



THE EXPERIENCES OF EARLY
ADOLESCENTS IN FOSTER CARE
IN NEW YORK CITY
Analysis of the 1994 Cohort

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December 2001

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ACS
NYC Administration for
Children's Services

Acknowledgements

This research is produced in conjunction with, and through a grant provided by, the New York City Administration for Children's Services. The authors acknowledge the contributions of Benjamin Charvat, Research Director of ACS, and Eileen Sullivan, Research Director of Vera, as well as the editorial assistance of Russ Immarigeon and Jill Pope.

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Executive Summary

Child welfare agencies traditionally work with young children who enter foster care because of abuse or neglect. Statistics on New York City's shrinking foster care population show, however, that adolescents are an increasing proportion of the children in care—comprising 43 percent of the foster care population in June 2000. Adolescents are at a volatile time in their lives and often enter foster care for behavioral reasons as well as abuse and neglect. They also have fewer placement and permanency options than young children because family placements and adoptions tend to decline with age.

As part of its foster care planning process, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) asked the Vera Institute of Justice to analyze current outcomes for the adolescents in its care. This report describes the experiences of the 2,019 children who entered foster care as early adolescents—aged 11 to 15—in 1994, and follows their foster care experiences through May 1999. The data for the analysis comes primarily from the ACS Child Care Review System.

More early adolescents entered care in 1994 because of PINS (persons in need of supervision) petitions and voluntary agreements than because of abuse and neglect. The children's experiences in care varied by these reasons for entry, but ACS met its stability and permanency goals for most of the children in each of the groups. Most occupied only one or two placements during their stay in care, had been returned to their families before the end of the study period, and had not reentered foster care. Each of the groups, however, also pose distinct challenges to ACS policy and programming.

The PINS entrants typically had short lengths of stay, with a median of two months, before being discharged to their families. About a fourth of them reentered care, usually within a year and often within a few months, and their second stay tended to last longer than their first. About one third of PINS youth can be characterized as the 'quick turnarounds' and another 25 percent as the 'repeaters.' The prevalence of 'quick turnarounds' suggests that some families may be using foster care as a type of respite care. Taking their length of stay into account, PINS children were more likely than the other adolescent groups to be absent without leave and to be admitted to juvenile detention—48 percent of them were AWOL, and 9 percent were admitted to detention, during their time in care.

Although voluntarily placed youth are frequently compared to the PINS cases, their experiences in foster care are quite different. The voluntarily placed group had much longer lengths of stay, with a median of almost one and a half years, and they were much less likely to reenter care. Voluntary placements are the most costly to ACS because these children spend relatively long periods in the system and two thirds of their days in care are spent in congregate placements, the most expensive type.

Children entering because of an abuse and neglect petition—about 30 percent of the study group—had the longest lengths of stay, with a median of over two years. About 40 percent of these children had three or more placements while they were in care. At the same time, they were the least likely of the adolescent groups to be absent without leave or to be admitted to detention during their stay. Although only 13 percent of the 1994 cohort were 'longtermers'—children who remained in care for the entire study period—half of them were children who entered care because of abuse and neglect.

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Introduction

Even in the best of circumstances, early adolescence is an awkward and volatile time in the lives of young people. Early adolescents who enter foster care must face additional burdens, including the trauma, conditions or events that resulted in their placement in foster care and their adjustment to life in care. To better understand the experiences of these young people, the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) asked the Vera Institute of Justice to examine the foster care experiences of a group of children who first entered care as early adolescents.

Children between the ages of 11 and 15—early adolescents—who are in foster care, deserve special attention for several reasons. As the foster care population shrinks in New York City, adolescents make up a larger proportion of children in care than they did in the early 1990s (see Chart 1). While early adolescents made up one in five (11,112 of 53,539) children in care on any given day in 1991, that proportion rose to one in four (9,487 of 37,356) children by June 1, 2000. Children 16 and over also increased their share of the foster care population from 9 percent to 18 percent over this period. The same pattern is seen when looking at the age of children first entering care during the 1990's (see Chart 2).

Adolescents consume an even larger share of ACS resources than their incidence in the foster care population would suggest. They occupy congregate care, rather than family-based placements at a far higher rate than their younger counterparts and congregate care is the more expensive alternative.

Early adolescence is also a time when many mental illnesses and behavioral disorders manifest themselves, and the increased physical size of these youth makes them more difficult to control (Broering and Irwin 1987, Mechanic 1983). Contact with delinquent peers and poor school performance also often become more apparent during this time (Wasserman, Miller, Pinner, and Jaramillo, 1996; Wasserman and Miller 1998; Hawkins and Catalano, 1993). Since some of these problems require services outside of its control, ACS spends a portion of its resources maintaining ongoing relationships with other agencies, including the Board of Education, and the Departments of Health, Mental Health and Juvenile Justice.

As early adolescents require an increasing share of ACS resources, the agency also has fewer placement and permanency options available for them. Family based placements and adoption rates decline with age (Ross, 2000). If family preservation efforts fail, independent living is often the only permanency option available. In working with the Vera Institute to trace the experiences of early adolescents in its care, ACS expects to be in a better position to evaluate its current policies and programs and to plan for any improvements that are indicated. The agency also expects that by focusing

on the early, rather than the older, adolescent population, it will be able to identify the policies and programs that best meet the children's needs before their problems become even more serious.

This report builds upon a Vera Institute report, *Foster Care Outcomes of the 1994 ACS Entry Cohort: A Preliminary Report* (Ross, Wamsley and Kyriakakis, 2000), that analyzed selected outcomes for early adolescents in foster care, finding that the outcomes varied by the reasons that children entered care. Outcomes such as length of stay in care, number of foster care spells, and number of absences without permission (AWOLs) differed depending on whether the children came into care as Abused and Neglected, Persons in Need of Supervision, or Voluntary Placements.¹ This report reflects additional analysis of the reasons early adolescents enter foster care and of their experiences or outcomes during and after care. The outcomes, analyzed for the 1994 early adolescent cohort overall and by each reason for entry subgroup are:

Length of stay, defined as the number of days children spend in foster care before they are discharged. We adjust this measure to account for the effect of AWOLs and trial discharges. We also calculated length of stay for those children who were reunited with their families at the end of their stay in care.

Stability, which includes the number of different placements the children occupied during their first spell in care and across all spells, the number of children going AWOL and number of AWOL events, the length of time between placement and first AWOL, and the number of children admitted to juvenile detention facilities while they were in care.

Permanency, which includes the children's destinations at their last discharge, the number of their reentries into care, the time from discharge to reentry, and the changes in reason for entry across foster care spells.

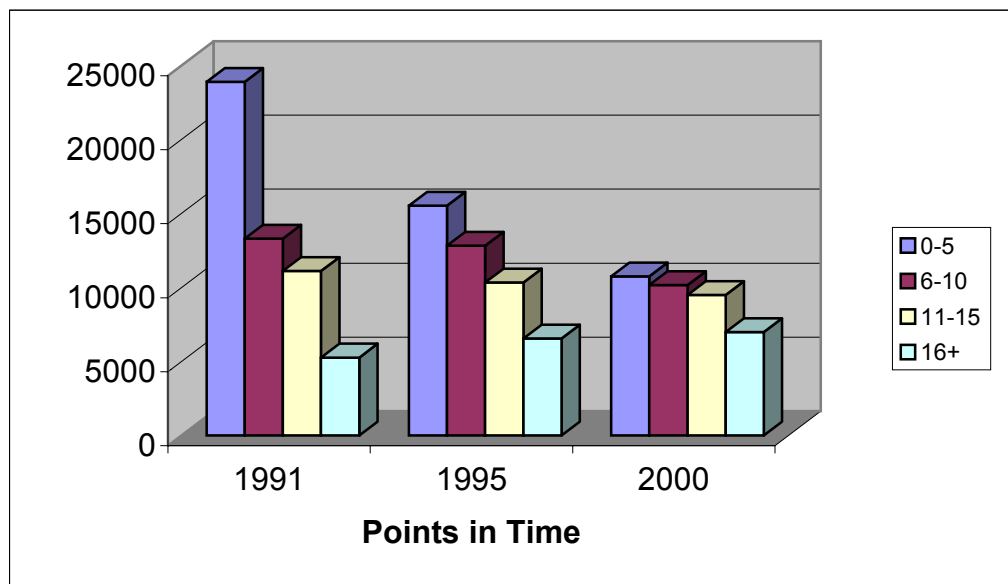
Cost of placement, based on the children's length of stay and level of care (foster boarding home, kinship, congregate care).

These outcome measures reflect the goals that ACS established for the entire foster care program in its 1996 reform plan. ACS goals are to reduce the length of time children spend in care, their movement among placements, and their reentries into care. The measures also reflect the national goals established for child welfare agencies throughout

¹ A small number of early adolescents also enter foster care as juvenile delinquents. Because their numbers are so small, we do not discuss this group in the report but include the CCRS data on them in the tables.

the country. Under the terms of the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Department of Health and Human Services has set forth the measures it intends to use to assess the performance of states in achieving national child welfare goals (DHHS, 2000). The measures include length of stay before reunification with family, number of different placements during a stay in care, and number of reentries into care. The ACS and federal goals apply to foster care systems as a whole, including children who enter at all ages and for all reasons. The purpose of this report is to describe the outcomes for those children who enter care as early adolescents and for a variety of specific reasons. Outcomes for these children will differ from those obtained for children who enter care as infants or at very young ages. ACS expects that the analysis in this report will not only help them to better understand, and plan for, the early adolescents in its care but also to determine the specific outcomes that are appropriate and realistic for this population. A specific goal for family reunification or adoption, for example, that is appropriate for infants entering care may not be appropriate for adolescents. Moreover, as adolescents comprise an increasing share of the City's foster care population, the overall agency goals will have to reflect appropriate and realistic goals for this group.

