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ABSTRACT

This paper summarizes a diverse body of literature on Achievement Place, a community-based program for juveniles in group home settings. The program's Teaching-Family treatment model is described in detail as a base for presenting findings about its ability to change behaviors. Preliminary data from follow-up studies of attempts to extend the treatment method to other studies are also presented. The first section presents a brief overview of Achievement Place and the Teaching-Family model, together with a list of conclusions reached in a prior review. The details of the Teaching-Family model developed at Achievement Place are presented, including the point system, self-government system, and teaching parents. A second section presents some of the findings reported by researchers who have examined the program, its results and costs. The report concludes by raising certain questions future research on Achievement Place might pursue. (JAC)

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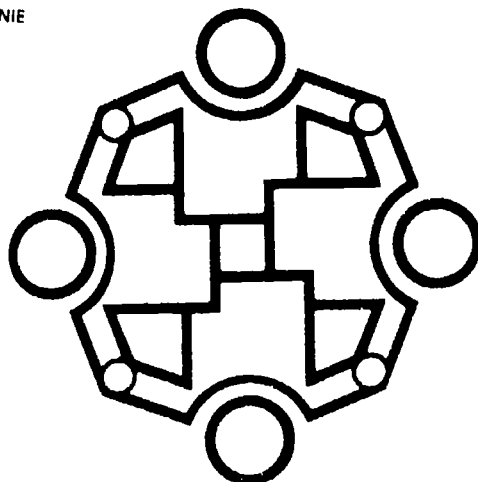
Reports of the National Juvenile Justice Assessment Centers

Achievement Place: The Teaching-Family Treatment Model in a Group-Home Setting

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Reports of the National Juvenile Justice Assessment Centers

Achievement Place: The Teaching-Family Treatment Model in a Group-Home Setting

by
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PREFACE

This paper summarizes a diverse body of literature on Achievement Place -- a community-based program for juveniles living in group home settings. The program's Teaching-Family treatment model is described in some detail as a base for presenting findings about its ability to change behaviors. Several successful attempts have been made to extend the treatment method to other settings, and preliminary data from followup studies are available. These are presented as well.

The articles and papers we have read were written for those interested in the treatment methodology per se. The characteristics of the youths served, the types of offenses they may have committed, the criteria for selecting them for the program, and the practical details of daily living are not given in detail in all instances. The Achievement Place Program model has been used as an alternative to institutionalization for juveniles adjudicated delinquent. It has also been used for juveniles classified as dependent and neglected and even for children not classified for court purposes.

For these and other reasons it is not possible at the present time to arrive at conclusions about the role of the several Achievement Place programs in their respective systems of juvenile justice. Additional research is needed. This report ends by pointing to some of the questions future research might pursue.

To have said the above is not to have criticized the literature on Achievement Place. Cumulatively, the literature is superior to any other pertaining to alternative programs.

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(in 1979)

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INTRODUCTION

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 has heightened interest in community-based programs that can be used as alternatives to juvenile justice processing or to incarceration in secure facilities.¹ Such programs

. . . attempt to provide an environment that will establish the behavior necessary to bring the youths back into contact with the normal community resources available for developing academic, social, and vocational skills. Also, these programs aim at strengthening the natural family to the point that it will be able to reassume the family's goals and responsibility for the child.²

Achievement Place provides one model for such programs -- the Teaching-Family model. It was developed originally by Elery L. Phillips and others at the University of Kansas beginning in 1968³ and use of it has spread to other parts of the United States as well.⁴ The accomplishments of the Teaching-Family model have been demonstrated repeatedly: over a hundred descriptions or evaluations have been published. This report attempts to summarize that literature and make it accessible to individuals and organizations interested in program models suitable for community-based settings.⁵

The first section of this report provides a brief overview of Achievement Place and its Teaching-Family model together with a list of conclusions reached in a prior review. Then the details of the Teaching-Family model developed at Achievement Place are presented. A second section presents some of the findings reported by researchers who have examined the program, its results, and costs.

ACHIEVEMENT PLACE: AN OVERVIEW

Achievement Place has been described as a

. . . community-based, family-style, behavior modification, group home treatment program for delinquent youths. . .

The goals of Achievement Place are to teach the youths appropriate social skills such as manners and introductions, academic skills such as study and homework behavior, self-help skills such as meal preparation and personal hygiene, and pre-vocational skills that are thought to be necessary for them to be successful in the community.⁶

Some idea of what the youths admitted to Achievement Place are like can be obtained from a summary of selected characteristics reported for the first 41 boys entering the original program in Lawrence, Kans. Sixty-one percent of the youths were white; 29 percent black. American Indian (7 percent) and Mexican American (2 percent) youths made up the remainder. Achievement test scores placed the youths an average of two grade levels behind their actual grade levels and over half (57 percent) of the youths had already failed one or more grade levels. Sixty-five percent of the youths were suspended from school at the time they were admitted to Achievement Place. All had been adjudicated in juvenile court, 52 percent involving felonies. Two-thirds of the youths lived in homes lacking one or both natural parents, and slightly more than half of the families were receiving some form of public assistance for income.⁷

The Teaching-Family model developed for Achievement Place teaches juveniles appropriate behaviors in a family-like setting. The staff focuses on behaviors that can be observed and recorded. Some behaviors are viewed as useful to the juveniles in school, at home, and in the community more generally. Other behaviors are viewed as potentially not useful and even counterproductive in the sense that they do not provide the juvenile with what he wants in a socially acceptable manner. The Teaching-Family model seeks to increase the frequencies of behaviors that are useful and to decrease the frequencies of those that are not.

