



The Departure Status of Youth from Residential Care: Implications for Aftercare



Michael H. Epstein, Ed.D.¹, M. Beth Chmelka, B.S.², Alexandra L. Trout, Ph.D.¹, Patrick Tyler, M.A.P.C.², and Ronald W. Thompson, Ph.D.²

~ Abstract ~

Youth departing from out-of-home care settings face numerous challenges as they adapt to new settings or return to placements that have been unsuccessful in the past. Although several thousand youth face this transition annually, little is known about their specific needs and risks at departure. The purpose of this study was to describe the status of youth at departure from a residential group care setting.

~ Research Questions ~

1. To what settings do youth depart?
2. What are the characteristics of youth at departure?
3. Do these characteristics differ for youth departing to different levels of restrictiveness?

~ Participants ~

- 640 youth who departed from the Girls and Boys Town Family Home Program between 2003 and 2005
- 61% male, 58% Caucasian
- Mean age at departure = 16.5 (9.6 to 20.2)
- Mean length-of-stay = 18.9 months (5 days to 7.6 years)

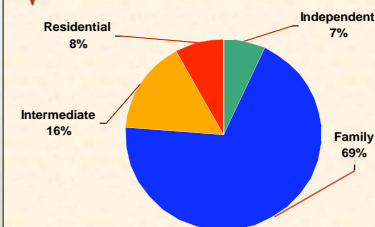
~ Methods ~

Each youth was categorized into 1 of 4 placement restrictiveness groups using a modified method described by Hodges et al. (2000):

- **Independent** = Little to no supervision and support
- **Family** = Supervised, but few supportive services
- **Intermediate** = Supervised with moderate support
- **Residential** = High level of supervision and support

~ Restrictiveness Categories ~

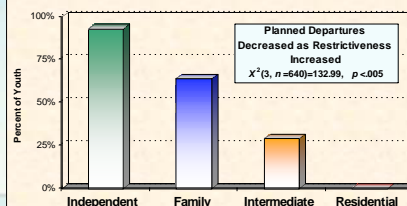
Category	Departure R.O.L.E.S.
Independent (n=44)	• Military • Independent Living
Family (n=440)	• Regular Foster Care • Supervised Independent Living • Home of Family Friend/Relative • School Dorm • Home of Parent
Intermediate (n=104)	• Group Emergency Shelter • Residential Job Corps • Group Home • Treatment/Supported Foster Care
Residential (n=52)	• Jail/Detention/Correctional Center • Inpatient Psychiatric • Drug/Alcohol Rehab • Residential Treatment Center



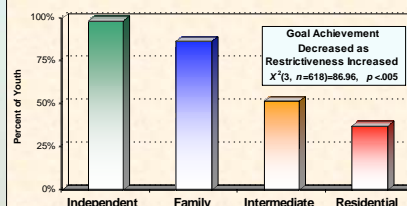
~ Results ~

- Overall, youth were less at-risk when they departed than when they were admitted.
- Three-fourths returned to either a family or independent living environment, wherein they will receive few to no services.
- Most risks were more pronounced as restrictiveness increased, displaying a linear progression.
- An exception was found in the Intermediate group, who posed the highest level of mental health and academic risk.

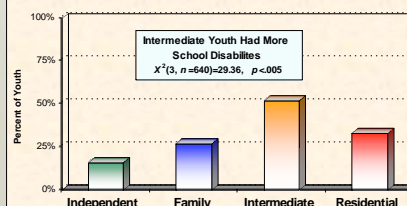
PLANNED DEPARTURE



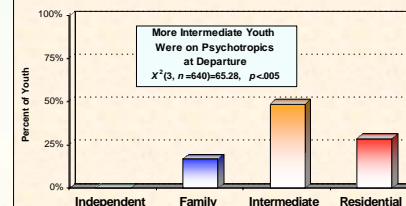
PERCENT OF TREATMENT GOALS MET



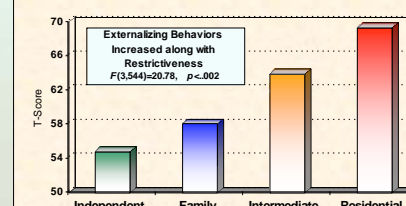
NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION



ON PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION



EXTERNALIZING PROBLEMS (CBCL)



~ Conclusions ~

- Different levels of restrictiveness call for different aftercare supports and services.
- Independent and Family settings could benefit from assistance in building a system of natural supports within their community.
- Youth departing to intermediate settings may require specialized academic and mental health services.

~ References ~

Hodges, K., Doucette-Gates, A., & Kim, C. (2000). Predicting services utilization with the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale in a sample of a sample of youth with emotional disturbance served by Center for Mental Health Services - funded demonstrations. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research, 27*, 47-59.

Affiliations

¹William E. Barkley Center for At-Risk Children's Services, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
²Girls and Boys Town, Boys Town, Nebraska

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Contact Information

Ronald W. Thompson, Ph.D., thompson@girlsandboystown.org