





# North Carolina's Juvenile Court Counselors

Donn Hargrove and Janet Mason



*Jeremy, age fifteen, sits on a hard plastic chair in the basement hallway of the county courthouse. It is crowded and noisy. He and his mother are there to meet with an "intake counselor." A police officer has filed a complaint alleging that two weeks ago Jeremy skipped school with a group of friends, broke into a house, and stole money and soft drinks. Waiting silently, Jeremy thinks about what awaits him. Is he going to jail? Is his life ruined? Will he have a record? Will he be thrown out of school? Will he ever get things straight again with his mother? What will the other boys who were involved say? Will he have to face the people whose home he broke into?*

*Rachel, sitting in her cramped office, hangs up the phone after talking with the attendance counselor at Jeremy's school. Rachel has been a court counselor for*

---

Donn Hargrove is a state-level administrator with the Juvenile Services Division in the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts; he has 25 years' experience working in juvenile justice. Janet Mason is an Institute of Government faculty member who specializes in juvenile law and social services law.

# Glossary of Juvenile Justice Terminology

**Adjudicatory hearing.** The hearing at which a judge hears evidence and determines whether the allegations in a petition are true—that is, whether the juvenile is delinquent or undisciplined as alleged in the petition.

**Aftercare.** Supervision of a juvenile who has been returned to the community from training school.

**Alternative-to-detention court counselors.** Court counselors who provide daily contact, supervision, and monitoring of a small number of juveniles who otherwise would need to be in secure detention.

**Chief court counselor.** The person responsible for administration and supervision of juvenile intake, probation, and aftercare services in a judicial district.

**Complaint.** An oral or written allegation that a juvenile is undisciplined or delinquent.

**Court.** The district court.

**Court counselor.** A person responsible for probation and aftercare services to juveniles who are on probation or are released from training school.

**Delinquent juvenile.** A juvenile who, while under age sixteen, committed a crime or infraction under state law or under a local government ordinance.

**Detention.** Confinement of a juvenile in an authorized facility pursuant to a secure custody order, pending a court hearing or placement in training school.

**Dispositional hearing.** The hearing, after a juvenile has been adjudicated to be delinquent or undisciplined, at which the judge (1) considers evidence about the child's needs, available resources, and other relevant factors and (2) designs a plan to meet the child's needs and the interests of the state.

**Intake counselor.** A person who screens a complaint alleging that a juvenile is delinquent or undisciplined in order to determine whether a petition should be filed.

**Intensive service court counselors.** Court counselors who provide concentrated probation supervision to a small number of juveniles who need extra attention.

**Judge.** A district court judge.

**Juvenile.** A person under age eighteen who is not married,

emancipated, or in the armed services. (See also Delinquent juvenile and Undisciplined juvenile.)

**Juvenile Code.** The North Carolina laws (N.C. General Statutes Chap. 7A, Subchap. XI) that address delinquent and undisciplined juveniles (as well as abused, neglected, and dependent juveniles and other matters relating to juveniles).

**Nonsecure custody.** The physical placement of a juvenile in a licensed foster home or other home or facility before adjudication and pursuant to a written court order.

**Petition.** The document filed with the court to initiate a juvenile proceeding.

**Probation.** The status of a juvenile who has been adjudicated delinquent and is subject to specified conditions under the supervision of a court counselor.

**Prosecutor.** The assistant district attorney assigned to represent the state in delinquency proceedings.

**Protective supervision.** The status of a juvenile who has been adjudicated delinquent or undisciplined and is under the supervision of a court counselor but is not on probation.

**Secure custody.** The physical placement of a juvenile in an approved detention facility, pursuant to a court order.

**Temporary custody.** The physical taking and holding of a juvenile under personal supervision without a court order.

**Training school.** Any of five residential facilities operated by the Division of Youth Services in the state Department of Health and Human Services for delinquent juveniles who are a danger to persons or property in the community and for whom no less restrictive placement is available or appropriate.

**Undisciplined juvenile.** A child who, while under age sixteen, (1) was unlawfully absent from school; (2) was regularly disobedient to and beyond the disciplinary control of his or her parent, guardian, or custodian; (3) was regularly found in places where it is unlawful for a juvenile to be; or (4) ran away from home.