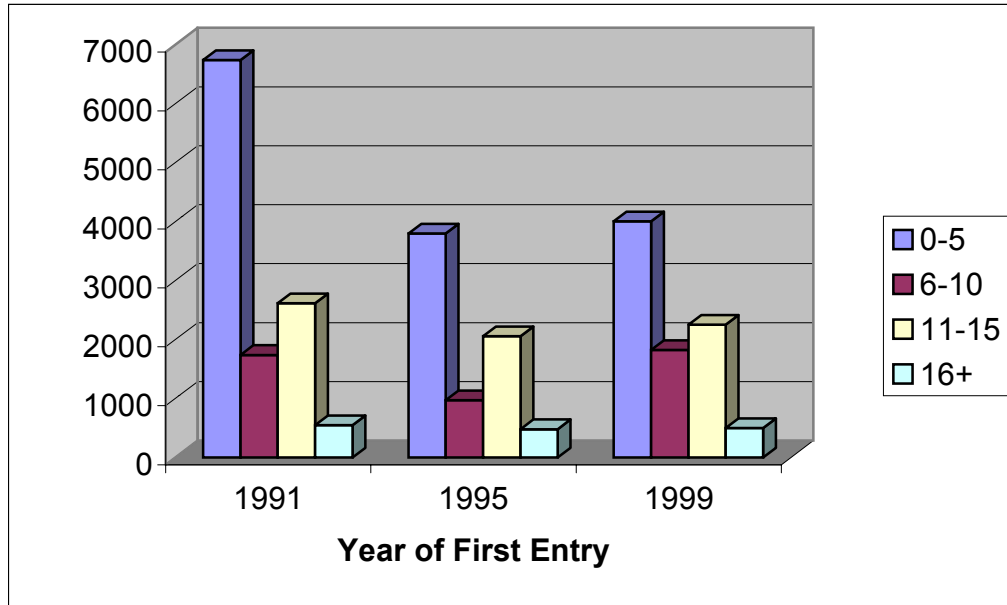
Chart 1: Age Distribution of Foster Care Population, Sept. 1, 1991 & 95 and June 1, 2000



Data Source: Child Care Review System (CCRS).

Note: Charts 1 and 2 include youth listed in the CCRS as placed with OCFS, approximately 250 to 600 cases each year.

Chart 2: Age Distribution of Entry Cohorts, 1991, 95 and 99



How Early Adolescents Enter Foster Care

Most young children enter foster care on Article 10 abuse/neglect petitions filed by ACS in the Family Court. In 1994, over 90 percent of the children who entered care at age 10 or younger entered on Article 10 petitions. The petitions usually arise out of a complaint made by a neighbor or a mandated reporter, such as a teacher, doctor, or social worker. If an investigation substantiates the report, a Family Court judge may place the family under supervision, order preventive services, or place some or all of the family's children in foster care. A Family Court judge must review Article 10 placements once a year.

Early adolescents, in contrast, have additional pathways to foster care that are only infrequently used by younger children: voluntary agreements and status offenses (as well as juvenile delinquency which is rarely used). Historically, child welfare researchers have paid little attention to youth who entered foster care for reasons other than abuse and neglect. As we will show, however, the reason an early adolescent enters care influences the legal requirements surrounding the placement, the time a youth stays in care, and other important measures. In 1994, children ages 11 to 15 years accounted for 24 percent of all first-time entries. The same group, however, accounted for 94 percent of

PINS entries, and 43 percent of voluntary entries (see Table 1). Only 29 percent of early adolescents entered due to Article 10 proceedings, accounting for 11 percent of all Article 10 entries. The early adolescent group, then, enters foster care for distinctly different reasons than their younger peers.

Table 1: Reasons for Entry, 1994 Cohort

1994 Cohort	Entries Ages 11-15		All other entries		Ages 11-15 Share
<i>Reason for Entry</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
Article 10					
Abuse	45	2%	214	3%	17%
Neglect	387	19%	3,931	63%	9%
Undifferentiated*	144	7%	705	11%	17%
Subtotal	576	29%	4850	78%	11%
PINS	666	33%	44	1%	94%
Delinquency	14	1%	1	0%	93%
Voluntary Agreement	482	24%	647	10%	43%
Uncategorized					
No Legal Activity	162	8%	360	6%	31%
Unable to Determine	119	6%	321	5%	27%
Subtotal	281	14%	681	11%	29%
Totals	2019	100%	6,223	100%	24%

* We were able to determine that children entered care under an Article 10 petition but the database did not provide enough information to determine whether the original allegations involved charges of abuse or neglect.

Voluntary Agreements

Under New York State Social Service Law §384-a, a parent or legal guardian may voluntarily transfer the custody of a child to a child welfare agency, pending the approval of a judge. Parents may voluntarily place a child in care for many reasons. Parents may conclude that poverty, mental health issues, substance abuse, or other problems have diminished their capacity to care for their children. Abandonment or the death of parents can also lead to voluntary agreements that place children into foster care. In some cases, children may have developmental or physical disabilities that families can no longer handle. According a recent Vera Institute of Justice study of ACS case records, however,

disobedience and other behavior problems are the most common causes for voluntary placements of children (Armstrong, Finck, and Conger, 1997).

Armstrong et al. (1997) also found that, in some cases, voluntary agreements were used when placements lapsed. An Article 10 placement lapses if a Family Court judge has not reviewed the case after one year. Without this review, the child welfare agency lost legal authority to keep a child in care, as well as any claim to reimbursement from the state and federal governments. If when a placement lapsed, a parent who was unwilling or unable to care for a child signed a voluntary agreement, the placement became legal. Since 1997, ACS has taken several steps to prevent Article 10 placements from lapsing. To immediately address the problem, ACS reviewed court records to identify cases that had lapsed or were about to lapse, and subsequently filed requests for extensions. To address the longer-term issue, ACS implemented a system to flag cases nearing the deadline for judicial review. The problem of lapsed placements does not impact the analyses below, which primarily examine first time entries into care.

Status Offenders/ PINS

New York State Family Court Act §712(a) creates a special class of youth called “persons in need of supervision” (PINS). This law defines PINS as “a person less than 16 years of age who is truant, incorrigible, ungovernable or habitually disobedient and beyond the lawful control of a parent.”² Generically, these cases are referred to as “status offenders” because the actions of the youth are not criminal or delinquent, but of concern to the court due to the youth’s status as a juvenile. Though the police, school officials, or neighbors may initiate PINS proceedings, parents usually start the process by filling out PINS intake forms with the Department of Probation. In New York City, this action makes a youth eligible for a variety of diversion programs that attempt to address the problems faced by the family and the child. Diversion from the Family Court also keeps youth out of foster care, which requires a court order.

Most judges resist finding a youth “guilty” in PINS cases. In the past six years, the Probation Department opened between 5,000 and 6,000 PINS cases each year, but Probation Department officials estimate that fewer than five percent of these cases result in a formal finding that a youth is guilty of being a PINS. Such a finding becomes a mark on a child’s record, and often results in permanent foster care placement. If a judge decides against ordering diversion services or if diversion fails, the court can, in the short term, remand the child to foster care and schedule another hearing to review the case. If the parent misses a hearing, the judge may dismiss the case. In those cases that result in a finding of guilty, multiple hearings may occur before a final decision is made.

² New York State’s eligibility age for PINS will include all children under the age of 18 effective November 1, 2001.

Juvenile Delinquents

New York State law defines a juvenile delinquent as a young person between the ages of seven and 15 who is charged with committing an act that if committed by an adult would be considered a crime. Family Court judges hear juvenile delinquency cases, and if they find the youth delinquent, they may order probation or confinement in facilities for juvenile delinquents that operate under the direct supervision of the New York State Office for Children and Family Services (OCFS). In rare situations, judges order foster care placement. Delinquency cases are distinct from juvenile offenders, who are youth ages 13, 14, or 15 years old charged with committing one of 15 specific felonies. Adult court judges hear juvenile offender cases, but youth are not placed in foster care as a result of these proceedings.

Research Methods

Our study sample consists of all 11 to 15 year-olds who entered foster care for the first time in 1994. We tracked these youth through May 1, 1999. The 1994 entry group allows us to identify patterns in outcomes over a time period that is relevant to current practice and not distorted by the great spike in New York City's foster care census that took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Wulczyn, Brunner, and George 1999).

We limited the upper end of the age spectrum to 15 years of age because New York State delinquency and status offense statutes apply only to children below age 16. As our discussion of Table 1 shows, this age range also matches our theoretical division between young children who enter foster care primarily due to abuse or neglect and early adolescents that enter foster care mainly for other reasons. Though the start of adolescence depends heavily on the children involved, we believe this age range identifies a reasonably distinct group.

This study is a cohort analysis (Norval, 1977). It identifies a group that experiences an intervention, in this case entry into foster care, at about the same time and tracks members of the group over time. Cohort data better reflect the length of time a typical child spends in care as opposed to point in time data which contain a greater percentage of children with longer lengths of stay in the system (Goerge, Wulczyn, and Fanshel, 1994). Cohort analysis also follows children who are experiencing the same institutional and policy systems, giving researchers some control over institutional and policy variables.

