



Improving Law Enforcement Responses to Adolescent Girls



OJJDP



WHY FOCUS ON GIRLS?

There was a time when law enforcement calls involving juveniles were nearly always for boys. Girls were rarely arrested, and when they were, it was usually for non-violent “status” offenses such as running away, truancy, or curfew violations. But this has changed.

Although juvenile crime overall has decreased in the past decade, arrest rates for girls have declined at a much slower rate on most crimes and status offenses, compared to boys. Additionally, some arrest rates for girls have virtually remained the same (e.g., simple assault and disorderly conduct).¹

At the same time, research on the adolescent brain has given us new insights about juvenile behavior, including ways that girls differ from boys. It is becoming clear that some **juvenile justice approaches geared to boys may not be as effective with girls and, in some cases, may even make the situation worse.**

HOW THIS RESOURCE WILL HELP YOU

The purpose of this resource is to **improve outcomes when interacting with adolescent girls** by providing some **reasons why girls often behave differently** from boys, and **tips on how to approach situations** involving girls in a way that will lead to the best possible outcome for them and ensure public safety.

This information will also have another important benefit for you. In these times of tight budgets and personnel shortages, every officer is expected to demonstrate a proficient use of their time. **By understanding the unique needs of adolescent girls, you'll be better prepared to de-escalate conflicts and address underlying problems.** That way, you can avoid being called back to the same situations again and again.

Lead Authors: Susan Yeres, Ed.D and Meg Holmberg, MSW

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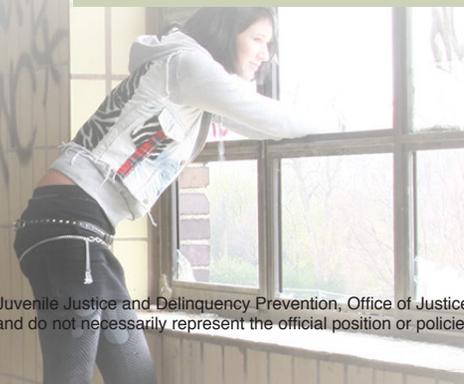
IMPORTANCE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

As a law enforcement officer, **you are in a unique position to make a difference in the life of a troubled girl** because you are likely to be her first point of contact with the juvenile justice system. In most jurisdictions, law enforcement officers can choose among options ranging from an informal warning to an arrest. As a “gatekeeper,” you can make choices that will influence whether a girl becomes more deeply involved in the system, or instead gets the help she needs to prevent delinquent behavior.

→ *Alternatives to arrest and detention: the benefits for girls*

Law enforcement officers are faced with situations when arresting adolescent girls is necessary or most appropriate. However, in other situations, consider how deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system can lead to severe consequences for a girl. By finding an alternative to arresting a girl, you can:

- ▶ Avoid subjecting her to further trauma and victimization
- ▶ Put her in contact with support systems in the community
- ▶ Make it less likely that she'll enter the juvenile justice system and someday enter the adult criminal justice system.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ADOLESCENT GIRLS

You respond to a call from a store owner who complains that a girl is loitering, glaring at customers, and refusing to leave. You find her in a back corner, head down, arms folded. As you approach her, she swears at you loudly and then dissolves into tears, refusing to answer your questions.

Adolescent girls sometime act in ways that might seem baffling or surprising. When you're under pressure to respond quickly, it can be difficult to know what to do. **When deciding an appropriate response, keep in mind four key findings** from research on girls who come into contact with police and the juvenile justice system.

1 Girls are more likely than boys to have a history of abuse and other forms of trauma.

A large body of research suggests that **sexual and physical abuse is a major predictor for female delinquent behavior**. Among a sample of incarcerated youth, girls reported significantly higher levels of physical punishment and sexual abuse and higher levels of psychological distress (e.g., Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression) than boys.²

Sometimes, what appears to be illegal behavior on the part of girls is actually evidence of victimization.