*ten years and for the last three has functioned as the intake counselor. Already this morning she has participated in a detention hearing for three juveniles who ran away from their homes in Towson, Maryland, and were taken into custody the previous night. They will be detained until a court counselor can arrange for their return home. One of her fellow court counselors was called out at 3:00 a.m. to work with the police and to place the three juveniles in the local detention center.*

*Rachel reviews the written complaint relating to Jeremy, her next appointment. He is one of four "intakes" that she will see today. Rachel first met Jeremy and his*

*mother six months ago when the mother came in to file a complaint alleging that the boy was "undisciplined" (see the glossary, above). He was skipping school and staying away from home for days at a time. Rachel had diverted the complaint and referred mother and son to a local mental health center for counseling services. Through her involvement with a local interagency group, Rachel knows that though Jeremy and his mother participated in several sessions, school officials still are concerned about his behavior and attendance problems. In addition, Rachel has talked with the couple whose home was broken into. They reported that the damage*

to the house was \$500 and said that they do not know Jeremy or any of the others involved in the incident.

Rachel glances at a half-written court report that is due tomorrow, then steps into the hall to find Jeremy and his mother.

Thus Jeremy, like more than 30,000 other young people in North Carolina every year, enters the juvenile justice system. And Rachel, as other intake counselors across the state do every day, begins a process aimed at answering this key question: How can the juvenile justice system and the community help this child and his family while protecting the community and the rights of other citizens?

It is estimated that fewer than 2.5 percent of the state's population of children under the age of sixteen will be referred to juvenile court intake services.<sup>1</sup> In 1996, of the 30,347 juveniles that court counselors evaluated in the intake process, the counselors referred only 18,580 for court action; the others they diverted from court. Of those who went to court, judges placed 9,380 on active supervision or probation. On any given day, court counselors were providing active supervision services to an average of 8,102 juveniles. Of these, 1,019 were committed to training schools during the year. (See Figure 1.)

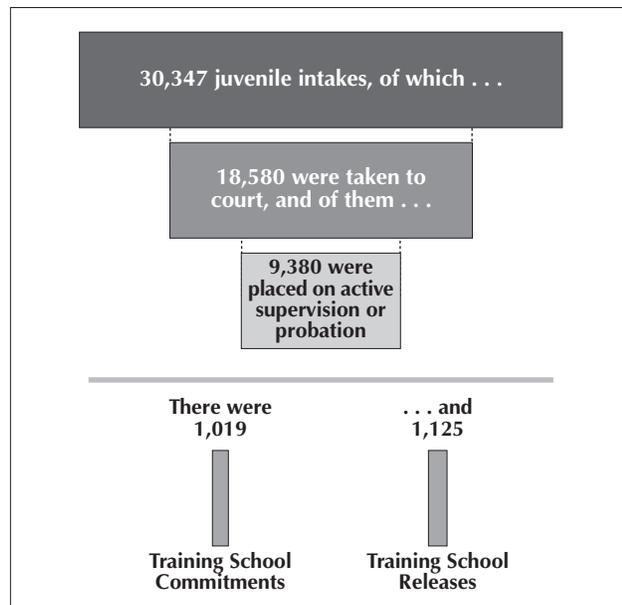
The most common offenses that bring juveniles into the system are property crimes such as burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft. In 1995 there were 6,498 juvenile arrests for property crimes, a 19.9 percent increase from 1990. A much smaller but growing number of cases involved violent crimes such as murder, rape, sexual offense, robbery, or aggravated assault. In 1995 there were 1,077 juvenile arrests for violent crimes, an increase of 24.7 percent from 1990.<sup>2</sup>

This article describes the role of court counselors in ensuring that the juvenile justice system handles such offenses in a manner consistent with the best interests of the juvenile offenders, their families, and the community. For a description of the state administrative unit that employs court counselors, see "The Juvenile Services Division," page 6.