The data for the study come primarily from the Child Care Review System (CCRS), ACS's main foster care database.³ We used CCRS records to obtain the following information on children in care: age, gender and race; reasons for entry into care; changes in status (for example, entries into and exits from care, transfers to new placements, and AWOLs); permanency goals (for example, return to parents, adoptions, independent living); and reason for discharge.

To examine the experiences of the cohort in the juvenile justice system, we used entries into the juvenile detention facilities operated by the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). This data contains information about all youth who entered juvenile detention from January 1, 1994 through September 1, 1999. The database shows when a young person went from detention to juvenile prison facilities operated by OCFS. We matched records from the CCRS and the DJJ databases to identify children involved in both systems. For detained foster children, we checked to see if they went to OCFS (see Appendix B).

We first identified all children who entered foster care for the first time in 1994. We then eliminated children not in the 11-15 age group, and youth with "DFY" as the agency in their initial placement. DFY (Division for Youth) is the predecessor agency to OCFS. Under an accounting arrangement established in the 1980s, New York City's child welfare agency pays for these placements. These youth are not in foster care, but are sentenced to OCFS, which has case management responsibilities. Thus, we eliminated them from our analysis.

The CCRS does not report specific reasons for entry into foster care. Instead, records contain the legal activities for each child, from which a reason for entry can be derived. In brief, we determined the reason for entry into foster care by relying on docket number codes and legal activity records that show a transfer of custody or a remand to care. In this process, we made a number of assumptions, but we were not able to identify a reason for entry for every child. Appendix A provides a detailed discussion of this process and the assumptions we used in assigning reasons for entry.

The primary weakness of the analysis involves this data on reason for entry. As Table 1 indicates, we could not determine a reason for entry for almost 14 percent of children in the 1994 cohort. The CCRS database recorded that these children had no legal activities or it did not contain enough legal information to determine a reason for entry. We believe that CCRS does not contain legal activities for some youth because New York State sealed their records. In addition, the recording of legal activities prior to 1996 is an acknowledged problem in the CCRS. ACS has since taken several measures to improve the quality of this data.

³ Child Care Review System [SAS]. Fred Wulczyn. May 1999 ed. Chicago Chapin Hall Center for Children; 1999 CD-ROM.

ACS’s Quality Improvement Unit examined a sample of 50 cases that had no legal activities. They found that 13, or 26 percent of them, were PINS cases, but they were not able to identify a reason for entry for the remaining cases. We did not redistribute the children in the “no legal activity” category into a specific reason for entry but kept them together with the “unable to determine” group as “uncategorized.” We examined the uncategorized children as a separate reason for entry group, and included their outcomes alongside the outcomes of known reason for entry groups throughout the report. The outcomes of the uncategorized group did not consistently mirror those of any other group. Furthermore, in some instances, the outcomes for the uncategorized group differed significantly from all other groups, particularly the group’s length of stay in foster care.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

Early adolescents who entered foster care in 1994 were predominantly Black and Hispanic, over half were girls, and they were on the older side of the age range, i.e., 14 and 15 years old (see Table 2). The early adolescent group had proportionally more girls, and more Hispanics than the younger children in the 1994 entering cohort. Because the majority of foster children first enter care when they are five years old or younger, the average age of those under 10 is just 2.6 years.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics, 1994 Entry Cohort

Characteristic	0-10 Year Olds		11-15 Year Olds	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Male	3,004	53%	935	46%
Female	2,762	48%	1,084	54%
Race				
Black	3,077	54%	919	46%
Hispanic	1,146	2%	497	25%
White	194	3%	100	5%
Other	77	1%	42	2%
Unknown	1,230	22%	445	22%
Age				
11	N/A	N/A	238	12%
12	N/A	N/A	300	15%
13	N/A	N/A	378	19%
14	N/A	N/A	529	26%
15	N/A	N/A	574	29%
Average Age	2.6	N/A	13.4	N/A

Foster Care Experiences

Length of Stay

We calculated length of stay (LOS) in two ways. First, we counted all time during which the child legally remained in care (Table 3). This is the standard method. In addition, we calculated another LOS statistic that excluded time spent on trial discharge or AWOL (Table 4). This latter method is useful for examining how long children physically reside in foster care and for determining cost – foster parents and congregate care providers are not paid once a child goes on trial discharge or if a child is AWOL for longer than three days. To determine average and median LOS, we first calculated the number of days in care for youth discharged after the first spell. For those youth who never left care or who were in care on a subsequent spell, we counted the number of days from the date of entry to May 1, 1999, the last date for which we had data. This adjustment applied to 15 percent of the study group. Thus, these figures necessarily undercount the actual LOS because some youth have not completed their stays in care. The median LOS is not affected by this problem.⁴

Table 3: Length of Stay Including AWOL and Trial Discharges

	1st Spell (days)				2nd Spell (days)				3rd Spell (days)			
	No.	Still in Care	Mean	Median	No.	Still in Care	Mean	Median	No.	Still in Care	Mean	Median
Article 10	576	165	902	832	87	38	703	761	11	3	239	167
PINS	666	36	284	62	175	20	371	183	33	3	212	88
Delinquency	14	2	575	105	2	0	353	353	1	1	823	823
Voluntary Agreement	482	109	750	520	81	14	362	126	23	2	241	105
Uncategorized	281	19	313	17	47	12	530	336	9	2	312	312
Total	2019	331	578	203	392	84	462	262	77	11	244	142

⁴ By definition, half of all children stay for a period shorter than the median, and half longer. Because well over half of the children in each group have been discharged, increasing the length of stay for the remaining children has no effect on the median.

Table 4: Length of Stay Excluding AWOL and Trial Discharge Time

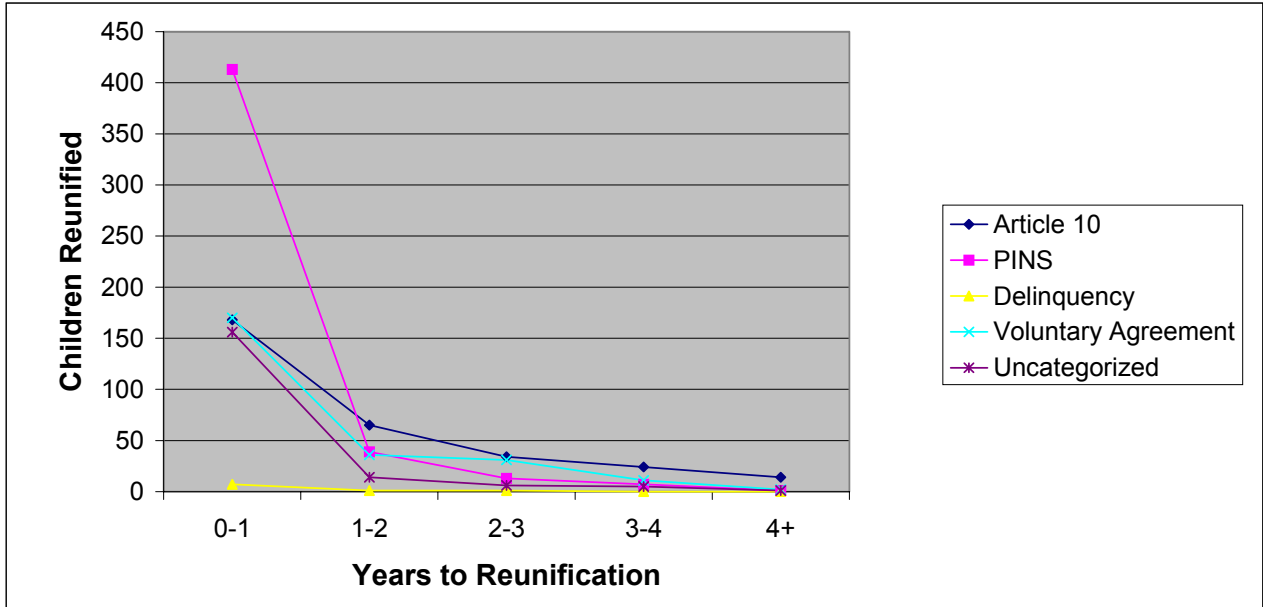
	1st Spell (days)				2nd Spell (days)				3rd Spell (days)			
	<i>Children</i>	<i>Still in Care</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Still in Care</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Still in Care</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>
Article 10	576	165	846	742	87	38	620	544	11	3	233	167
PINS	666	36	248	50	175	20	300	145	33	3	172	78
Delinquency	14	2	540	105	2	-	353	353	1	1	822	822
Voluntary Agreement	482	109	683	455	81	14	297	104	23	2	167	67
Uncategorized	281	19	288	15	47	12	483	329	9	2	268	236
Total	2,019	331	530	174	392	84	393	208	77	11	199	92

Both methods for calculating length of stay show a sharp divergence by reason for entry. Children who are in care due to Article 10 petitions have the longest LOS, followed by voluntaries. The first spell LOS for PINS youth departs radically from other early adolescents who can be categorized by their reason for entry. Using the standard method for calculating LOS shows that PINS youth have a shorter average LOS (284 days or 9.5 months) than early adolescents as a whole (578 days or 24 months), and the median LOS for PINS is just two months. Voluntary placements, a group often compared to PINS youth, have an average LOS of 25 months, and a median LOS of over 17 months.

Excluding the AWOL and trial discharges from the calculation, reduces the cohort's average length of stay during the first spell by about a month and a half, and the median by about a month (Table 4). It does not change the relative ranking of reason for entry groups, although some groups experienced more considerable drops in their LOS than others. Voluntarily placed children exhibited the most reduction in LOS when taking AWOLS and trial discharges into account, losing more than two months from both their mean and median LOS.