- A teenage girl charged with "simple assault" against a family member may be striking back after years of abuse.
- A girl detained for soliciting sex may be one of the estimated 100,000 children nationwide who are trafficked into prostitution each year.³

Along with being victimized, girls who come to the attention of police and the juvenile justice system are **likely to have experienced other traumatic life events that can overwhelm their ability to cope**—death of a family member or friend, divorce, or the ongoing stress of poverty and community violence. Girls who are U.S. citizens by birth, but whose parents are illegal immigrants, may live in constant fear of parental arrest and deportation.

A girl might seek support and protection by joining a gang. But far from offering a safe haven, **gang membership puts her at even greater risk of victimization**. This is because girls are often treated as the sexual property of male gang members. During initiations, girls may be beaten ("beat-in"), sexually assaulted, or gang raped ("sexed-in"). Staying in the gang may require that a girl tolerate ongoing physical or sexual abuse.

Research on girls in the juvenile justice system found that:

- 70% had been exposed to some form of trauma
- 65% experienced symptoms of PTSD sometime in their lives
- 74% reported being hurt or in danger of being hurt
- 60% reported being raped or in danger of being raped
- 76% reported witnessing someone being severely injured or killed⁴

Girls most often cope with trauma in one of two ways:

- **they fight back** through indifference or aggression, or
- **they internalize anger and fear**, which leads to depression and self-destructive behavior.

Adults who are unaware of the trauma a girl has experienced, might easily misinterpret her behavior as manipulative and defiant.

2 Girls experience a unique set of personal problems that put them at risk for delinquency.

Although there are a number of common factors that place both boys and girls at risk for delinquency, girls have a distinct set of risk factors. Often these result from a girl's response to the abuse and trauma she has experienced. These problems rarely occur in isolation; the presence of one will make the others more evident.

- **Mental health problems:** Girls who are coping with serious issues—such as abuse, family problems, or academic failure—may develop eating disorders, depression, and other mental health problems. More than half of the young women in court-operated schools have reported attempting suicide.
- **Substance abuse:** Girls may turn to alcohol and other drugs in an attempt to cope with trauma. In contrast to boys, substance abuse by girls rarely occurs by itself. Instead, it nearly always accompanies other problems.
- **Teen pregnancy:** Female juvenile offenders engage in sexual activity at an earlier age than non-offenders, putting them at higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancy. Pregnancy can disrupt a girl's adolescent development. It also may cause her to drop out of school.
- **Academic or school-related problems:** Some researchers identify academic problems as the most significant factor in predicting delinquent behavior in girls.

All these problems are likely to be exacerbated if a girl joins a gang. As gang members, girls face an even greater risk of: unsafe sex; pregnancy; substance abuse; suicide; physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; and assault.

→ **Unfortunately, the methods commonly used to detain, restrain, and sanction juveniles are likely to cause further trauma to girls, making it more likely that police will be called again.**

3 Girls usually display aggression with words rather than fists.

While it was thought for a long time that boys are more aggressive than girls, the current school of thought is that boys are more *physically* aggressive: They get upset with another boy, they fight, and they resolve their issues. Girls can be equally aggressive, but in contrast to boys, they more often display their anger verbally—often loudly—by calling names, hurling insults, and making threats.

→ **"There appears to be a link between the experience of abuse and neglect, the lack of appropriate treatment, and the behaviors that led to arrest."**⁵

Girls also engage in bullying, but it takes a different, more subtle form. Boys who bully use physical intimidation. Girls, however, are **more likely to use gossip and social exclusion**. They are in a good position to do this because, unlike boys, girls bond with other girls by sharing secrets. If they later become angry or jealous—over physical appearance, clothes, a boy, or perceived popularity—they can use those secrets to start a hurtful or embarrassing rumor. With social media such as instant messaging and online video, rumors often spread quickly and pervasively. Eventually, the conflict can escalate into a physical confrontation.

Although **girls' verbal aggression might appear to be less serious than boys' physical aggression, it can be just as hurtful and damaging**. This is because **relationships are so central to girls' lives and sense of well being**. While this can make it challenging to interact with girls, it also means that **a trusting relationship can go a long way toward gaining a girl's cooperation**. If you can invest some time—*before* there is a problem—to talk with and get to know the adolescent girls in your patrol area or school, you'll be able to draw on those connections during a tense interaction to get past defensiveness and de-escalate negative emotions.