The model assumes that a delinquent youth has not learned the appropriate behaviors that will enable him to interact with others in a socially appropriate manner and therefore has what is called a "behavioral deficiency."⁸ Achievement Place is designed to correct that behavioral deficiency by teaching juveniles behaviors that are socially appropriate.

When a youth enters Achievement Place he meets the other youths in a program and is given a tour of the house. Then he is introduced to the point system that is used to help motivate the youths to learn new, appropriate behavior. Each youth uses a point card to record his behavior and the number of points he earns and loses. When a youth first enters the program his points are exchanged for privileges each day. After the youth learns the connection between earning points and earning privileges this daily point-system is extended to a weekly-point system where he exchanges points for privileges only once a week.

Eventually, the point system is faded out to a merit system where no points are given or taken away and all privileges are free. The merit system is the last system a youth must progress through before returning to his natural home. However, almost all youths are on the weekly point-system for most of their 9-12 month stay at Achievement Place. Because there are nearly unlimited opportunities to earn points most of the youths earn all of the privileges most of the time.

The main emphasis of the program is on teaching the youths the appropriate behaviors they need to be successful participants in the community. We have found that a community-based group home that keeps the youths in daily contact with their community offers many opportunities to observe and modify deviant behaviors and to teach the youths alternative ways to deal with their parents, teachers, and friends. These behaviors are taught by the professional teaching parents who direct and operate the treatment program. The teaching parents live at Achievement Place with their "family" of six to eight delinquent youths and provide them with 24-hour care and guidance. The teaching parents also work with the youths' parents and teachers to help solve problems that occur at home and at school.⁹

A recent report following up on youths who had completed the program listed the following tentative conclusions regarding the program's results.

The Achievement Place group home model was acting as an alternative to institutionalization for the majority of the youths it served.

The youths who took part in the Achievement Place programs were much less likely to be institutionalized within two years after treatment than were similar youths who were originally treated in the institutional program.

During treatment in Achievement Place there was marked reduction in police and court contacts and an increase in school attendance.

In the second year, after treatment, the Achievement Place youths had fewer police and court contacts than before treatment. However, equivalent aged youths who had been treated in an institution had a similar reduction.

The Achievement Place youths were more likely to continue in school after treatment than the youths who were treated in the institution.

In addition, the preliminary data indicate that:

The cost of treatment in Achievement Place was substantially less than the cost of treatment in the institution.

The consumers (youths, parents, board of directors, school personnel, court personnel, social welfare personnel, and juvenile court personnel) were satisfied with the Achievement Place program.

The Achievement Place research program produced a training program which resulted in approximately 35 replications of the original program.¹⁰

These above conclusions were characterized as tentative because of methodological reasons including use of small samples of youths.¹¹ Details will be provided later in this report. We have presented the conclusions here so that the reader may have an overview of the purposes, activities, and outcomes of Achievement Place before beginning a fuller discussion of each.

THE TEACHING-FAMILY MODEL

The design and operation of the Teaching-Family model consists of three components: a multilevel token-economy system, a social-reinforcement system, and a self-government system.¹² Each component is described below, and we note here that at Achievement Place the three components are referred to collectively as the Motivation System.

We take up the token economy system first: this is because much of the available literature about Achievement Place is devoted to studies evaluating its use and effects. The social reinforcement system is described second: researchers at Achievement Place have learned from experience that the interaction between youths and teaching parents is of critical importance for the success of the program. The self-government system is described last.

THE TOKEN ECONOMY SYSTEM

Token economies had received considerable attention before Achievement Place adopted one version for its program.¹³ In a token

system certain basic requirements must be met: a target behavior must be identified for intervention and a medium of exchange selected to serve as the token. Tickets, stars, poker chips, points on a tally sheet, plastic credit cards, computer cards, and currency created specifically for the program have been used as tokens. (Achievement Place uses points on a tally sheet.) Such tokens can be "cashed in" for special foods, cigarettes, drinks, privileges, money, cosmetics, transistor radios, or other items wanted by the youths in residence. The items for which tokens can be exchanged are referred to collectively as "privileges."

The value of the tokens is enhanced if they can be used to buy things especially valued by the subject; if they cannot, the effectiveness of a token economy system will be limited. The effectiveness of a token system depends also upon clear specification of behaviors for which tokens are to be given or taken away, together with the token value of each act. It is essential that youths understand the token system's rules and procedures. Youths must know which behaviors will win or lose tokens. In this way a youth can learn to discriminate which behaviors are socially appropriate and which are not. The importance of the tokens themselves is that they provide feedback on specific behaviors more immediately than do the privileges or items they buy later. A youth knows which specific behavior earned the privileges he wanted and so begins to sense which behaviors are socially appropriate.

A token economy is used to construct a social environment for a youth in which he will learn behaviors appropriate for successful social relationships. It is an environment in which behavior has planned consequences, usually of two kinds: consequences that increase a rate of behavior and consequences that decrease a rate of behavior.