Chart 3 shows the length of stay in foster care only for those children who were reunited with parents or relatives at the end of their first spell in care. Three-fourths of these discharges to parents and relatives occurred within the first year of placement, with an additional 13 percent within the second year. The likelihood of reunification within one year of placement is associated with the reason a child enters care. Of the PINS youth who were discharged to parents or relatives, 90 percent had a length of stay of less than one year (median 43 days). Of Article 10 children who were returned home, 55 percent were in foster care for less than a year.

Chart 3: Time to Reunification for Foster Children Ages 11-15, First Spell, 1994 Entry Cohort (n=1,150)



Stability of Foster Care Placements

The stability of foster care placements reflects the number of placement changes children experience while in care, and the number of times they left those placements due to AWOLs and admissions to juvenile detention facilities.

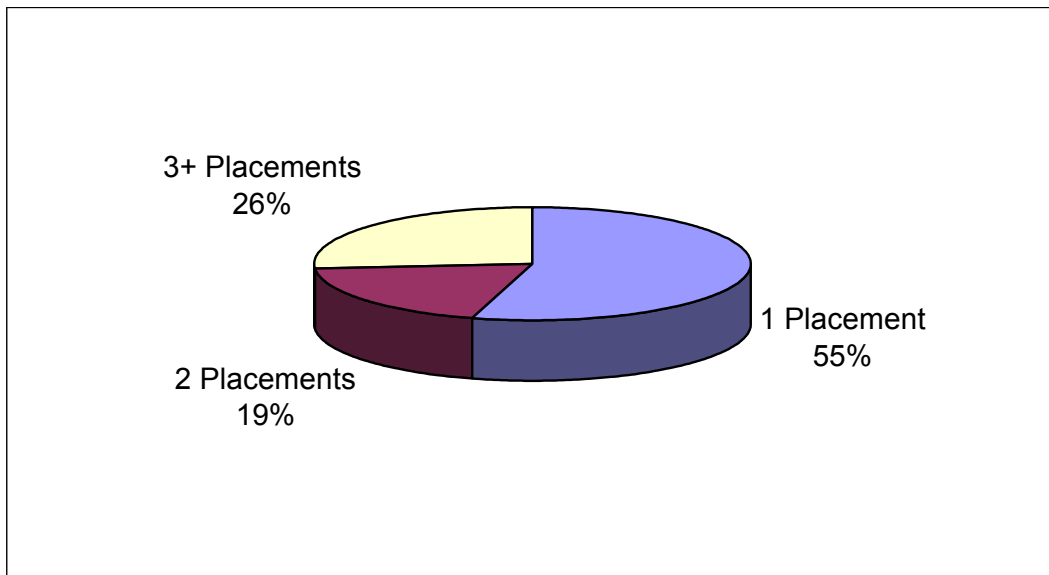
Number of Unique Placements

The term ‘unique placements’ refers not to placement types but more particularly to placement settings, that is, a child in two different group homes would occupy two different placements. To measure stability, we distinguished between those children with one or two placements, on the one hand, and those with three or more on the other. Child welfare systems often place children in transitional facilities as they seek out the most appropriate placement. While ACS does not have a central transitional facility, the agency operates diagnostic reception centers, emergency foster boarding homes, and other temporary placements that serve a similar purpose. Since temporary placements are

intended to increase the likelihood of ultimately stable ones, we considered that one or two placements indicates a high level of placement stability.⁵

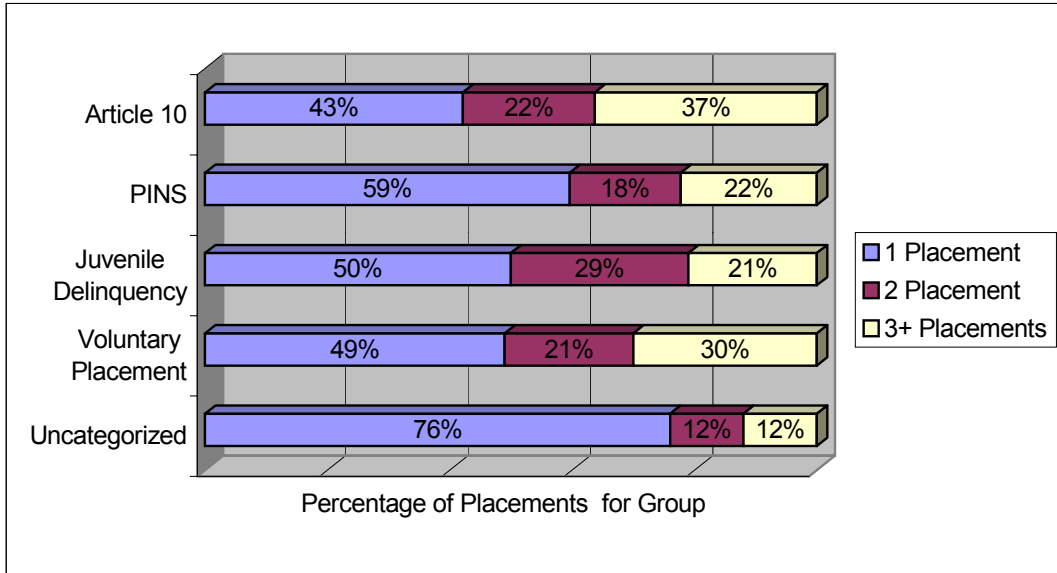
Over one-half of the study group experienced only one placement (Chart 4), and three of every four children experienced one or two placements during their first spell. Of the children who entered on Article 10 petitions, a group with relatively long stays in care, 65 percent had one or two placements, compared to 77 percent of the PINS youth, who have much shorter stays in care. Seventy percent of the voluntarily placed youth had one or two placements (Chart 5).

**Chart 4: Number of Unique Placements Experienced for First Foster Care Spell
(n=2,019)**



⁵ In their year 2000 report, DHHS said they would consider two placements as an indication of stability for a State's entire foster care population—including all age groups.

Chart 5: Number of Unique Placements for First Spell by Reason for Entry
(n=2,019)



Even considering all spells in foster care, almost two-thirds of the study group still had only one or two placements over their foster care stays (Chart 6). The gap between the reason for entry groups narrows primarily because PINS children are more likely than the other groups to have multiple spells in care and, thus, more placements when all spells are included in the analysis (Chart 7).

Chart 6: Number of Unique Placements for All Spells
(n=2,019)

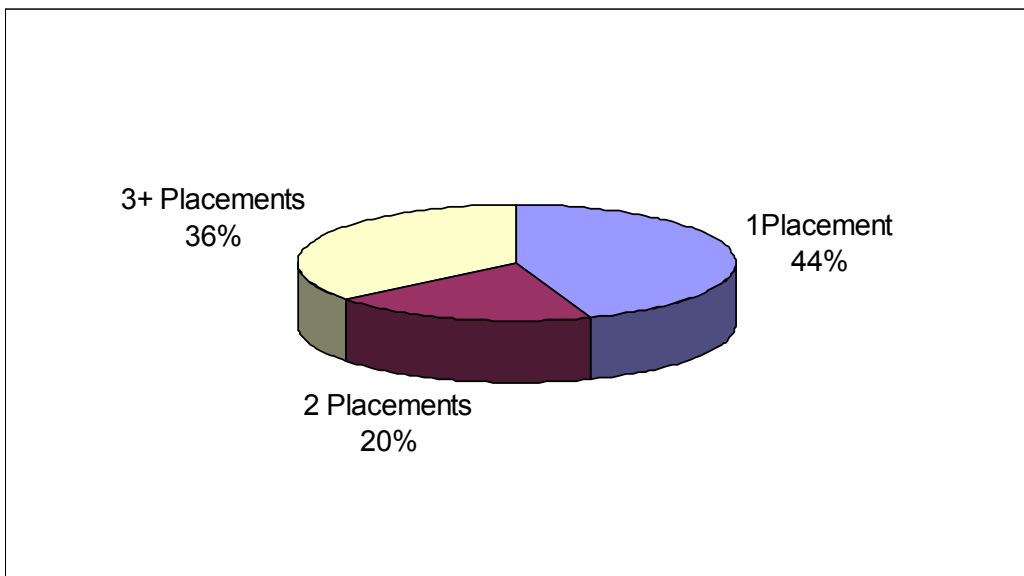
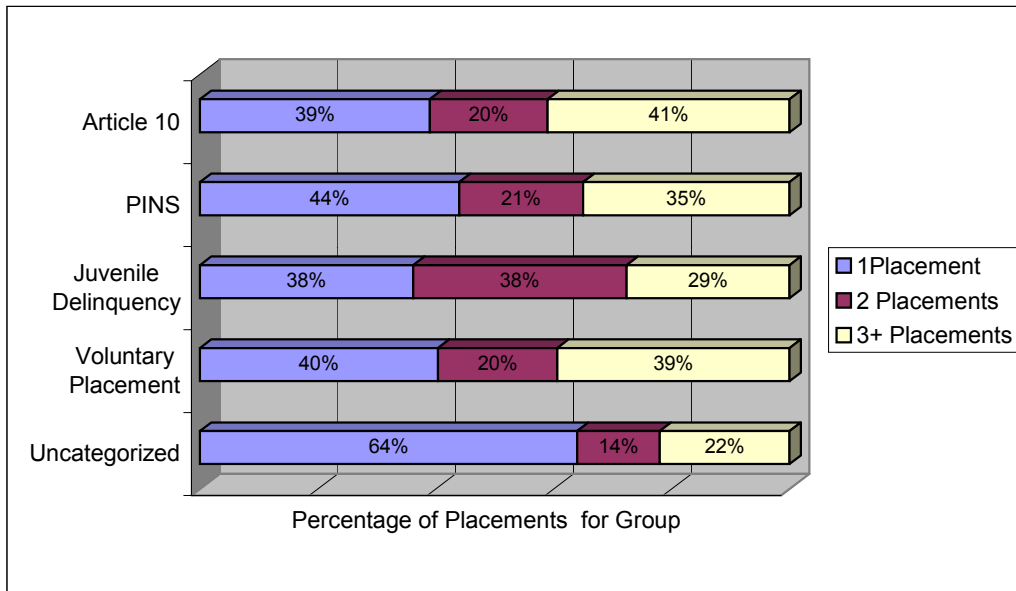


Chart 7: Number of Unique Placements for All Spells by Reason for Entry
(n=2,019)



Absent Without Leave

Forty percent of the study group (812 children) left care without permission, or were absent without leave (AWOL) at some point during their cumulative time in foster care. In total, the group went AWOL 1,745 times (Table 5). Further, a small number of children accounted for most of the AWOLs: specifically, only ten percent of the cohort (205 children), accounted for 59 percent of its AWOLs (1,025 incidents).