## The Juvenile Court System

Before the turn of the century, children who committed crimes in North Carolina were treated in court just like adults who broke the law. Children who committed serious offenses were placed in prisons along with adult inmates.<sup>3</sup> Today, children who commit

**Figure 1**  
Number of Juveniles at Key Points in  
the North Carolina Juvenile Justice System, 1996



Source: Data on juveniles in intake, in court, and on supervision or probation, from North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts, Juvenile Services Division; data on juveniles committed to and released from training school, from Division of Youth Services.

criminal offenses when they are under the age of sixteen are subject to special procedures in the juvenile court system. That system, as it has evolved over the past one hundred years, reflects the following beliefs about how the state should respond to juveniles who break the law:

1. Except in the most serious cases, juveniles should be diverted from the court system when that is consistent with the public safety.
2. When juveniles *are* brought into court, they are entitled to procedural fairness and to most of the rights that adult defendants have.
3. When the court finds that a juvenile has violated a criminal law, the response should be a rehabilitative "disposition" designed to address the child's needs and the state's objectives. Dispositions should be consistent with the following principles:
  - Whenever possible, the juvenile should be left at home, and community resources should be used to provide services to the child and his or her family.
  - The disposition should be the least restrictive plan that is appropriate.

## The Juvenile Services Division

Since 1973 the Juvenile Services Division of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts has provided a statewide system of services for children who are alleged or found by the court to be delinquent or undisciplined juveniles. These services are provided by court counselors who are employed by the division but work in local communities. From its early days, the division has developed policies to standardize court counselors' work with juveniles who either are on probation or are released from training schools. Division standards address, among other things, the development of treatment plans for each child, the number of personal contacts that counselors have with juveniles and their families, and case reviews by supervisors. The division also developed and provides pre-court intake services in order to divert some children from court to other more appropriate community services.

The Juvenile Services Division operates primarily as a field-based service program, with 426 personnel in the field and 12 administrative and clerical staff in the state office. Of the field staff, 38 are chief court counselors, each heading an office or offices that serve one of the 39 district court districts into which the state is divided. Of the remainder, 63 are intake counselors, 219 are regular court counselors, and 28 are intensive service court counselors. The 1997 General Assembly authorized 25 new court counselor positions.

Court counselors must have a college degree; most of them have majored in social work, psychology, criminal justice, or a related field. They are required

to live in the judicial district where they work. All court counselors and other field staff are state employees who work for the Juvenile Services Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts. The chief court counselor in each district hires the court counselors and other local staff.

Personnel in the state office provide overall program management to ensure uniform service standards, coordinate and provide training and consultation for local staff, collect data, and respond to legislators' and other policy makers' requests for information or recommendations. Division administrators encourage local autonomy so that each district office can respond appropriately to local community concerns. For example, one district may need to focus its efforts on problems relating to gang violence, while another district might need to focus on teen pregnancy.

In all districts, court counselors provide intake, probation supervision, and aftercare services. In very small counties, one court counselor might perform all of these duties. In larger counties each of these functions may require the services of many counselors.

In many judicial districts the primary work of court counselors is augmented by specialized services such as alternatives-to-detention and transportation programs. Alternatives-to-detention counselors provide daily contact, supervision, and monitoring of a small number of juveniles who otherwise would need to be in secure detention. Transportation officers provide for the secure movement of individuals between court, detention, and training school.

- A juvenile should not be committed to an institution unless other resources have been exhausted or are not appropriate.

The points in the juvenile system that reflect most concretely the belief that children are entitled to special treatment are "intake" and "disposition." These also are the points at which court counselors are involved most critically. Their decisions and skills play a major role in determining how a child's case progresses through the juvenile justice system. Court counselors, in concert with district court judges, attorneys, social workers, and other professionals, are charged with pur-

suing the dual—and sometimes competing—goals of rehabilitation and community protection.

To understand the role of court counselors in the juvenile justice system, it is necessary to understand some basic terminology (see the glossary), which children are subject to juvenile laws and procedures, and the primary stages of a juvenile case.

### Children Subject to Juvenile Procedures

Court counselors work with children who are alleged to be, or have been found by the court to be, either "delinquent juveniles" or "undisciplined juve-

niles.” A juvenile is delinquent if he or she commits a crime or infraction or violates a local government ordinance while under age sixteen. A juvenile is undisciplined if he or she, while under age sixteen, is truant, runs away from home, is beyond his or her parents’ control, or frequents a place where it is unlawful for a juvenile to be.