Typically, behaviors are increased by presenting points following desired behaviors and decreased by removing points following undesired behaviors. Giving and taking away points are equivalent to giving and taking away the privileges the points will buy.

The systematic application of such methods to increase appropriate behavior and decrease inappropriate behavior is often called behavioral treatment, behavior modification, or applied behavior analysis.¹⁴ In a token economy the tokens are the immediate consequences of behaviors. Later, they may be exchanged for privileges. Without tokens, privileges cannot be purchased.

Token economies have great flexibility. They may focus on one behavior, just a few, or on many behaviors at the same time. The behaviors can be structured in sequences so that when youths learn certain behaviors they can move into a different stage where other behaviors become the focuses and the behaviors learned earlier are expected without payment. This is the case at Achievement Place.

THE POINT SYSTEM AT ACHIEVEMENT PLACE

The token economy at Achievement Place is a complex structure working in relation to a great many behaviors at the same time. But the research evaluating it often can study only one or a few behaviors at a time and this can give a misleading impression to those who do not know all the literature about the program. To portray the program's complexity there follows a list of behaviors that might be being worked on simultaneously on a given day. It also gives the number of points that youths may gain or lose.

At Achievement Place a youth begins the point system with the points tabulated and exchanged for privileges every few hours. He then moves to a level during which points are tabulated and exchanged only once in 24 hours. Next, the tabulation and exchange occur only once a week. Later, a youth may move from the point system to the Merit System where privileges are free. He remains responsible for the behaviors that previously earned or lost him points. Finally, a Homeward Bound System is used for youths who are about to go home.¹⁵

After the teaching parents compute the points earned (hourly, daily, or weekly) youths can exchange them for privileges they want. At Achievement Place the privileges usually are some variation of the following list.

Basics. The "basic" privileges are sold as a package and include the use of tools, telephone, radio, recreation room, and the privilege of going outdoors.

Snacks. The privilege to have snacks permits the youth to have them when they are available, usually after school and before bedtime.

TV. This privilege permits the youth to watch television almost anytime.

Hometime. With this privilege the youth may go home and he may also attend extracurricular activities at school (e.g., sports events), go downtown, and visit friends. However, permission must be obtained from the teaching parents or natural parents before this privilege can be used.

Out of Saturday Work. There are certain days when the entire household engages in cleaning the house or other maintenance chores without earning points. This privilege allows the youth to avoid this task.

Bonds. Bonds may be used to purchase clothes, gifts, and advancement to higher systems and to eventually return to his natural home.

CHART 1
Sample of Point Consequences

Behavior	Points
SOCIAL	
Citizenship	
Participation in family conference (new boy)	+ 1,500
Reading (depending on ability)	+10-100/pg.
Special news (T.V.)	+ 20/min.
Elected or candidate for school office	+ 3,000
Aggressiveness	
Fighting (second person objects)	-10,000
Hitting (second person doesn't object)	- 1,000
Temper (yelling, slamming objects, stomping, etc.)	- 3,000
Teasing (name calling, annoying gestures, etc. if second person objects)	- 2,000
Teasing (if second person doesn't object)	- 500
Noise and rowdiness	- 3,000
Arguing (peers)	Minor Major - 300 - 3,000
Arguing (adults)	Minor Major - 500 - 5,000
Manners	
Interrupting	- 300
Bragging (if it is frequent)	- 1,000
Moodiness (after first warning)	- 500
Volunteering (when no one else does)	+ 500
Procrastination (after first warning)	- 500
Odd facial expressions (after first warning)	- 500
Obnoxious behavior	- 1,000
Appropriate greeting behavior	+500-1,000
Conversation	
Poor grammar	- 100
Excessive volume	- 300
Dishonesty	
Lying	-10,000
Stealing	-20,000
Cheating	- 5,000
Misuse of equipment or materials	
Carelessness with furniture	- 1,000
Carelessness with equipment	- 5,000
Wastefulness	- 1,000
Cooperation	
Not having proper permission	- 1,000
Disobeying (minor)	- 1,000
Disobeying (major)	-10,000
Using an unearned privilege	-10,000
Not reporting a peer's rule violation	- 5,000
Speaking after having been placed on silence	- 100/time
Avoiding work	- 1,000
Being Late	- 100/min.
Personal Appearance (inappropriate)	
Poor hygiene (fingernails, hair, face, hands, body odor, breath)	-500-1,000
Clothing (wrinkled, soiled, torn, buttons missing)	- 1,000
Socks (holes, no socks)	- 500
Shoes (unpolished/muddy)	-300-500