Table 5 also shows that children who enter care due to PINS petitions and voluntary agreements are disproportionately involved in AWOL events. Forty-eight percent of PINS and 49 percent of voluntarily placed children engaged in at least one AWOL during their stay in care. To account for the different lengths of time these children spend in care, we created an AWOL rate by dividing the number of AWOLs for each reason for entry group by the number of “care days,” and multiplying by 1,000.⁶ Table 6 shows that for each 1,000 days of care, 1.4 AWOL events occurred. PINS youth, however, had a rate of 3.1 AWOLs per 1,000 care days, compared to 1.39 for voluntary children, and 0.7 for Article 10 youth.

⁶ One care day means a day a child stays in care.

Most AWOLs occur near the time of placement; one half occurred within the first year (Table 6). Even more specifically, 29 percent occurred within the first 90 days and 17 percent occurred in the first 30 days.

Table 5: Children with AWOL Activity by Reason for Entry

	Children	Total AWOLs	Children with at least one AWOL	% of Total Children
Article 10	576	357	169	29%
PINS	666	695	321	48%
Delinquency	14	10	3	21%
Voluntary Agreement	482	504	235	49%
Uncategorized	281	179	84	30%
Totals	2,019	1,745	812	40%

Table 6: Frequency of AWOL Events in Years Following Placement

AWOL Events	Years Following Placement					Total	Total Care Days	AWOLS per 1,000 care days
	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5+years			
Article 10	149	50	59	71	28	357	534,744	0.7
PINS	431	146	61	39	18	695	225,774	3.1
Delinquency	0	0	2	7	1	10	9,100	1.1
Voluntary Agreement	183	122	76	72	51	504	360,536	1.4
Uncategorized	99	28	20	24	8	179	106,499	1.7
Total	862	346	218	213	106	1745	1,245,723	1.4

Juvenile Detention

The involvement of foster children with the juvenile justice system is a longstanding concern of child welfare agencies (Bilchik 1995; Ross and Conger, 2000, 2001). Entering detention can result in loss of placement, educational disruption, loss of employment, and possibly greater risk for future criminal activity.

The proportions of the categorized youth who entered detention while they were in care do not vary much. However, since these children spend varying lengths of time in care, we created a detention rate by dividing the number of detained youth in each group by the average number of “care days” for that group, multiplied by 1,000. For each 1,000 days of care, .13 individuals were detained. PINS youth stand apart from the others with a rate of .27 detentions per 1,000 care days. When adjusted for number of care days, PINS youth were almost twice as likely to be detained as voluntary placements, and more than 3 times as likely to be detained as Article 10 entrants (Table 7).

Table 7: Early Adolescents Admitted to Juvenile Justice Facilities

	1994 11-15	Admitted while		Total Care	Detentions per
	year olds	in care		Days	1,000 care days
	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>	%	<i>No.</i>	<i>No.</i>
Article 10	576	45	8%	534,744	0.08
PINS	666	62	9%	225,774	0.27
Delinquency	14	1	7%	9,100	0.11
Voluntary Agreement	483	50	10%	360,536	0.14
Uncategorized	281	9	3%	106,499	0.08
Total	2019	167	8%	1,245,723	0.13

Permanency

Permanency refers to the children’s destinations when they leave care, and the number and nature of their reentries into care.

Destination of Last Discharge

Chart 8 shows that 81 percent of the study group were ever discharged from care. This varied by reason for entry group, ranging from 92 percent for PINS youth, to 68 percent for Article 10 entrants.⁷

⁷ It is likely that the 19% figure for never discharged, which is taken from the CCRS, is an overstatement. It includes some children with no record of a discharge but whose last recorded event is an AWOL; we assume that some of these children in fact should have been discharged to AWOL. If we make this assumption, the never discharged percentage is 13%.

Chart 8: Proportion of Reason for Entry Groups Discharged from Foster Care
 (Study group n=2,019, Number Discharged n=1,628)

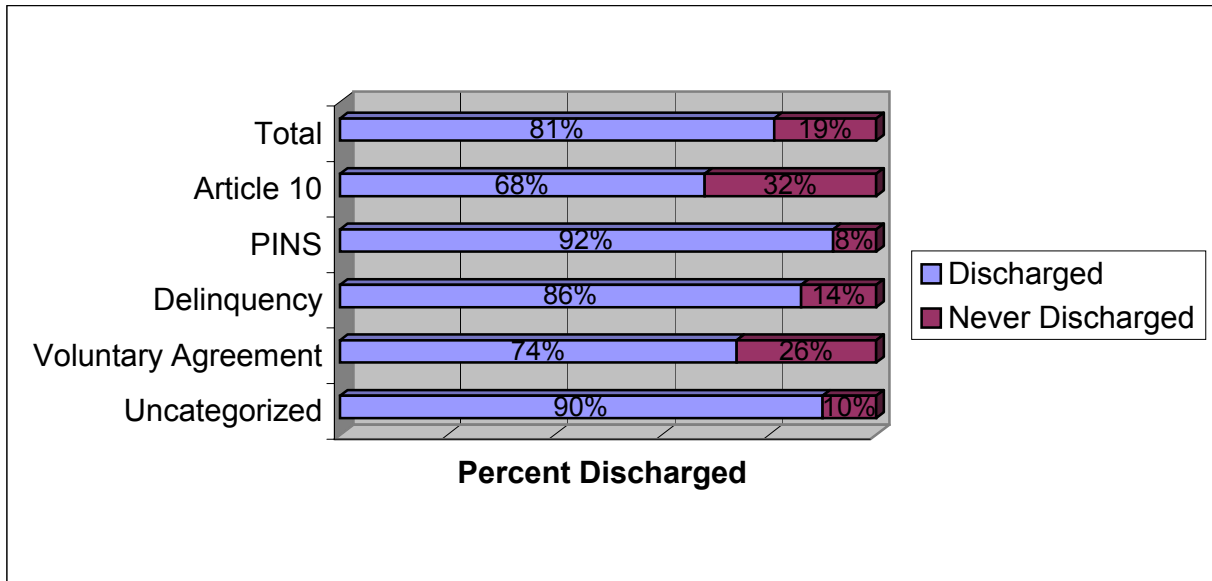


Chart 9 shows the destinations of the most recent discharge from foster care that a youth experienced. If a child had only one spell in care, the chart reflects the destination of that discharge, but if the child had two or more spells, only the destination of the last discharge is reflected. By far, the most common discharge destination was a return to a parent or relative (71 percent of those discharged). This was followed by AWOLs and administrative discharges (18 percent of those discharged).⁸ Table 8 shows the discharge destination of children from the reason for entry groups. From two thirds to three fourths of those discharged from every group were discharged to parents or relatives, and AWOL and administrative discharges were the second most common destination for each of the groups.

⁸ Administrative discharge represents an ACS procedure rather than a discharge destination. We combined AWOLs and administrative discharges because a high percentage of children with administrative discharges had an AWOL as their last recorded event, with no record of a return to placement.

