Dawn Project come
from the juvenile court. Results from the first several years of the
Dawn Project show reduced reliance on residential placements and
reduced costs. The program has received federal support for continu-
ation and expansion and serves as a model for replication in several
sites in Indiana.
that probation services provided directly in schools are more effective than regular probation (Griffin, 1999). The Unity Soccer Clinic, described in Box 4.3, developed by the Santa Cruz Probation Department, clearly embodies several principles of positive youth development (safety and structure, opportunities to belong and for skill building, support for efficacy and mattering). The probation youth who serve as soccer clinic staff gain valuable, potentially marketable skills, are empowered by the control they have in the clinic, and gain a sense of usefulness by serving younger children.

Although residential programs, especially detention and training schools, are often overused (Schwartz & Barton, 1994; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999), there will always be some circumstances in which a young person must be held securely prior to court hearings or after adjudication. A classic study (Haney, Banks, & Zimbardo, 1973) suggested that the situational role demands of “prisoner” and “guard” create dehumanizing behavior, even in typical college students. Certainly, such behavior may be found in many juvenile detention centers and training schools, as well as in adult prisons. Conditions of confinement are often atrocious, and overcrowding is common (Parent et al., 1994; Snyder & Sickmund, 1999). Such conditions and behaviors clearly are not conducive to the promotion of positive youth development, but these may not be inevitable.

Effective intake screening based on rational criteria and case-monitoring systems can prevent overcrowding by limiting incarceration to those for whom it may be appropriate and by reducing unnecessarily long stays (Schwartz & Barton, 1994; Wiebush, Baird, Krisberg, & Onek, 1995). Careful staff hiring and training in youth development principles can promote more positive, respectful interactions. Programming in secure facilities should provide safety and structure while providing competency development opportunities, including meaningful interactions with the community.

An example is the partnership between a juvenile detention center, community parks and recreation department, and local arts council in Columbus, Indiana, described in Box 4.4. In this “Mural Project,” home detention and shelter youth along with other young people participate in the planning and implementation of a community arts project. The goals of this project are to engage young people and other community members in the production of a collaborative work of art that enriches the community and to set a standard for creative partnering among other local agencies. A national initiative to encourage the use of the arts to prevent or reduce delinquency has been evaluated and found promising (Clawson & Coolbaugh, 2001).

In addition to finding creative ways to involve incarcerated youth in community activities beyond the walls, secure facilities can bring the community in. The requirement that detention centers and training schools
Box 4.3  Unity Soccer Clinic, Santa Cruz (CA) Probation Department

The Unity Soccer Clinic\(^3\) is a summer job program that had its beginnings in the participation of probation youth in a city indoor soccer league. Unity fielded a co-ed team of teens deemed by the court to be “at risk of out of home placement.” The profiles of these youth included significant substance abuse, particularly heroin, and gang entrenchment. The activity was chosen because of its popularity with the youth, the prosocial nature of the sport, and because it helped fill otherwise unsupervised free time. In 1999, the probation department partnered with Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to pay 10 youth to put on a summer soccer clinic through the Watsonville Parks and Recreation and Community Services Department. The youth first participated in 2 weeks of training in teaching techniques, specific soccer games and drills, conflict resolution skills, and first aid. Following an example set by the director of a nearby soccer camp, the youth planned out each day of the 3-week clinic. They divided up the responsibilities for leading each activity from welcome to clean-up.

During a final week, they practiced connecting their newly acquired experience with future employment possibilities. They drew up resumes, practiced filling out job applications, and took turns in mock interviews. They toured the Police Athletic League facilities and learned about recreation-related high school course work. Their written evaluations reflected a very positive experience. Throughout the 2-week training, 3-week clinic and 1-week “next steps,” this group of chronic offenders had no new offenses and only two probation violations. More than $225 in restitution was paid. Four of the 10 participants found jobs during the following school year. Five of the original 10 clinic coaches are now off of probation entirely.

What had begun with league play as a way to increase community safety during nonschool hours soon became one of the most complete examples of balanced and restorative justice practice in the Juvenile Probation Department. Unity Soccer Clinic developed new competencies and offered a way for young offenders to be accountable to their victims by paying restitution and to their community by serving its children.
provide education is one opportunity. The same detention center in Columbus, Indiana, for example, is one of the few that provides a full day of school, 5 days a week, year round to all detention residents. The detention education program is considered a satellite program of the school corporation, allowing the corporation to include the youth in their head count (for funding purposes) (P. Clark, personal communication, May 20, 2002).