Girls are heavily motivated by what others think of them and tend to behave differently in a group than when they are alone. With other girls watching and supporting her, a girl is more likely to take risks—to talk back, defy authority, and act out.

4 Many adolescent girls feel worthwhile only if others see them as attractive.

Adolescent girls need positive role models to develop into healthy women—images of adult females who are accomplished people with the capacity for independent action and decision-making.

Unfortunately, **the role models that girls encounter in the popular media are more likely to be valued solely for their physical attractiveness and sex appeal**. A recent study by the American Psychological Association found that nearly all types of media—television, music videos and lyrics, movies, magazines, sports media, video games, the Internet, and advertising—portray girls and women in a sexual manner while also setting an unrealistic standard of physical beauty.⁶

This "sexualization" of females has been shown to have a profound and negative impact on girls' well being and sense of self. It has been linked to the three mental health problems most common among women and girls: eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression. It has even been shown to impair girls' cognitive functioning by detracting from their ability to focus on academic subjects.⁷

When a girl's sense of her own worth is based largely on how she looks, her appearance becomes the focal point of her interactions with both males and females. While talking with other girls, she may be wondering: "Am I wearing the right clothes?" "Did I use the right make-up?" "Am I as attractive and appealing as the other girls?" With boys or men, she's likely to be asking herself: "Does he think I'm pretty?" "Is he attracted to me?" "Does he notice me?" And, she's likely to learn that by looking and behaving provocatively, she can attract attention and get her needs met.

→ **Remember, for teenage girls, trust is everything.**
— law enforcement officer, St. Louis, MO

For a girl who is vulnerable, sexually provocative behavior can become the key to survival, enabling her to get out of trouble, avoid abuse, get her basic needs met, and feel good about herself when everything else in her life is painful. So it is not surprising that when girls encounter authority figures—particularly male authorities—they may behave in a way that is provocative, sexual, and manipulative.

10 TIPS TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO SITUATIONS INVOLVING ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The following tips are based on the current understanding of adolescent girls. When you're called to incidents involving girls, having these tips in mind will help you to:

- Avoid causing further trauma to a girl
- Maintain everyone's safety
- Keep girls out of the juvenile justice system (or, keep them from getting more deeply involved)
- Address problems so you are not called back for a similar incident.

Tip 1: Gather information on your way to the scene.

The more you learn ahead of time about the girl and what is going on in her life, the easier it will be to size up the situation. If you are called to a school, for example, a staff member or teacher will probably escort you to the scene. You can use the time to find out:

- What happened that led to the call about this girl? Is she alone, or are other people involved?
- Has she been involved in incidents like this before, or is this a first for her? If she is involved in a conflict or a fight, what is her relationship to the other person? Is there a history with this person or with this type of problem?
- Have there been recent changes in this girl's life at school—such as the loss of a friend, an interpersonal conflict, or rumors spread about her?
- Have there been changes at home—a move, divorce, death, or conflict with a parent?
- Are there any teachers or staff whom she trusts and who relate well to her?

→ *“Girls need a lot of time—when a girl has an issue, be ready to listen...That might be all they need is for you to listen. Guys aren't born with that many words. Girls have a million words. It's just the way it is.”*

—law enforcement officer, Nashville, TN

Tip 2: Observe before you act, and then approach cautiously.

Under time constraints, it can be tempting to push the situation toward a resolution. But if you take some time to scan the scene before you take action, you will be less likely to escalate hostility. You will also be in a better position to develop rapport with the girl and gain her cooperation. In the end, it may take you less time to resolve the call.

- **Observe her behavior.** Is she yelling and escalating the situation? Is she quiet but seething? Tearful? Withdrawn? Agitated? Ask yourself what might be happening, other than the obvious. What might she be trying to communicate?
- **Is she alone or with others?** Are other girls taunting, shouting, or encouraging her to escalate the conflict? Remember that girls are more likely to take risks and defy authorities when friends are there to support them.
- **Approach slowly and observe her reaction.** If she becomes more agitated or appears to feel threatened, back up slightly to see if she calms down.
- **Try not to be impatient** or to show fear that she might get out of control. This can escalate the situation and increase her agitation.
- When you speak, **use a relaxed, low tone.** Assure her you're not there to hurt her.
- If she appears to be distraught, **let her know you would like to call someone who can help her.**
- **Be extremely cautious about touching a girl.** If she has been abused or suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, she might react strongly—even if your intent is to gently remove her from the situation, or simply to reassure her.