Chart 9: Destination of Last Discharge from Foster Care

(Total Discharged n=1,628)

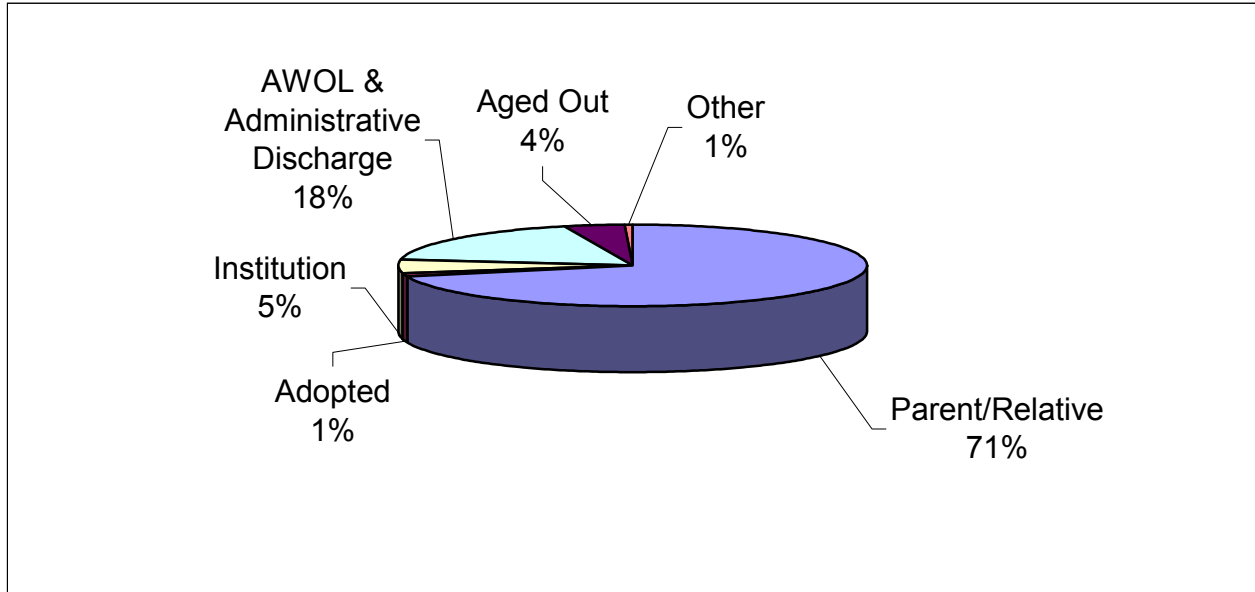


Table 8: Destination of Last Discharge from Foster Care by Reason for Entry

Reason for Entry	Parent/Relative		Adopted		Institution		AWOL & Admin.		Aged out		Other		Totals
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Article 10	299	76%	9	2%	16	4%	42	11%	25	6%	1	0%	392
PINS	442	72%	0	0%	34	6%	119	19%	14	2%	5	1%	614
Delinquency	8	67%	0	0%	0	0%	4	33%	0	0%	0	0%	12
Voluntary Agreement	229	64%	9	3%	26	7%	68	19%	22	6%	2	0%	356
Uncategorized	172	68%	2	1%	10	4%	60	24%	8	3%	2	1%	254
Total/ % of Discharges (n=1,628)	1,150	71%	20	1%	86	5%	293	18%	69	4%	10	1%	1,628
Total/ % of Study Group (n=2,019)	1,150	57%	20	1%	86	4%	293	15%	69	3%	10	0%	2,019

We suspect that more children returned home than these numbers suggest. While no data exists on where the youth discharged to AWOL go, anecdotal information and some research studies suggest that many of these children “runaway” to their homes, to kin, or to a friend’s residence (Biehal and Wade, 1999; Courtney and Wong, 1996). This phenomenon may be especially prevalent for PINS youth and those children voluntarily placed. In such cases, when children AWOL to home, parents are not violating court orders by accepting them into their residence. Article 10 placements, in contrast, require ACS approval before a child may legally return home. Henceforth, a parent or relative faces a legal risk for accepting an AWOL Article 10 child home, as opposed to accepting an AWOL PINS or voluntarily placed child.

Only one percent of the study group left care because of an adoption and only three percent has aged out or been emancipated. Of the 69 emancipated children in the study group, only one entered care at age 11 or 12; the rest entered at the older ages.

Reentries into foster care

Approximately one of every five youth in the study group reentered care at least once (Table 9). PINS youth, who have shorter lengths of stay in their first spell, were more likely to reenter care than other children in the study group. Over one-quarter of PINS children reentered care, and they account for 45 percent of all the early adolescents who did so. Article 10 entrants and those who enter care on a voluntary agreement reentered care at rates of 15 and 17 percent respectively.

Table 9: Number of Spells in Care by Reason for Entry

	First Spell		Second Spell			Third Spell		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Discharged</i>	<i>No.Returning</i>	<i>%of Total</i>	<i>Discharged</i>	<i>No.Returning</i>	<i>%of Total</i>	<i>Discharged</i>
Article 10	576	411	87	15%	49	11	2%	8
PINS	666	630	175	26%	155	33	5%	3
Delinquency	14	12	2	14%	2	1	7%	0
Voluntary Agreement	482	373	81	17%	67	23	5%	21
Uncategorized	281	262	47	17%	35	9	3%	7
Total	2019	1688	392	19%	308	77	4%	39

Time from Discharge to Reentry

Of those youth who have second spells, two thirds reenter care within one year of discharge (Chart 10). PINS youth who reenter care are more likely to do so within a year

than youth who originally entered as Article 10 or voluntary placements, an expected finding given the vagaries of the PINS court process. For those children who did reenter care within one year, most reentered within the first six months after their discharges (Chart 11). PINS children reentered at their highest rate in the third month after discharge, with their reentry rate declining thereafter. Other groups demonstrated a more consistent rate of reentry throughout the year.

Chart 10: Years Elapsed Between First Discharge and ReEntry Into Care
(n= 392)

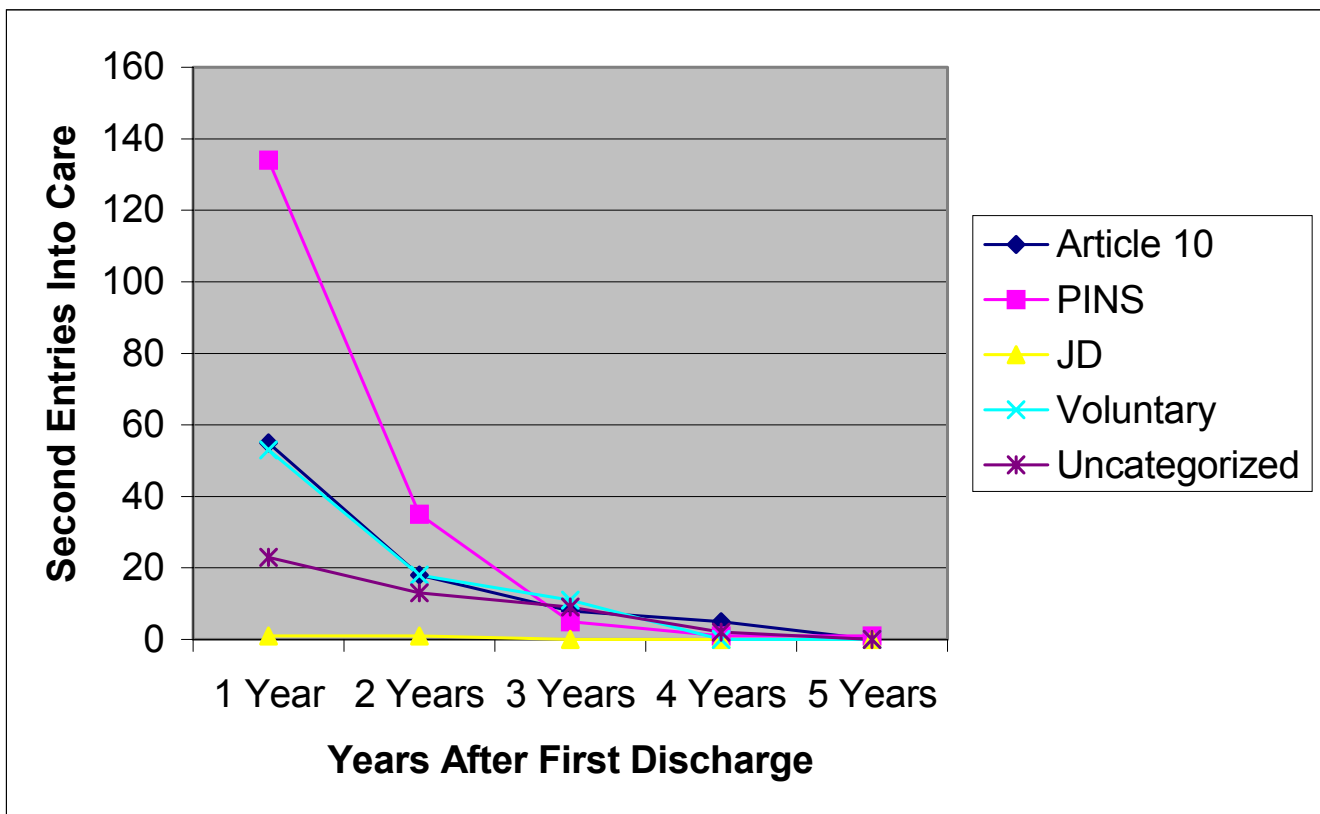
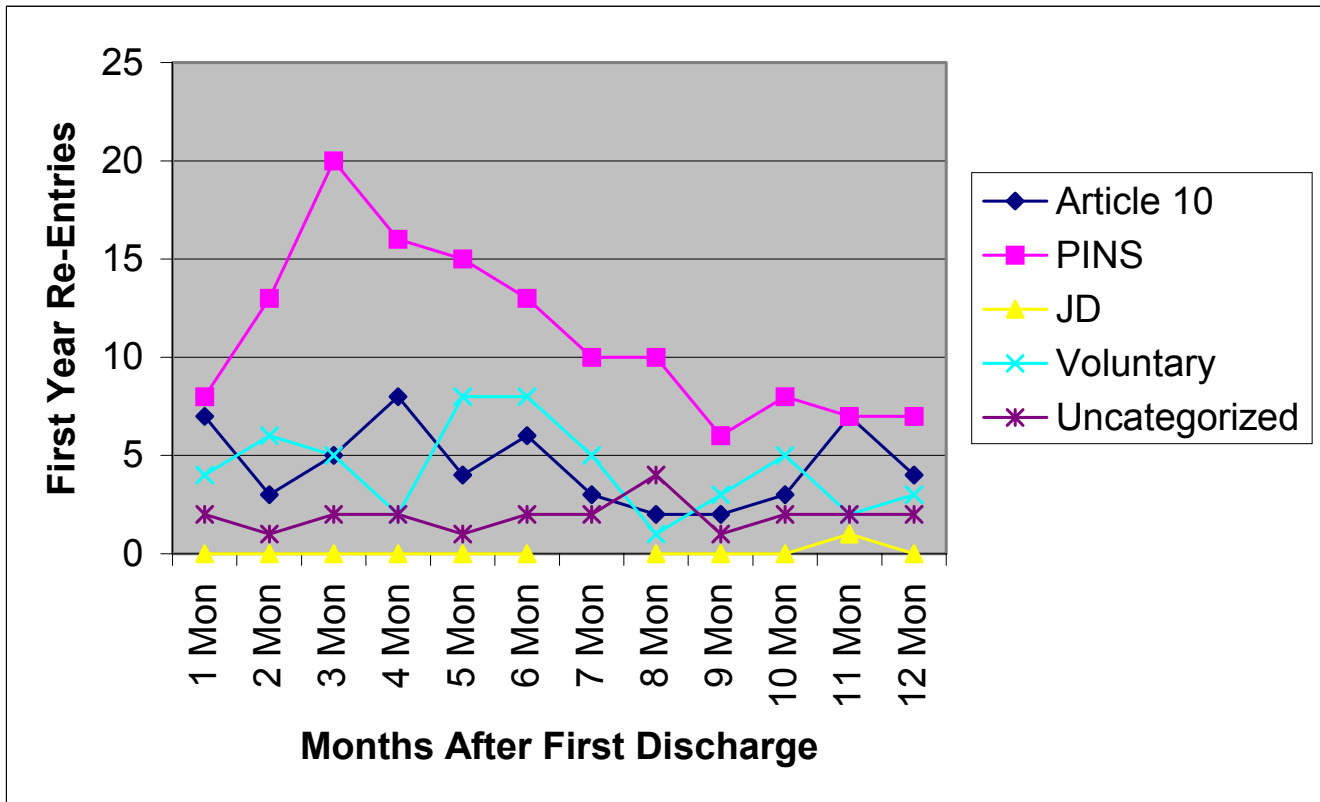