The child’s age when the alleged conduct occurred (not when he or she is caught or goes to court) determines whether the child is subject to juvenile procedures. Although a person is a juvenile until he or she reaches age eighteen, children may be classified as delinquent or undisciplined only for conduct that occurred before they become sixteen. Court counselors often work with sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds, but that involvement always is based on conduct that occurred before the juvenile’s sixteenth birthday.<sup>4</sup> A child cannot be classified as delinquent or undisciplined for his or her conduct that occurred before the sixth birthday.

Juvenile matters are in the jurisdiction of the district court. The district court judge, however, can transfer a juvenile’s case to superior court, where the child will be tried as an adult, if the judge finds probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed a felony while he or she was at least thirteen years old but younger than sixteen. (If the felony is first-degree murder, the judge *must* transfer the case.) These cases begin in the juvenile system, however, and court counselors are involved up to the point at which the case is transferred to superior court.

## Court Counselor’s Role with the Child and in the Community

The scope of the services provided by juvenile court counselors includes a continuing involvement with the juvenile, his or her family, and the community through intake, court, supervision and probation, training school, and aftercare. These are the core services of the juvenile justice system in North Carolina. Court counselors also serve the court, where their primary responsibilities are to provide information and recommendations, to advocate for the child’s and the community’s best interest, and to assist with juvenile court management.

### Intake

Intake is a screening and evaluation process leading to an intake counselor’s decision on whether a

juvenile’s case will go into court. Complaints alleging that a juvenile is undisciplined or delinquent come to the counselor from law enforcement officers, agencies, and individuals. Unless the counselor approves the filing of a petition, the matter ordinarily will not go to court.<sup>5</sup>

The counselor *must* approve the filing of a petition if the counselor finds reasonable grounds to believe the juvenile committed murder, rape, a sexual offense, arson, a controlled-substance felony, first-degree burglary, a crime against nature, or a felony that involved willful infliction of serious bodily injury or was committed with a deadly weapon. In all other cases, if the counselor finds reasonable grounds to believe the juvenile is delinquent or undisciplined, he or she decides whether to

- approve the filing of a petition,
- refer the juvenile to a community resource, or
- take no further action.

In each case, if practicable, the counselor must interview (1) the person who made the complaint and anyone else who is a victim of the juvenile’s conduct; (2) the juvenile and his or her parent, guardian, or custodian; and (3) anyone else who has pertinent information. Throughout intake, the counselor’s role is to act as consultant to the parents and the community. Intake also can involve supplying information and reports to the court, assisting in the timely preparation of petitions, assisting victims, and facilitating the resolution of complaints.

Approximately 35 percent of all complaints received are diverted to other community programs, and the parties never appear in court.

*During the one-hour meeting, Rachel talks with Jeremy and his mother about the incident that sparked the police officer’s complaint. Jeremy admits some limited involvement but places most of the blame on the other boys. They also talk about problems with his behavior at home and at school, for which Jeremy also blames everyone but himself. Rachel must decide whether Jeremy will “go to court.” She, Jeremy, and his mother exchange ideas, and Rachel weighs the alternatives for a plan of rehabilitation and treatment for this child. She decides that this time it is in Jeremy’s and the community’s best interest that he go to court. She approves the filing of the complaint against him as a petition and forwards it to the clerk of court for placement on the docket for hearing. The hearing will be in a juvenile court in approximately two weeks.*

---

## Adjudication

The adjudicatory, or fact-finding, hearing looks very much like the trial of an adult, except that all juvenile cases are heard by a judge only, never a jury. In a delinquency case, the juvenile always is represented by an attorney. Formal rules of evidence apply, and to find a juvenile delinquent, the judge must make findings “beyond a reasonable doubt”—the same standard that applies in adult criminal trials.

Statements that the juvenile made to the counselor during intake are not admissible during this hearing. The state must prove the allegations using other evidence. If the juvenile is able to understand the significance and ramifications of doing so, he or she may admit to the offense and focus on the next stage, the disposition.