Chart 1, continued

Behavior	Points
MAINTENANCE--FOOD PREPARATION	
Setting table (place settings and table accessories)	+100/place set
Peeling potatoes and onions	+200 each
Peeling carrots	+ 50 each
Dicing onions	+500 each
Dicing potatoes	+400 each
Making toast	+ 25/slice
Toasting buns	+ 75/bun
Toasting rolls	+ 75/roll
Opening cans or frozen packages and putting contents in containers	+100 each
Serving (taking food out of pans or skillets and putting them in serving dishes on table)	+200/item
Preparing drinks	
Making/serving coffee	+100-500
Serving milk	+ 25/glass
Making tea or Koolaid	+200/pitcher
Arranging desserts	
Cutting and serving pie	+ 50/serving
Cutting and serving cake	+ 50/serving
Dishing and serving ice cream	+ 25/serving
Making green salad	+500 each
Mashing potatoes (including boiling, mashing, adding salt and pepper and putting in serving dish)	+1,000
Preparing meat	
Cutting up meat for round steak dinner	+1,500
Pounding meat	+ 50/ounce
Making hamburger patties	+ 50/patty
Cooking meat	
Hamburger	+ 100 each
Cheeseburger	+ 150 each
Chicken	+ 150/piece
Watching and serving round steak dinner	+ 25/min.
Pork chops	+ 150 each
Watching and stirring stews and stroganoff	+ 25/min.
Making sandwiches (cold/hot)	+100-200
Making jello	+ 500/dish
Washing vegetables	+ 50 each
Groceries	
Going to store for groceries (only one boy)	+ 10/min.
Carrying groceries into house	+ 100/sack
Putting groceries away	+ 300/sack
MAINTENANCE--INDOORS	
Vacuuming	
Living room (downstairs)	+ 400
Entry hall	+ 200
Hallway (upstairs)	+ 300
Living room (upstairs)	+ 300
Office	+ 300

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Chart 1, continued

Behavior	Points
Mopping floors (after sweeping)	
Utility room	+ 500
Kitchen	+ 500
Dining room	+ 500
Waxing floors	
Utility room	+ 1,000
Kitchen	+ 1,000
Dining room	+ 1,000
Taking off scuff marks	+ 500
Taking off old wax	+ 1,000
Dusting furniture	
Living room	+ 300
Dining room	+ 100
Office	+ 300
Baseboards	+ 200/room
Fixtures (lights/pictures)	+25-100/each
Window sills	+ 25 each
Bookshelves	+ 50/shelf
Sweeping (broom)	
Stairs	+ 300
Dining room	+ 300
Kitchen	+ 200
Utility room	+ 200
Front porch	+ 300
Basement	+ 1,000
Washing dishes	
Breakfast	+ 1,500
Lunch	+ 1,500
Dinner	+ 6,000
Washing (miscellaneous)	
Doors	+ 100 each
Walls	+ 300/room
Hall (upstairs)	+ 700
Windows	+ 200 each
Window sills	+ 100 each
Stove	+ 200
Refrigerator (inside and out)	+ 300
Woodwork	+ 300/room
MAINTENANCE--OUTDOORS	
Shoveling snow off drive	+ 3,500
Shoveling snow off patio	+ 1,500
Shoveling snow off sidewalk	+ 500
Sweeping snow, dirt, or leaves off drive	+ 1,000
Sweeping snow, dirt, or leaves off patio	+ 700
Sweeping snow, dirt, or leaves off sidewalk	+ 300
Mowing grass	+20,000/lawn
Trimming bushes	+ 300/bush
Trimming trees	+ 100/1" branch
Policing yard	
Trash (bucket=5 gallons)	+ 500/full bucket
Pulling weeds	+ 800/full bucket
Cutting or hoeing weeds	+ 100/sq.yd.
Raking	+ 200/bushel
Watering	+ 25/sq.yd.
Leaving items outside (carelessness)	- 1,000
Winding hose	+ 200/hose

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Chart 1, continued

Behavior	Points
Cleaning outdoor tools	
Shovel (scrape)	+ 300
Hoe	+ 300
Spades	+ 300
Oil and clean shears	+ 300
Misuse of small tools	- 1,000 + cost
Misuse of power tools	-10,000 + cost
Garage	
Front half of downstairs	+ 4,000
Back half of downstairs	+ 3,000
Upstairs	+ 3,000
Mail	+ 300
MAINTENANCE--AUTOMOBILE	
Washing (individual job)	+ 1,000
Orying (individual job)	+ 500
Wheels (individual job)	+ 200
Windows (individual job)	+ 500
Inside (individual job)	+ 800
Complete car job (all of the above)	+ 3,000
Additional wax	+ 4,500
Starting car	0
Removal of ice on windows	
Front	+ 1,000
Back	+ 600
Sides	+ 100/window
Clearing snow from car	+ 300
SCHOOL	
Lack of promptness to and from school	- 300/min.
Destruction of property (carelessness, writing in books)	- 1,000
Not returning library books on time	- 1,000/day
7th hour (having to stay after school)	- 1,000/time
Reading	+ 1-100/page
Tutoring	+ 50/min.
Books lost (carelessness)	- 100/10¢ value of book
Forgetting books or papers (carelessness)	- 1,000 each
Reporting a peer's inappropriate school behavior	+ 1,000 each
Homework at home (small)	+ 500/assignment
Homework at home (large)	+ 1,500/assignment
Forgetting lunch money	- 2,000 each
Trouble calls from school	-10,000 each
Losing report card (carelessness)	- 1,000
Weekly grades (for a "C" student)	
A	+10,000
B	+ 5,000
C	0
D	-10,000
F	-20,000
Weekly grades (for a "D-" student)	
A	+15,000
B	+10,000
C	+ 5,000
D	0
F	-20,000

Chart 1, continued

Behavior	Points
Weekly grades (for an "F" student)	
A	+15,000
B	+15,000
C	+10,000
D	+ 5,000
F	- 1,000
Nine weeks grades	
A	+10,000/week of the 9 weeks
B	0
C	0
D	0
F	-15,000/week of the 9 weeks
Daily grades	
Satisfactory	+ 1,000
Unsatisfactory	- 5,000
Daily paper grades (for "C" student)	
A/B	+ 1,000
C	+ 500
Major test grades (for "C" student)	
A	+10,000
B	+ 5,000
C	+ 1,000
D	-10,000
F	-20,000

Source: E.L. Phillips, E.A. Phillips, D.L. Fixsen, and M.M. Wolf, The Teaching Family Handbook. Lawrence, Kansas: Bureau of Child Research, University of Kansas, 1972. Pages 94-100.