Chart 11: ReEntries Within One Year After Discharge
(n=263, 67% of Second Entries into Care)



Changes in Reason for Entry Across Spells

We also analyzed how frequently reasons for entry changed when a child reentered care (Table 10). Many believe, for example, that youth who originally enter care due to PINS proceedings often reenter care as voluntary placements. We found that reason for entry showed a high level of consistency. Over two thirds of Article 10 and PINS children who reentered care did so for the same reason, as did nearly 60 percent of those voluntarily placed.

However, the greatest overlap is between PINS and voluntary children. Of the PINS children who reentered care, 22 percent reentered due to voluntary agreements. Of the children who first entered care due to a voluntary agreement and subsequently reentered, 20 percent reentered due to a PINS petition.

Table 10: First Reason for Entry by Second Reason for Entry

		Second Spell Reason for Entry						
		Article 10	PINS	JD	Vol	Uncat.	No Legal Act.	Total
First Spell Reason for Entry	Article 10	57	4	0	13	12	0	86
	PINS	2	121	2	39	13	0	177
	JD	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
	Vol	5	17	0	51	13	0	86
	Uncat.	4	4	1	12	3	0	24
	No Legal Act.	0	0	0	0	0	16	16
	Total	69	146	4	115	41	16	391

Placement Cost

To estimate the cost of care by reason for entry, we calculated the average number of days spent in each placement type *over all spells* through May 1, 1999 (Table 11). Considering all spells allows us to project average lifetime costs per child regardless of the number of reentries. We then multiplied congregate care days by \$170 per day, and foster boarding home and kinship costs by \$40 per day to produce an average cost per youth.⁹ To calculate the cost per day, we divided the average cost per youth by the average number of days in care.

This analysis shows that voluntarily placed children have the highest average lifetime placement cost (\$93,660). This represents 44 percent more than the average early adolescent entrant (\$65,171), and easily out-distances PINS or Article 10. This reflects the relatively long LOS of voluntary placements, and that two-thirds of these days are spent in congregate care—the most expensive placement type. The cost of PINS youth is also revealing: on average, PINS youth cost just 12 percent less than Article 10 children, yet they have the highest average daily cost (\$161 per day) of any entry category. Virtually all PINS youth spent their entire stay in congregate care, and not a single youth entered a kinship placement. A large percentage of PINS cost is created by the small percentage of PINS youth permanently placed with ACS, a situation described earlier in this report.

⁹ We received the estimated placement costs per day from ACS.

Table 11: Estimated Placement Cost by Reason for Entry

Reason For Entry		Still In Care		Time Spent in Care								Average Total Cost	Average Daily Cost
				(Average Number of Days)									
Category		No.	No.	%	Total	Congregate		FBH		Kinship			
	No.	No.	%	No.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
Article 10	576	206	36%	944	186	20%	409	43%	349	37	\$61,905	\$ 65.57	
PINS	666	61	9%	339	314	93%	26	8%	0	0%	\$ 54,420	\$ 160.53	
Delinquency	14	3	21%	650	589	91%	60	9%	0	0%	\$ 102,530	\$ 157.74	
Voluntary Agreement	482	127	26%	748	490	66%	236	32%	23	3%	\$ 93,660	\$ 125.21	
Uncategorized	281	34	12%	379	242	64%	113	30%	24.1	6%	\$ 46,617	\$ 123.01	
Total	2019	431	21%	3060	1821	50%	844	32%	396	18%	\$ 65,171	\$ 105.63	

Discussion

Early adolescents do not have the same experiences in foster care and do not present the same issues for ACS policy and management. For the cohort examined in this study, we were able to identify three distinct patterns in adolescents’ use of the foster care system that have distinct implications for ACS. The patterns are linked to the reasons children enter care. We named the patterns “quick turnarounds,” “repeaters” and “longtermers,” based on short stays in care (less than two months), reentries into care, and lengthy stays in care (from entry in 1994 through May 1999), respectively. Of the early adolescents in the 1994 cohort, 57 percent used the foster care system in one of these ways; the remainder entered care only once and stayed longer than two months but less than the entire period.

Quick turnarounds

Quick turnarounds are early adolescents who enter foster care only once and are discharged within two months. Quick turnarounds account for 25 percent of the study group. Over one-third (35%) of the PINS entrants can be classified as quick turnarounds compared to 15 percent of the voluntaries and 11 percent of those placed as a result of an Article 10 petition. With a mean age at entry of 14.4 years, quick turnarounds were five months older on average than the rest of the early adolescent group.

Four of five “quick turnarounds” are discharged to parents or relatives, with virtually all of the remainder discharged to AWOL (16%) or administrative action (2%). Length of stay statistics show that most quick turnarounds stay for much less than the two months. Seventy-three percent stay in care for 30 days or less, and almost one-half for 10 days or less.

Despite the short time these children spend in foster care, they consume a noticeable amount of resources. Three quarters of these children are first placed in congregate care, one quarter in foster boarding homes, and less than one percent in kinship homes. Quick turnarounds consumed the equivalent of 20 congregate care beds for an entire year, at a cost of \$1.2 million.¹⁰ Though in care for a short time, the group accounted for 121 AWOLs, and had an extraordinary AWOL rate of 13.8 AWOLs per 1,000 care days. Opening and closing cases and searching for AWOL children are labor intensive processes. Thus, the true cost of managing the quick turnarounds is likely higher than the one calculated here.

In these cases, it appears that families and the Family Court are using foster care as respite care, which can be an effective intervention in many instances. The foster care system, however, is neither intended for nor designed as a respite care resource. This suggests that ACS, either on its own or in conjunction with another agency such as the Department of Mental Health, may consider developing specialized respite care programming.

Repeaters

Repeaters are foster children who reenter care at least once following a discharge. The study group contained 393 repeaters, or 19 percent of the total. Almost all of them reentered only once. Over one quarter of PINS youth were repeaters, compared to 15 percent of Article 10s and 17 percent of voluntary placements. With a mean age of 13.7 years, repeaters were three months younger on average than the group as a whole.

Over two thirds of repeaters entered congregate care as their first placement and an even higher percentage (79%) entered congregate care at the start of their second spell. The majority of repeaters (57%) spent all of their time in congregate care, while only eight percent resided exclusively in foster boarding homes and one percent in kinship homes. Eighty-two percent were discharged home following their first spell and nine percent were discharged to AWOL. Of those discharged a second time (75 of all repeaters), only 62 percent went home and 21 percent were discharged to AWOL. Repeaters spent an average of 141 days in care during their first spell and 377 days during the second spell, a 267 percent increase. Overall, repeaters had an AWOL rate of 2.4 AWOL events per 1,000 days in care, or 70 percent higher than the average for the

¹⁰ This figure is based on a \$175 per diem rate for group care.

whole study group. In addition, 26 percent of repeaters entered juvenile detention facilities, a rate 70 percent higher than the study group as a whole.

Longtermers

Longtermers are adolescents who remained in foster care without a discharge from their first entrance in 1994 through May 1, 1999, the end of the study period.¹¹ While these children account for only 13 percent of the study group, they are of particular concern due to recent increases in emphasis on permanency. One-half of these youth entered due to Article 10 petitions, and one-third entered on voluntary placements – this translates to roughly one of every four Article 10 entrants and one of every five voluntary placements. Only 11 percent originally came into care on PINS petitions (this constitutes only 5 percent of the PINS entrants.) With a mean age at entry of 13.4 years, longtermers were seven months younger on average than the group as a whole.