*Two weeks later Jeremy and his mother return to the courthouse. They see Rachel in the crowded hallway, and she directs them to the courtroom. They are joined there by Jeremy's court-appointed attorney, who met with Jeremy the week before. Eleven other “new” juveniles are coming before the court today. The total docket consists of twenty-four cases. As he waits for his case to be called, Jeremy is extremely nervous. He has heard that this judge is tough and sends a lot of juveniles “away.” He has asked Rachel a lot of questions about what might happen, and she has told him what her recommendations will be if the judge finds him delinquent.*

*Jeremy's adjudication hearing starts about two hours later. After hearing testimony from the police officer and the victim, the judge determines that Jeremy committed the offense and is delinquent.*

## Disposition

The dispositional hearing can follow immediately after the adjudicatory hearing or be held later. An adult at this stage would be “sentenced”—subjected to punitive sanctions that are computed on the basis of the seriousness of the offense and the adult's prior record. In a juvenile case, however, the judge considers not only these factors but also a broad range of information relative to the juvenile's needs, the family situation, and community resources and then designs a plan tailored to the child's specific needs and circumstances. Regardless of the nature of the offense, the judge at this stage would learn about and consider any substance-abuse problems, special edu-

cational needs or problems, and medical or psychological problems. The judge would evaluate the family's ability to address the child's needs as well as the availability of resources to help him or her and the family.

A large part of the intake counselor's role is to ensure that the judge has information that is accurate and as complete as possible at this stage. In addition, the court counselor usually makes a recommendation to the judge about the disposition. This hearing is less formal than the adjudicatory hearing, and the rules of evidence are relaxed, so that the judge can consider written summaries and reports, including a written report from the counselor.

When a juvenile is found to be delinquent, the judge often places him or her on probation, which allows a court counselor to provide active supervision, monitor the child's compliance with conditions set by the court, identify his or her need for treatment and services, and mobilize resources. In twenty-five districts, intensive supervision counselors are available to provide concentrated supervision to a small number of juveniles who need extra attention during probation. When a juvenile is found to be undisciplined, the judge may place the child under protective supervision, which is similar to probation but does not place enforceable conditions on the child's behavior.

Other dispositional options for delinquent or undisciplined juveniles include placing the child in the custody of a relative, a county department of social services, or some other suitable person or agency; releasing the child from compulsory school attendance; ordering appropriate evaluations or treatment; or, if no further action is needed, dismissing the case. For delinquent juveniles, the judge also may order the following: restitution, payment of a fine, community service, short-term confinement in a detention facility, or loss of the privilege of obtaining a driver's license. Whenever possible, within the bounds of the need to protect the community, dispositions emphasize working with the juvenile in the community. In some cases, after community resources have been exhausted or found to be inappropriate, a delinquent juvenile is placed in a state-operated training school. Such a commitment usually lasts several months. The court counselor stays involved with the child during this time and provides transitional aftercare services when he or she is released from training school.

The counselor keeps the judge informed of a juvenile's progress throughout the period of probation or other disposition and can take the case back to court for review.

After the judge finds that Jeremy is delinquent, the parties agree to proceed directly to the dispositional hearing. Rachel gives the judge information about the previous diversion and referral to a mental health program and about Jeremy's school record and home situation. She explains that Jeremy is a child with multiple problems: he may have a learning disability; he lives in a poor, "rough" neighborhood with his mother and a younger brother who is developmentally and physically disabled; he has no contact with his father, who deserted the family years ago and provides no support; he has experimented with marijuana and is being pressured by older neighborhood boys to begin dealing. Rachel expresses concern that if these problems are left unattended, they will lead Jeremy into a life of criminal activity. She emphasizes that Jeremy's mother is overwhelmed by the younger child's needs and is increasingly unable to supervise Jeremy adequately. Jeremy's mother confirms this but says that Jeremy is not a bad boy and she does not want him "sent away."

Rachel recommends to the judge that Jeremy be placed on probation under the formal supervision of a court counselor. The judge agrees and orders that the boy be placed on probation for one year. As conditions of probation, the judge orders Jeremy to cooperate and meet regularly with the court counselor, keep a curfew, attend school regularly, participate in a restitution program to reimburse the homeowners for a portion of their damages, and refrain from violating any laws. The hearing concludes about thirty minutes after Jeremy entered the courtroom.