Tip 3: Listen, and take her seriously.

To many people, listening feels passive, as if they are not really doing anything to take charge. When a situation is tense and time is short, it can be tempting to interrupt to let the other person know what you think and what you want them to do.

→ *Listening is a powerful tool for de-escalating hostility and taking control of a tense situation.*

Listening can be especially powerful with girls because relationships are so important to them. They want and need to feel a connection with others. **If a girl has been traumatized, listening will build her trust and lessen the possibility of re-traumatizing her.** Listening also allows you more time to gather information and assess the situation.

- As you listen, **be calm and attentive.**
- **Learn her name** if you don't already know it.
- **Reflect back what you hear her saying.** For example, “You were really upset when they told you she'd started a rumor about you...” This will assure her you're listening, and also let you check to make sure you understand what she is saying.

→ *“Listen more, and try to let them open up to you. Word gets around fast how you treat girls. The more you treat them with respect, the more they come to you to talk...”*

—law enforcement officer, Dallas, TX



10 TIPS TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO SITUATIONS INVOLVING ADOLESCENT GIRLS *continued*

Tip 4: *Be aware of your body language.*

Communication experts tell us that between 65% and 90% of communication is non-verbal. **Girls are particularly attuned to non-verbal signals**, so their attention to body language is likely to be closer to the high end of that range. This means that **how you say something is just as important (if not more important) than what you say**. If you are aware of what you are communicating non-verbally—and the impact it is having—you can use it to help you manage the situation.

When you are interacting with an adolescent girl, it is important that your body language is consistent with what you are saying. If it is not, she might be confused at best; at worst, she might conclude that you are untrustworthy.

One way to manage your non-verbal behavior is by **paying attention to how and where you stand**.

- Try to **stand in a way that is non-threatening**. Examine your stance: Is it defensive or on guard? Are your arms crossed in front of you? Is your hand on your gun? Do you look as though you are receptive to listening, or as if you do not really want to hear what she has to say?
- **Position yourself close enough to hear and see the girl, but far enough away that she will not feel crowded or trapped**. If she is sitting, try not to “hover” above her.

Also, pay attention to:

- **Eye contact**. Although giving the girl your full attention is good, **allow her to break the gaze and look away**. Demanding constant eye contact may escalate her anxiety. Be aware that for some girls with mental illness or in particular cultures, eye contact may seem intrusive or uncomfortable. To avoid it, she might hide behind her hair, a hoodie, or a hat. **Do not assume that she’s being disrespectful or uncooperative if she avoids looking at you**.
- **Expressing emotion**. While smiling or laughing with a girl may be helpful at times, **be extremely careful not to smile or laugh at inappropriate times**. A girl in an intense emotional state may interpret your laugh or smile as mockery and react by shutting down or becoming hostile. Even if you find something she says to be obviously “irrational” or “ridiculous,” remember that to her, what she is expressing is a real emotion that is important.

Tip 5: *Ask questions that will encourage her to talk but also keep her focused.*

The best way to encourage a girl to talk is to **ask questions that cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”** (also known as “open-ended” questions). For example, asking “What happened in the gym?” (an open-ended question) is likely to net you more information than “Were you shouting at each other in the gym?” (a yes/no question).

Once you succeed in getting a girl to open up, it is possible that she may get off track and ramble. Or she might attempt to distract you by diverting the conversation to topics far from the situation at hand—how you are behaving, or how people have treated her.