ACS spent an average of \$150,471 on each of these 270 children, or \$40.6 million in total. Longtermers consumed 468 bed years of congregate care, 489 bed years of foster boarding home care, and 244 bed years of kinship care. Congregate care costs accounted for 74 percent of the total amount spent on providing services to these children. In other words, though longtermers spent more time in family-type care, congregate care still consumed the vast majority of resources.

This group stood out in two other ways. Only six percent ever experienced a trial discharge, and they exhibited relatively little AWOL activity. While one-third of the group had at least one AWOL event, 24 children (9 percent of all longtermers) accounted for 62 percent of the total number of AWOLs, and the group as a whole had only .58 AWOLs per 1,000 care days. Combining these indicators suggests that these children appear to come from deeply troubled homes where a trial discharge was viewed by caseworkers as unlikely to succeed and that, once removed from that situation, most of these youth avoided troubling behavior.

¹¹ For this analysis, we eliminated youth whose last activity was either an AWOL or a trial discharge. Although the data extract did not contain a record of discharge in these cases, the children may well have left care permanently and would not meet the definition of longtermers. See also footnote 7.

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Appendix A: Identifying and Categorizing the 1994 Entry Cohort

This appendix discusses the methods used to identify the 1994 entry cohort, and to determine each child's reason for entry into foster care.

Identifying the 1994 entry cohort

To identify the entry cohort and its associated foster care information, we used the files “movements,” “indiv_bio,” “legal_activity,” “service-assess” and “other activity” from the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Child Care Review System (CCRS) database. Identifying all first-time child entries for a particular year required several steps. First, we extracted all entry records (coded “M910” in the CCRS) from the database. After sorting these records by child identification number (coded “recipid” in the CCRS), and then by date, we selected the first entry record for each child. From this chronologically sorted subset of first-time entries, we selected all events that occurred in 1994. We also removed children sentenced to Office of Children and Family Services facilities because ACS functions solely as a reimbursement vehicle, not a service provider. Thus, we removed all children with “DFY” as the agency on their first movement.

Reason for entry

We found identifying a child's reason for entry into care difficult, as “reason for entry” is not an individual variable in the CCRS. Reason for entry can be inferred from information contained in the CCRS legal activities table. To categorize the 1994 cohort by reason for entry, we matched children in the cohort to their CCRS legal activities records using “recipid” as the key variable. Of the 8,244 children in the cohort, 523 children (6.3%) had no legal records in the data extract. Of those with missing information, 193 were between 12 and 16 years of age, which accounted for 9.3% of the 2,058 children in that age range.

Those children with recorded legal activities had as few as one legal event and as many as 57 through May 1999. Multiple legal activities made it difficult to identify why a child entered foster care. Moreover, the data often refer to sections of the law that do not precisely identify the child's reason for entry. For example, an Article 10 refers to abuse *or* neglect, two distinct reasons. Except for a small percentage of these children who experienced a later adjudication for either “abuse” or “neglect,” a satisfactory reason for entry based only on CCRS legal activity categories was impossible to discern. To

overcome these problems, we designed categories to account for both chronology and the type of legal events.

Because of problems with coding legal activities, we used New York City Family Court docket numbers (also in the CCRS) as our first method for assigning children a reason for entry. Most Family Court docket numbers include a letter-prefix identifying the type of case under consideration by the court. By this coding scheme, categories were indicated by the following docket prefix letters: abuse (NA), neglect (N), PINS (S), JD (D or E), and voluntary placement (K or L).

The coding of child entry reasons entailed three steps:

Step 1: Docket Numbers

The first step used petition docket numbers and an expanding chronological window of legal activities. The logic underlying this approach was that legal activities occurring closest in time to a child's entry into care were the ones most likely related to the entry. Children were initially placed in categories based on the docket prefixes of petitions that occurred on the same day as their placement into care. This resulted in relatively few categories.

For the remaining uncategorized cases, the time frame surrounding the date of entry was expanded to one week before and one week after the date of placement. For children still not categorized, the time frame was increased successively to two weeks, three weeks, one month, and two months, removing children categorized after each change in time frame. This method minimized the possibility of categorizing a single child multiple times. This process successfully categorized over half of the children in the entry cohort. A small number of individuals with docket prefixes that did not fit any established category had typographical errors and were assigned to a group. Others with a docket prefix that did not sufficiently identify a reason for entry were returned to the uncategorized pool and analyzed again in the second step. A larger number of children had no docket number, or no prefix associated with their docket number. These were also returned to the uncategorized pool for further consideration.

Step 2: Petitions, Adjudications, and Remands

The second step involved categorizing the remaining individuals using CCRS legal activity coding and a much broader possible time range. The only time limit established ruled out legal activities that occurred after February of 1995, two months after the last date on which a child in the 1994 cohort could have been placed. The expanding window technique employed in step one was too cumbersome at this point in the process, and would not have improved results dramatically. We determined criteria for inclusion into our established categories using CCRS coding for legal activities (coded "activity"), types of legal events (coded "moda"), dispositions (coded "modb") and reasons for

revocations (“modc”). Separate abuse and neglect categories were omitted from this step for reasons cited above, and a new category, “Article 10’s,” was included. Only children who had a hearing for an Article 10 that resulted in a disposition of “remand to placement” were categorized as “Article 10” for their reason for entry. Children were categorized as PINS if they had an Article 7 (PINS petition) hearing and either an adjudicated disposition of PINS, or a disposition of “care and custody to local social service district,” “foster care placement to be continued,” “return child to relative,” or “remand/temporary placement.” Children were classified as juvenile delinquents by the presence of a hearing of “Article 3; JD,” “355.3 court review JD,” or an adjudicated disposition of JD. Lastly, voluntary placements were categorized by the presence of a petition or an “agreement signed” with a legal event type of “384a transfer care and custody,” “384; voluntary surrender for adoption,” “384b; commitment of guardianship and custody,” or a revocation under either 384 or 384a SSL. This last condition assumed that the child entered care through voluntary surrender, and then the parent revoked the agreement.

Step 3: Hard Coding

After step two, 75 children had more than one category. Tests that narrowed the time window for step two did not reduce this number by a notable amount and increased the number of uncategorized individuals. Therefore, step three entailed reviewing children’s records to make a category determination. Most children placed in two categories could be assigned easily to a category based on activity date or the sequencing of event types. Less than five children were randomly placed in one of their identified categories because a determination could not be made.

This method categorized 94.7% of all children with legal activities. In total, 523 children or 5.9% of the cohort, had no legal activities, and 407 children, or 4.9% of the cohort, remained uncategorized.

Appendix B: Matching Process Used to Identify Study Sample Children Who Entered Detention

The DJJ and ACS data systems do not share a common identifier, such as social security number. Therefore, in order to locate a youth listed in both databases, the data match must use several items of identifying information, including name, date of birth, and gender. Human error in entering these data—name misspellings, incorrect dates—require flexible and comprehensive searching techniques to maximize the number of matches. Our technique adjusts the key matching criteria, name and date of birth, to ensure the highest match rate possible.

We used a number of combinations of name, date of birth, and gender in our match. We first matched the first name, last name, gender, and date of birth to identify the “exact” matches. We then used various combinations of name and date of birth to generate a list of “near” matches (see Table B1). For each of the five matching criteria after full name, gender, and date of birth, we shortened the number of characters in the first and last name and/or we required only two out of the three components of birth date (month, day, and year) to match. For example, match criteria number five is the first four characters of the first name and the first four characters of the last name and only two out of the three components of the birth date. With each pass of the data, we made the matching criteria less stringent to identify as many additional youth as possible.

Most of the records that matched on anything less than the full name, date of birth, and gender required further examination. In several instances, we determined that the ACS and DJJ child matched because the first and last name were unusual, or the birth year was exactly ten years off, which is a common error in entering dates. We also discovered a few duplicate records—cases where the ACS youth matched more than one DJJ record, and vice versa. In these cases, we employed the techniques mentioned above—looking for common date errors and unique names—to determine the correct match.

Columns two through four in Table B1 list the number of foster youth (after we examined the “near matches” and duplicate records) located in the DJJ system in each of the three years using the six matching criteria. For example, we located 310 youth using match criteria three—first four characters of the first and last name, gender, and the full date of birth. Seventy percent of the 1,850 youth matched exactly, and employing the five other combinations produced the remaining 30 percent. Match criteria two and three yielded the highest number of matches after full name, gender, and date of birth, while the remaining three criteria yielded much smaller numbers of matches. Readers should note that the final numbers in these tables do not match the numbers used in our analytic sample because we excluded several groups from the analyses. In addition, figures for 1999 include data only through September.

Table B1: Match Criteria and Results

Year of Admission	1997	1998	1999 ^a	Total
1. Full name, gender, and date of birth	520	439	332	1,291
2. Full name, gender, and two out of three components of date of birth	92	77	57	226
3. Last name (1 st four characters), first name (1 st four characters), gender, and date of birth	72	46	51	169
4. Last name (1 st four characters), gender, and date of birth	35	27	27	89
5. First name (1 st four characters), last name (1 st four characters), gender, and two out of three components of date of birth	16	17	10	43
6. First name (1 st four characters), gender, and date of birth	7	16	9	32
Total	742	622	486	1,850

^a Figures for 1999 only include data through September.