Jeremy and his mother are confused and anxious. Rachel, whose intake role is completed, introduces them and Jeremy's attorney to Anthony, the court counselor who will supervise the boy while he is on probation. They all crowd into a corner of the hallway and talk for fifteen minutes about what has happened. Anthony schedules an appointment for Jeremy and his mother to return to the juvenile services office in several days. Case planning for Jeremy has begun, and Rachel and Anthony return to the courtroom for their next case.

### Implementation—Probation and Aftercare Supervision

After the dispositional orders are entered, court counselors offer a broad array of services—counseling, coordinating with other agencies, developing and implementing case supervision plans, explaining and

enforcing court orders, supervising regular or intensive probation, and supervising and monitoring juveniles who are released from training schools.

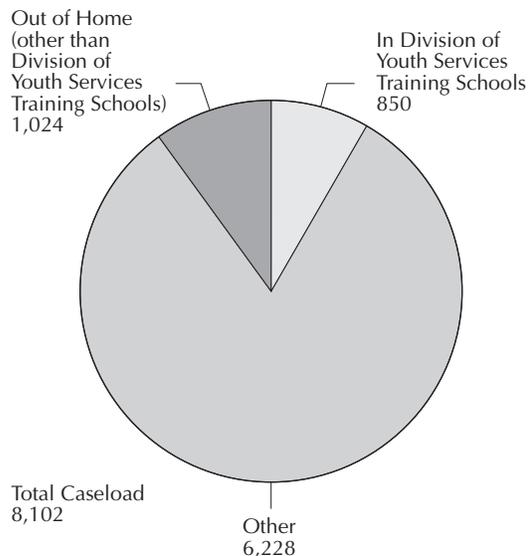
Even when the judge commits a juvenile to training school or orders some other out-of-home placement, the counselor has responsibilities toward the child and the community. The counselor gathers and provides medical and social information that is required for the juvenile's admission; assists in developing residential treatment plans; visits regularly with the child during his or her confinement; makes efforts to prepare the family, the child, and the community for his or her return; participates in prerelease planning; arranges and supervises home visits; and explores other resources when a placement fails or is terminated.

A juvenile's needs, the family situation, the unavailability of resources, or the risk to the community may require that the child be placed away from his or her home—and sometimes out of the community. In 1996, there were 1,024 North Carolina juveniles in court-ordered out-of-home placements other than training schools (see Figure 2). These include wilderness camps, psychiatric treatment centers, residential substance-abuse programs, long- and short-term group homes, private educational programs, and specialized and regular foster homes, among other facilities. The court counselor's biggest challenge may be to know about various placement resources, the kinds of juveniles they will accept, and the appropriateness of their services for children with particular needs. The judges and even the juveniles' families and attorneys often look to the court counselor to explore, understand, and explain the options that are available to meet the child's needs. As resources for delinquent ("criminal") juveniles shrink, this challenge grows.

Besides juveniles who need out-of-home placement, however, counselors supervise many more children who are placed on probation and remain at home. This duty includes maintaining regular contact with the juvenile and his or her family as well as with the personnel at the child's school and anyone involved in treating or counseling him or her. It also includes scheduling court reviews when a juvenile violates probation or when the counselor believes that something in the dispositional order should be changed.

*Jeremy sits again in the hallway outside the court counselors' office. The place seems lighter and less threatening than it did a year ago. Jeremy has come to appreciate*

**Figure 2**  
Average Caseload of Juveniles, Including Juveniles in Placements (Per Day, 1996)



Source: Data on juveniles in out-of-home placements other than Division of Youth Services training schools and on average daily caseload, from North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts, Juvenile Services Division; data on juveniles in Division of Youth Services training schools, from Division of Youth Services.

his relationship with Anthony. During his period of supervision, Jeremy has been “successful”—he has not returned to court on either a violation of probation or a new delinquency charge. Anthony and Jeremy have worked together with the local school social workers to improve his position at school. School officials reevaluated Jeremy and determined that he has a severe learning disability. A school-based interagency group, which included Anthony, recommended to the school principal that Jeremy be placed in a special after-school tutoring program. Anthony helped Jeremy realize that if he did not behave well in school and attend regularly, he would lose this opportunity for special services.