Initially, you will want to build rapport by letting her vent while you listen respectfully. But at some point you will need to draw her back to the immediate situation so that you can resolve it and move on. The challenge is to find the right balance between building rapport and getting to the heart of the matter. To find this balance:

- **Pose questions that are open-ended but also focused**. For example, if you ask “What happened?” you might elicit a story stretching back days or even years. If you ask instead, “What happened today in the gym?” you will focus her on the current situation and you will be more likely to get the information you are looking for.
- You could also **use a blend of open-ended and yes/no questions**. If you do this, be sure to lead with at least two open-ended questions.
- **Avoid asking questions that begin with “Don’t you know that...?” “Shouldn’t you...?” or “Aren’t you...?”** Questions like these imply that you already have an answer and you just want the girl to agree with you. She is likely to conclude that you are not really interested in what she has to say, and you will risk losing her cooperation.

→ **“Look at it from her perspective. Let her know what is important to her is important to you.”**

— law enforcement officer, Orlando, FL

Tip 6: *Remain alert to safety risks.*

- **Remember that “hurt people hurt people,”** and this includes adolescent girls. If they have been abused or traumatized, girls may lash out at others, particularly those close to them or those who are trying to help. Do not be surprised by emotional outbursts.
- **Do not be caught off guard by appearances**. It is easy to become complacent when a girl is 5’2”, weighs 105 lbs, and speaks in a soft voice. Remember that any girl, no matter how quiet or petite, could be carrying a weapon and capable of hurting you. Your number one priority is safety.
- **Follow your department’s general policies and procedures** for suspects and victims. If a pat-down is needed and a female officer is present, she may be the best person to conduct it. (Some departments require this.) If a female officer is not available, have another officer present.
- **Look for weapons in unexpected places**. If you decide you need to search a purse, do not assume that common items—such as a lipstick, hairbrush, or tampon—are not a threat or that they are out-of-bounds for your search. These items have been known to conceal knives or drugs.
- **Remember that control and safety can be achieved in a number of ways other than physical force**. If you slow down, disengage, and listen to the girl, you may be able to elicit her cooperation and prevent the situation from escalating. And if she becomes distressed, your calm, steady, non-threatening approach will help to calm her, ensuring your safety as well as hers.

→ **“Things are not always what they seem. So stay on guard and don’t get distracted.”**

—law enforcement officer, Dallas, TX

10 TIPS TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO SITUATIONS INVOLVING ADOLESCENT GIRLS *continued*

Tip 7: Ignore attempts to flirt or manipulate.

When an adolescent girl feels threatened or anxious, **she may attempt to regain control by flirting or playing one officer off another.** This is particularly true if a girl has had to use her sexuality to get attention or to get basic needs met.

A girl might react differently to male or female officers. Some girls might actually be more comfortable with a male officer, particularly if there is a history of conflict with, or abuse from, a female figure. For example, if a girl has been repeatedly let down by her mother, she may respond negatively toward female officers.

- Remember that **flirting and manipulation are forms of self-protection.** It is best not to take this behavior personally or to react punitively.
- If both a female and male officer are responding together, note whether the girl responds better to one or the other, and let that person take the lead.

Tip 8: Look for signs of gang involvement.

If a girl is involved in a gang, it is important to know about it—not just because she is likely to be engaged in criminal activity, but also because gang membership puts her at greater risk for victimization and violence.

- **Become familiar with common “red flags” for gang involvement.**

→ Signs of Gang Involvement⁸

- ▶ Tattoos or ‘branding’ with gang-related symbols
- ▶ Changes in hair or dress style, or having a group of friends who have the same hair or dress style
- ▶ Unexplained material possessions such as expensive clothing, money, or jewelry
- ▶ Use of a new nickname
- ▶ Displaying gang hand signs
- ▶ Presence of firearms, ammunition, or other deadly weapons
- ▶ Not associating with long-time friends/ associates and being secretive about new friends and activities

- As you look for signs of gang involvement, **take the girl’s age into account.** The nature of her gang activity is likely to change from age 11 or 12, when girls usually affiliate with a gang, to age 18 or 19, when they often drop out.

Tip 9: Empower girls by providing choices.

Adolescents are influenced by power and importance. Taking away or restricting what power they have—especially in front of their friends—will likely escalate their aggression.