Specials. The teaching parents and youths can negotiate prices for special privileges.¹⁶

The prices of privileges purchased with points are given in Chart 2, for the weekly system.

CHART 2

Privileges That Can Be Earned With Points On The Weekly Point System

Privileges	Price in Points (Weekly System)
Basics	5,000
Snacks	3,000
TV	3,000
Hometime	6,000
Out of Saturday's Work	6,000
Allowance \$1 (1)	3,000
Allowance \$2 (2)	6,000
Bonds	1,500
Specials	Negotiated

Source: E.L. Phillips, E.A. Phillips, D.L. Fixsen, and M.M. Wolf, The Teaching Family Handbook, (Lawrence, Kansas: Bureau of Child Research, University of Kansas, 1972). Page 59.

Throughout a youth's stay at Achievement Place one privilege he may purchase is hometime: he may go home Friday evening and return Sunday evening. The parents are given a "homenote" that tells them whom to contact in case of trouble; describes restrictions, if any, to be placed on a youth; asks them to answer a list of questions about the youth's behaviors; and requests that they keep a record of when the youth left the house and where he went. The homenote includes forms for the parents to use in reporting back to the teaching parents.

In order to remain on the Merit System at Achievement Place the youth's parents must rate his behavior, overall, as "excellent" or "very good." The successful youth spends increasingly greater amounts of time at home. After the youth has left Achievement Place to live at home the parents and youth meet weekly with the teaching parents. After a few weeks, they are cut back to every other week, then to once a month until 6 months have passed. Thereafter scheduled meetings cease: meetings occur only if there is a problem.

THE SOCIAL-REINFORCEMENT SYSTEM

Underlying the token economy point system, and used simultaneously with it, is the social-reinforcement system. The teaching parents provide praise, attention, affection, criticism, encouragement, and support: this is the social-reinforcement system. It has been described in this way:

In addition to occasionally giving or taking away points the teaching parents must continually provide social reinforcement to the youths. The teaching parents must give compliments; they must present criticism in a non-aversive, non-emotional, non-punitive way, they must constantly interact with the youths by instructing, demonstrating, and helping the youths practice appropriate skills; and, they must develop genuine affectionate behavior toward each of the youths. All of these aspects must be present to have a successful program.¹⁷

A central feature of social reinforcement is a formally developed instructional technique referred to as the teaching interaction.

There are 10 components to the teaching interaction:

1. Expression of affection.
2. Praise of work already accomplished.
3. Description of inappropriate behavior.
4. Description of the appropriate behavior (demonstration when necessary).
5. Stating the rationale for the appropriate behavior.
6. Description of the immediate rewards for appropriate behavior.

7. Request for acknowledgment that the youth understands what is expected.
8. Practice of the appropriate behavior.
9. Feedback during practice.
10. Reward.

These are described with examples in the Teaching Family Handbook.¹⁸ Teaching parents are urged to adopt these techniques to their own personal style of expressing affection towards their residents.

The researchers at Achievement Place have stressed the importance of the social reinforcement system. They have found that when the point system is used without the teaching interaction behavior the program often becomes suppressive. The points and fines come to be used only to suppress inappropriate behavior rather than as a motivation system to teach new skills that can be used to solve interpersonal problems and to obtain goals. A suppressive point system can be avoided by using the teaching interaction to teach these new skills.¹⁹

The teaching parents are carefully trained to use the social-reinforcement system and it is operating continuously throughout a youth's stay in the program. By plan it remains in effect at Achievement Place after the point system has been withdrawn, through home notes, talks with parents, and other activities in the youths' communities. Achievement Place tries to transfer the practice of providing social reinforcements to the youth's natural home, school, and larger community. Presumably, those social reinforcements are what maintain youths' appropriate behaviors after they leave Achievement Place. By then the youths are behaving in such ways that it is natural for parents, peers, and others to provide that "praise, encouragement, attention, criticism, and affection."

THE SELF-GOVERNMENT SYSTEM

At Achievement Place youths participate in decisions about the program's rules and what happens when rules are broken;²⁰ this is the self-government system. Youths are elected one at a time to help the teaching parents monitor the behavior of other youths. In this role they are called managers. A youth, as manager, is given responsibility for monitoring and checking specific behaviors of other youths and for adding or taking away up to 700 points for appropriate or inappropriate behaviors. The manager is elected by a majority of his peers for one day (or sometimes for a week) and he himself can gain or lose points depending on his performance of the managerial duties. (The teaching parents decide this.) A majority of the youths or the teaching parents alone can recall the manager.