Anthony also arranged for Jeremy’s mother to participate in a parenting support group operated by a local church. This group helped her gain the confidence she needs to supervise Jeremy more effectively. Jeremy had a face-to-face meeting with the victims, at which he apologized and gave them the \$200 restitution payment he had earned through participating in the community service program.

The road was not completely smooth, however. During his first month on probation, Jeremy continued to stay out very late. At Anthony’s suggestion, Jeremy and his mother agreed to his placement in a local ninety-day

emergency shelter home. While there, Jeremy continued to attend his local school, and he and his mother participated in joint counseling sessions. This short “cooling off” period allowed both Jeremy and his mother to catch their breath and reassess their relationship, and it gave Jeremy a needed period of separation from his neighborhood. It worked very well. Both were better able to use the other resources that were being offered to them.

Anthony’s primary role was to lead both Jeremy and his mother to the proper resources, while holding them accountable for meeting the conditions of the court order. His knowledge of these resources and his caring and supportive approach proved to be just the type of intervention that Jeremy needed. Anthony works with thirty-six other clients; not all are as successful as Jeremy. Some parents are not able or willing to participate in getting the help their children need. Some juveniles—about 15 percent of Anthony’s cases—engage in such serious criminal behavior that secure lockup is the only option. Some—about 20 percent—need longer-term out-of-home placement.

## Community Advocacy

Court counselors cannot be effective without active involvement in the communities where they and the youth they serve live. First, to garner resources for juveniles, counselors need to know what is available in the community and have credibility and rapport with the people who manage those resources. Second, court counselors are in an almost unique position to identify gaps in resources and to advocate filling them. Often they function as resource developers, assisting in community initiatives to develop needed programs and treatment resources. As the needs of North Carolina’s juvenile population expand, so do the demands for community advocacy and involvement by court counselors.

Within the community, court counselors work in collaboration with other community agencies, programs, and resources. Counselors try to blend the services they provide into the existing continuum of services in the community because they believe strongly in the effectiveness of interagency cooperation. For example, court counselors, school social workers, mental health personnel, and social services workers all may work together to place a juvenile in a group home, to arrange for substance-abuse treatment, and to enroll the child in educational or

---

vocational training. Court counselors must be aware of the values, interests, and concerns of their communities and recognize differences among communities even within the judicial district they serve. The services they offer must accurately reflect both the community's needs and its capacity to support the service.

Court counselors carry out a variety of functions. They must be part lawyer, part social worker, part big brother or sister, part community organizer, part psychologist, part probation officer. Court counselors also are role models, both for the juveniles with whom they work and for others in the community. They are called upon frequently to serve as mediators between youth and authority figures concerning conflicts that arise at school, at home, or in the community. Counselors frequently take juveniles to and from detention or training school facilities. They accept invitations to teach in training programs for law enforcement officers and other public and private agency personnel. They like to tell about the work they do.

*Today is a happy occasion. Jeremy enters the office to meet with Anthony and discuss the end of his probation. The two sit and talk and enjoy the moment. Jeremy thanks Anthony for sticking with him. Anthony tells Jeremy that he will be placing his case on next*

*week's docket for termination of probation. Anthony wishes Jeremy good luck, knowing that some good things have happened. He fully expects that Jeremy will be one of the kids who "make it."*

*Jeremy leaves, and Anthony sees Rachel going down the hall. He calls out to her, and, as they leave to have lunch, he smiles and says, "Remember Jeremy? I have some good news for you."*

## Notes

1. 1996 *Juvenile Services Division Monthly Report* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts, 1996).

2. State Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Statistics for North Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C.: SBI, 1995).

3. See Betty Gene Alley and John Thomas Wilson, *North Carolina Juvenile Justice System: A History, 1868-1993* (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts, 1994).

4. A juvenile who commits a crime on or after his or her sixteenth birthday is subject to most of the same procedures that apply to adults, and a court counselor has no role in that child's case. Neither do court counselors have a role with juveniles who, after becoming sixteen, run away from home or are beyond their parents' control.

5. The case can go to court without the counselor's approval if, at the complainant's request, the prosecutor reviews the counselor's decision and overrules it. ☐