→ *By giving adolescents choices, you can help them save face, and at the same time encourage them to take responsibility for their actions.*

Although law enforcement requires you to enforce laws and consequences for breaking those laws, offering choices does not diminish your ability to do that. **By giving a girl options, you can avert her resistance to being controlled or forced into doing something, and this makes your job easier.**

- **Offer a range of options, and present each one in simple terms.** For example, if you have exhausted all your best efforts to reassure the girl and build her trust, and she still refuses to talk with you, you might say:

“At this point, you have a few choices. You could talk with me here. We could find an office or another place to talk. Or, you could come with me down to the station if you choose not to talk with me.”

- Then, **help her to consider the consequences** of each choice. You might say:

“If you talk with me here or in an office, we can likely address the problem without you coming to the police station. If you choose not to talk with me, I might need to take more formal action at the police station.”

- Finally, **ask her to make a decision, and to accept responsibility** for her choice.

“So it’s up to you. What would you like to do?”

→ Continuum of Girls’ Gang Involvement⁹

Age	Level of Gang Involvement	Age	Level of Gang Involvement
8-10 years old	Girls who have relatives belonging to gangs—or who live in neighborhoods where there is a strong gang presence—may begin their involvement in gangs at this time by “learning the ropes.”	15-18 years old	These are the hardcore years for female gang activity. Crimes such as robbery and aggravated assault peak at age 15 and remain consistently high throughout this age range.
11-12 years old	Girls are most likely to enter a gang at this age and to begin engaging in low-level crimes, usually to gain recognition from older females.	19 years old and up	The female gang member has several options at this time. If she has children, she may assume the responsibility of caring for them. To do this, she might opt out of gang life, or she might remain involved in delinquent activity as a way to support her family. Older female gang members may decide to seek legitimate employment or to advance their education. If a female remains in the gang, another option might be for her to advance into a leadership role.
13-14 years old	This is the prime age during which girls undergo gang initiation. Statistics indicate that girls at this age are active in property crime, as well as weapons offenses and violent assaults.		

10 TIPS TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO SITUATIONS INVOLVING ADOLESCENT GIRLS *continued*

Tip 10: *Before you leave the scene, try to get her connected to resources where she can get help.*

For a girl at risk of delinquency, just one trusting, consistent relationship with a concerned adult can be a powerful protective factor to keep her from moving into the juvenile justice system. Although you may not have the time (and it is not your job) to be a social worker, anything you can do to get her connected to caring adults could make a difference in the course of her life—especially if it provides an alternative to arrest or detention.

- **Become familiar with your community's resources for girls.** Keep on hand a few gender-responsive resources with particular names and phone numbers she can call. Of course, it would be difficult to become familiar with every agency in your community that offers help for girls. Learning about even one or two resources will give you choices.
- **Find out if your community has a place where adolescents can be referred for risk assessment and intervention services.** If this service is available in your community, staff there can work with the girl to figure out what services would benefit her most and then follow up to see that she gets needed services.
- If an assessment center does not exist in your community, **try to develop a relationship with a single agency** that would be able to assist a girl in crisis and connect her to resources.
- **Suggest to your supervisor that he or she advocate for the community to establish a single referral source for adolescents** so that you can either provide girls with contact information for help, or take them to a safe place that can direct them to the most appropriate resources.

→ *Alternatives to Arrest: Police-Community Collaborations*

The following innovative programs are examples of ways law enforcement can identify and connect girls with community resources as alternatives to arrest and detention.

- ▶ **Center for Juvenile Alternatives, Tucson, AZ** If a juvenile is a status or domestic violence offender, police have the option of taking them to this center for assessment, counseling, rehab planning, and short-term respite care. <http://openinn.org/programs>
- ▶ **Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority Truancy Watch, Boston, MA** Police, truancy officers and community youth advocates search for truant youth during school hours. Officers interview youth who are not in school and refer them to school officials for in-depth evaluation and response. The project opens lines of communication between youth, school personnel and law enforcement, resulting in a reduction of youth disturbances on public transit. <http://www.mbta.com/transitpolice/divisions/default.asp?id=22099>
- ▶ **County Prevention Initiative, Miami-Dade, FL** Arrest prevention is the main goal for this referral program targeting at-risk youth. The program provides interventions for youth including referrals to community-based organizations to address the juvenile's needs. <http://www.miamidade.gov/juvenileservices/prevention-services.asp>
- ▶ **The Northern Star Juvenile Diversion Program, Minneapolis, MN** Multiple law enforcement agencies collaborate with this diversion program and community-based organizations to divert first-time offenders away from the juvenile justice system and to reduce recidivism. Youth participate in volunteer work and workshops to build self esteem, communication and life skills, and an understanding of the legal system. <http://www.juvenilediversion.org>