Dissatisfaction with a manager or his decisions may also be taken to the Family Conference -- a second aspect of the self-government component. The Family Conference is held at a time,

often at dinner, when most members can be present. Youths present their complaints about point losses, decide on house rules, and vote on sanctions for peers' behaviors. This provides an opportunity for the teaching parents to engage the youths in discussions about the reasons for rules and point penalties for violations. The manager's performance also is evaluated at the Family Conference and point losses or gains for him are decided at this time.

During any discussion of consequences or after any Family Conference decisions the teaching parents should discuss the decision in terms of its fairness, the effectiveness of the program in changing behavior, the happiness of the youths, the concern of the teaching parents and the other youths, the pleasantness of the program, and helping the youths to become better people.²¹

. . . youths learn to cooperate to reach some agreed upon goal, they learn how to elect and change their leaders, they learn how to be good (fair, just) leaders, they learn how to develop rules and to live under the rules they develop, they learn the degrees of importance of the various rules and become skilled in assigning appropriate consequences for violations of the rules, and they become skilled observers of their own behavior and of the behavior of others.²²

THE TEACHING PARENTS

The teaching parents are the only professional staff employees of Achievement Place. They operate the point system in all its variations, plan and provide social reinforcement for each youth, and establish and regulate the self-government. They also meet with each youth's parents on a regular basis and work as needed with juvenile court personnel, teachers at their youths' schools, and representatives of other community agencies.

The teaching parents are teachers of a broad curriculum of social, academic, self-help, pre-vocational, and family living behaviors. Their classroom is the group home, the school, the natural home, and the community.²³

An extensive training program prepares teaching parents in five stages. It begins with a 5-day workshop (50 to 60 hours) on all aspects of the Teaching-Family model; operating a motivation system; starting and guiding a self-government system; teaching youths appropriate behaviors; working with parents, teachers, the group home's Board of Directors, and representatives of other social service agencies; and maintaining good public relations. A "field education experience" lasting 3 months follows. The trainee is employed by the Board of Directors of a group home and is responsible for all aspects of the program. At the end the trainee is evaluated.

Trainees then participate in another workshop lasting one week, during which they are expected to improve those performances that have been rated as unsatisfactory. The trainee goes through two more field education experiences. Each is evaluated, the trainee being given detailed feedback and advice on strengthening his or her program. One year after entering training each trainee is evaluated again and, if ratings are satisfactory, the trainee is certified as a professional teaching-parent. If not, the trainee is encouraged to participate in another 3-month field experience and evaluation.

. . . certification as a teaching parent depends upon successful completion of each component of the education program and successful operation of a Teaching-Family group home as measured by the first annual evaluation.²⁴

Each year a couple must be recertified by meeting specific criteria during an annual recertification evaluation. Trainees who qualify may complete a master's degree after certification.

Thus, the training program looks essentially like this:

1. First workshop -- approximately 1 week.
2. Practicum -- 3 months followed by an evaluation.
3. Second workshop -- approximately 1 week.
4. Practicum -- 3 months followed by an evaluation.
5. Practicum -- 3 months followed by an evaluation.
6. Certification -- approximately 1 year after entry
7. Annual recertification
8. Possible continuation in the Master's Degree program.

The training is substantial. Certification requires considerable skill in use of the Teaching-Family model procedures.

FINDINGS

The first section of this report described the framework and methods of the Teaching-Family Model used at Achievement Place. This section reports some of the findings of research evaluating that model, selecting from a larger number of studies. It first explains the evaluative research strategy used in most of the studies. It then reports their findings in two general areas: the direct effects of treatment and longer range outcomes. The section concludes with a summary of what information we have obtained on the costs of beginning and operating Achievement Place.

EVALUATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY

One of the more interesting aspects of the Achievement Place literature is the precision which its authors have achieved. The behaviors treated are defined carefully so that independent observers can agree when they happen. The interventions are described in clear detail so that others can repeat them, if they wish.²⁵

The design of the experimental research -- or "quasi-experimental" research as some have called it -- used to evaluate treatment at Achievement Place is not usually the classical model of research in which experimental groups are compared with control groups.²⁶ Instead, the evidence submitted from which to infer the fact of change in behavior is a comparison of rates of behavior of an individual youth during specified periods of time -- rates for the same youth for periods when treatment is being given or withheld.

Psychologists call the research strategy that has been used most often to evaluate treatment at Achievement Place an ABAB reversal design.²⁷ The letters ABAB are not abbreviations for words; they designate time periods during the experiment. During A-periods of the experiments no treatment is being provided but the youth's behavior is being observed and recorded systematically. During B-periods treatment is being provided and observations and records of them are being taken as well. Thus, ABAB describes a research design that initially observes and records a behavior to establish the rate at which it occurs (A). Treatment then begins, and changes in that behavior rate are recorded (B). Then, treatment stops (this is the reversal); observations and the recording of them continue to make it possible to see if the behavior returns to the rate at which it had been initially (A). If so, the evidence supports an inference that the treatment had caused the changed behavior during the prior B-period, and not something else (e.g., the youth wanted the psychologist to like him, etc.). Then, treatment begins again (B) to demonstrate that the change of behavior occurs again with reinstatement of treatment.