The detention center in Columbus makes a conscious effort in its programming to reflect the concepts in the CUBE model (Boys & Girls Clubs of America, 2000) of youth development (P. Clark, personal communication,

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**Box 4.4  Mural Project, Columbus, IN**

Youth in the juvenile justice system, youth with disabilities, and young people in underserved areas of Columbus, Indiana, create large-scale works of art within the city parks system in The Mural Project. The Columbus Area Arts Council, in partnership with the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department and the Bartholomew County Youth Services Center (a juvenile detention center), administers this multiyear youth development. Youth collectively engage in brainstorming, collaboration, negotiation, planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation—valuable life skills for all citizens. Returning participants are encouraged to take leadership and mentoring roles.

**Project 1: “The Calm at the Center”** *(Summer, 2000).* Just across Haw Creek from the Columbus Regional Hospital, Lincoln Park is visible and accessible to patients, visitors, hospital staff, and the general public. With the location in mind, young people and their adult partners painted the first mural on the east wall of the handball court facing the hospital. Two artists, 17 teenagers, and seven Youth Services counselors created a bold, colorful work that reflects ideas and images pulled from sketchbooks, group work, “top 10” lists, and intimate conversations.

**Project 2: “Flight”** *(Summer, 2001)* at Jolie Crider Memorial Skate Park. The skate park, recently built as a result of a youth-led initiative to honor the memory of a high school student, seemed the perfect location for the second mural. During 2 weeks of painting, the project involved 25 at-risk teens and 12 Youth Services employees, in addition to skaters, Parks Department and Arts Council staff, and a large number of community volunteers. Three teens from the 2000 project returned to lend a hand.
Summary and Conclusions

The preceding analysis yields two recommendations for the integration of positive youth development and juvenile justice. First, those who would advocate broad-based, community strategies to promote positive youth development should not ignore the differential and inequitable distribution of risks and supports in contemporary United States communities. Their strategies must include ways to address these inequities and truly embrace all children and families. These approaches should also involve effective collaborations with professionals from the various human service systems, including juvenile justice.

Second, the juvenile justice system, though dealing with the most troubled and troubling young people in our communities, should incorporate the fundamental principles of positive youth development in its decision making and programming. The examples highlighted in this chapter are but a few ideas of how this can be done. The juvenile justice system must give more than lip service to the “competency development” portion of its threefold mission and resist the politically expedient tendency to maximize only accountability (the contemporary code term for punishment) and public safety protection (through behavioral supervision and restrictive placements). Competency development means much more than recidivism reduction. It means attending to supports and opportunities that can foster positive life outcomes. This can best be done by including youth and their families in planning, building on existing strengths of the young people, and incorporating the community, both in terms of informal supports and professional services, as appropriate for each individual youth.

Just as any specific human behavioral act can be viewed as the combination of an individual's ability to perform the act plus a motivation to do so, a combination of a valid mechanism and a political commitment are necessary for any innovation or major change to succeed. This chapter has attempted to describe some evidence-based, conceptual underpinnings for
building a bridge between positive youth development and juvenile justice. Of course, that bridge also spans the other systems affecting children and families, such as education, child welfare, and mental health.

Generating the political will to build this bridge is a more daunting challenge. It will take both widespread and persistent education of all community stakeholders regarding the positive youth development perspective, the theoretical and research bases on risk/protection and resilience, the evidence regarding what does and doesn’t work in juvenile justice, the promise of balanced and restorative justice, and wraparound approaches, to name several key elements.

Training and cross-training of professionals who work with children and families will be important. In addition, fiscal incentives will be required in order to change the way human services systems do business. Federal initiatives such as CASSP and the OJJDP comprehensive strategy are examples of attempts to redirect resources towards more promising models. Even greater integration across service sectors at all levels, from local communities to states and even federal agencies, will be required. Above all, what is needed is a sincere public commitment to the well-being and healthy development of all children, including those in trouble with the law.

Notes


3. The description of this program is excerpted from information provided by T. Spencer, Assistant Division Director, Santa Cruz County Probation, Santa Cruz, CA (personal communication, May 31, 2002).

4. This program description was excerpted from information provided by K. Shrode, Columbus Area Arts Council (personal communication, May 28, 2002).

References


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