→ Additional Resources

International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)

The IACP is the world's largest police executive membership association with over 20,000 members in 100 countries. The IACP provides resources for law enforcement including training, technical assistance, publications, training keys, model policies, and executive services such as management studies, executive searches, promotional testing, and assessment centers. www.theiacp.org

IACP Improving Law Enforcement Responses to Youth Training and Technical Assistance Program

The IACP, in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, provides training, technical assistance, and juvenile justice resources to law enforcement and juvenile justice professionals nationwide. This Program offers a series of no-cost training workshops, including *Law Enforcement Responses to Adolescent Girls*, a two-day training equipping law enforcement with effective responses to situations that involve contact with girls aged 12-17 who may be suspects, offenders, witnesses, or victims. This course teaches strategies and techniques to increase positive interactions and decrease the probability of arrest or incarceration of adolescent girls who may be at-risk. www.iacpyouth.org

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

The OJJDP provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. Resources available on their website include a juvenile justice events calendar, juvenile justice publications and statistics, information on juvenile justice programming, training and technical assistance and a model programs guide. www.ojjdp.gov

Gender Specific Resources from OJJDP's Gender Initiative Girls Study Group

RTI International, in partnership with OJJDP, established the Girls Study Group to further the understanding of female juvenile offending and to identify effective strategies for preventing and reducing female juvenile involvement in delinquency and violence. The Girls Study Group is an interdisciplinary group of scholars and practitioners convened by OJJDP to develop a comprehensive research foundation for understanding and responding to girls' involvement in delinquency. <http://girlsstudygroup.rti.org>

The Girls Study Group—Charting the Way to Delinquency Prevention for Girls
<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/223434.pdf>

Causes and Correlates of Girls' Delinquency
http://girlsstudygroup.rti.org/docs/GSG_Causes_and_Correlates_Bulletin.pdf

Fact Sheet: Girls' Delinquency
<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/228414.pdf>

Resilient Girls: Factors That Protect Against Delinquency
<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/220124.pdf>

Suitability of Assessment Instruments for Delinquent Girls
http://girlsstudygroup.rti.org/docs/GSG_Assessment_Instruments_Bulletin.pdf

¹United States Department of Justice. Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Crime in the United States, 2010*. <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2010/crime-in-the-u.s.-2010/persons-arrested> (accessed April 4, 2012).

²Wood, J. et al. (2002b). An examination of the relationships between violence exposure posttraumatic stress symptomatology and delinquent activity: An "ecopathological" model of delinquent behavior among incarcerated adolescents. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*. 6(1), 127-147.

³KQED Radio, "Underage Sex Trafficking," *Forum*, Weds, December 8, 2010.)http://www.kqed.org/a_forum/R201012080900.

⁴Caufman, E. et al. *Postraumatic Stress Disorder Among Female Juvenile Offenders*. 1998. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 37 (11), 1209-1217.

⁵National Child Traumatic Stress Network Juvenile Justice Working Group, *Trauma Among Girls in the Juvenile Justice System*. 2004. Page 4.

⁶American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. (2010). *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report-full.pdf>.

⁷American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. (2010). *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report-full.pdf>.

⁸Burke, Kelly. Gang Indicators. September 2006. <http://www.houstonda.org/gang-task-force/gang-indicators.html>.

⁹Adapted slightly from Eghigian, Mars, and Kirby, Katherine. "Girls in Gangs: On the Rise in America." *Corrections Today Magazine*, Volume 68, Issue 2, April 2006. Pages 48-50.