For example, suppose Achievement Place wanted to find out how to reduce the arguments a youth had been having with other residents. A measure of such arguments (after clearly defining what is to be considered an "argument") is taken first. That initial measure is called a "baseline" and allows precise summary of the first A-period in terms of a rate of occurrence. Then a point penalty is instituted: the youth loses 500 points each time he argues. The observation and recording of the behavior continues during this, the first B-period. In order to demonstrate that the intervention (the point-loss procedure) is responsible for the observed change in rate of arguments, the use of point penalties is suspended (the second A-period), and the youth's rate of arguments continues to be observed and recorded. In the final treatment period -- the second B-period -- the point penalties are reinstated and the observations still recorded.

If the treatment is successful, and the observations plotted, they might look like those in Figure 1. As may be seen, arguments had been high (6-8) during baseline (A), decreased rapidly during treatment through point-penalties (B), and almost returned to the initial level during the second A-period. The rate again decreased during subsequent treatment (B). Thus, the data can be interpreted as supporting a belief that the intervention, and not something else, caused the changes.²⁸ The treatment then can be applied to a number of other youths to demonstrate its more general applicability.

EFFECTS OF TREATMENT

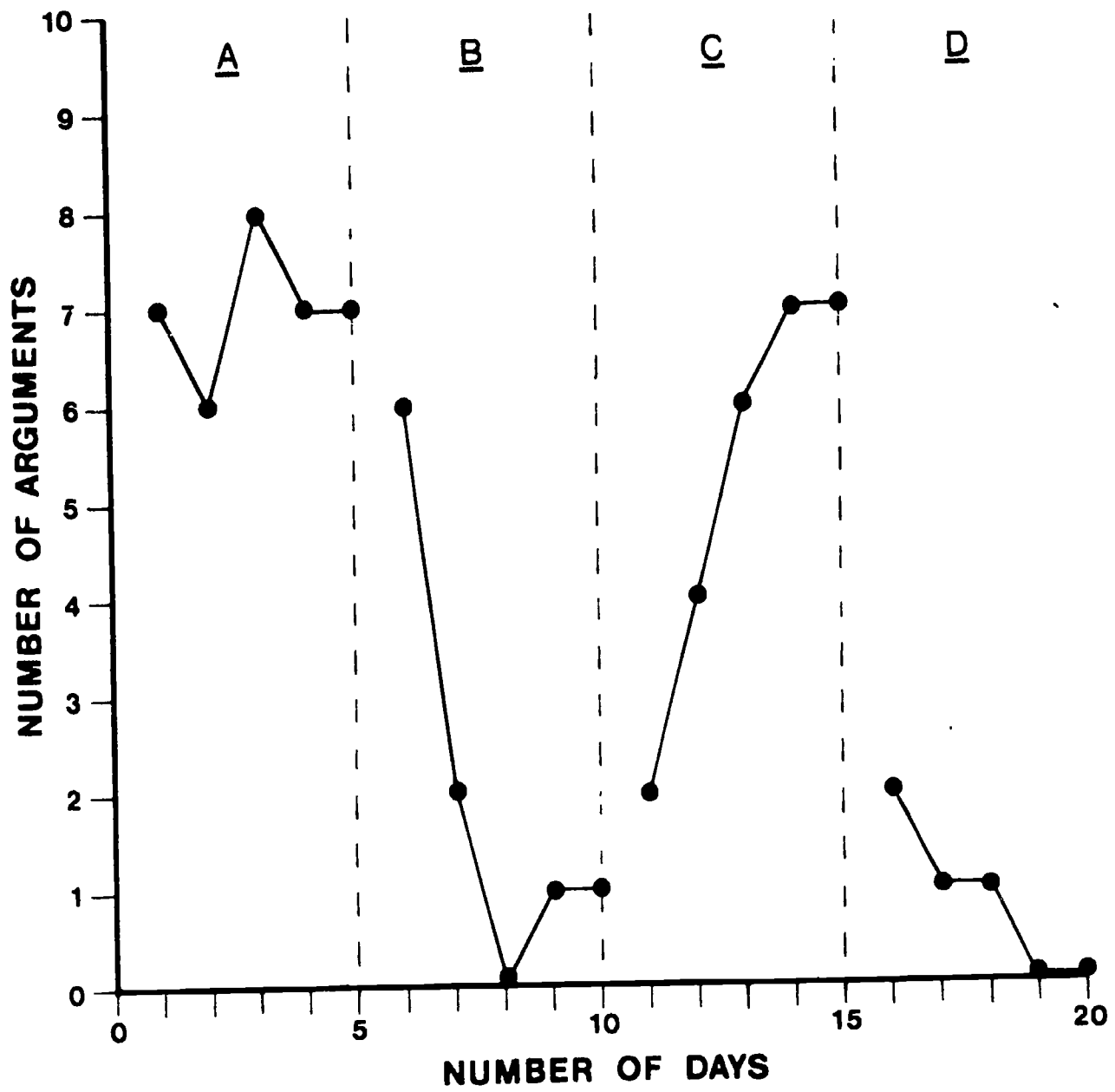
The type of research design just reviewed has been used to question whether the Teaching-Family Motivation System model at Achievement Place has modified target behaviors of youths while they are in residence at Achievement Place. Among the behaviors that have been changed or created while youths are in residence include: correcting speech articulation errors,²⁹ improving behavior in public school,³⁰ acquiring vocational and self-care skills,³¹ interacting appropriately with police officers,³² and negotiating conflicts with parents.³³ Other studies report success in training for housekeeping, self-maintenance behaviors, social skills, vocational behavior, attitudes, self-concepts, emotional behavior, conversational skills, and school performance.³⁴ The research studies are numerous, and the types of behaviors taught with the Teaching-Family model are extensive and complex.

Answers to three other questions about the effects of treatment have been pursued as well. The questions are:

1. Can treatment that changed behaviors at Achievement Place maintain that change in other settings, (such as the youth's home or school?)
2. When treatment has changed behavior in one setting does the changed behavior endure in similar settings?

Figure 1

The Effects of a Point-Loss Procedure on the Rate of Arguments in an ABAB Reversal Design: A Hypothetical Example



3. When treatment has changed behavior in one setting, does the changed behavior endure in dissimilar settings?³⁵

In all the studies reported here -- organized according to the question they address -- nearly all the juveniles studied were living at Achievement Place. This means that the Motivation System with all its component parts was in effect and can be thought of as a constant factor for youths in residence. Some of the studies involved yet other treatment procedures that were similar though not identical to those in use at Achievement Place. We simply note here that in the summaries to follow, the "treatment" in question may differ from study to study and may (or may not) be applied in addition to that ongoing at the group home. We will return to a general discussion of these matters in the conclusion of the report.

On the first question, one study reported on the extension of a point system to one boy's school.³⁶ The target behaviors initially trained at Achievement Place were studying, refraining from making disgusted comments, and learning to greet and introduce others properly. In order to apply the point system to his behavior in school his teachers were asked to answer seven questions in a daily "note" about his social behavior in each of six classes --yielding a total of 42 observations per day. Before treatment the answers to 33 of the 42 questions per day reported him as behaving inappropriately. After treatment only one answer per day was that he had behaved inappropriately. The authors concluded that control through a point system could be extended to the school.

A second study examined the application of the point system in a youth's home.³⁷ A "homenote" procedure was developed for point tabulation when youths returned to Achievement Place. There a youth would earn or lose points depending upon how the parents had marked the homenote.

In this experiment, prior to a youth coming into Achievement Place, the parents were asked to list about 10 behaviors that they would like to see their son change (some were appropriate behaviors they wanted to increase and others were inappropriate behaviors they wanted to decrease). Several days of baseline data were taken (using the parents' list as a behavior checklist) before the youth entered Achievement Place.

After the youth entered Achievement Place the teaching parents began teaching the youth new social skills and implemented the regular homenote-feedback systems with the parents. Data continued to be collected with the parents' list as a behavior checklist. The results indicated that the youth's inappropriate behaviors in his natural home were reduced from about 50 percent to 60 percent during baseline to about 10 percent to 20 percent after entering Achievement Place. For one youth, the homenote was then discontinued for several weeks and the youth's inappropriate behavior increased to about 40 percent.

When the homenote was again used the inappropriate behavior dropped to about 10 percent. After the youth had been in Achievement Place for several months the homenote was again discontinued and this time there was no appreciable change in the youth's behavior at home.

These data suggest that the homenote was effective in controlling the youth's behavior at home and that, with continued use, there was substantial generalization of appropriate behavior to the youth's natural home.³⁸

This same study also examined whether the changed behavior endured at home after the youth left Achievement Place and the point system was no longer operating in the youth's home. This will be taken up in greater detail below.

Another study produced findings relevant to the second question: does changed behavior endure in similar settings when the point system is not present? The study used training and feedback procedures to produce appropriate performance of Achievement Place youths on a Saturday morning job cleaning restrooms at three service stations.³⁹

Two boys (ages 15 and 16) were chosen for the program on the basis of their progress in the Achievement Place treatment program. Both were to complete the program soon and return to live in their own homes. Their job performance was rated on a checklist by the researchers.

Training and feedback procedures were instituted at station 1 but not (initially) at stations 2 and 3. The training was an explicit demonstration of how to clean each part of the restroom. The feedback was telling the youths what items did not meet the criteria for cleanliness on the checklist. Later, the training and feedback were suspended and then reinstated--this time at station 3. At no time during the experiment were training and feedback applied at station 2.

Although the treatment was never applied at station 2, job performance rose there when treatment was applied at either of the other two stations. The researchers concluded that these results demonstrate that generalization of the treatment effect (effect on training and feedback) probably occurred across setting.⁴⁰ In their words, "The generalization effect to station 2 seems to be the result of exposure of the youths to the treatment package in the other two settings."⁴¹ Behavior that was changed in one setting endured in a similar setting even though the training and feedback were not present in the second setting.

Two studies address the third question: when treatment has changed behavior in one setting does the changed behavior endure in dissimilar settings?

In one study researchers taught three pairs of parents and children to negotiate their conflicts with one another. The means of teaching the pairs involved rehearsing them in hypothetical conflict situations along with using instructions and feedback. The results showed that all three pairs increased their ability to negotiate.⁴² After training, the researchers contacted each parent-child pair and asked if agreements reached during home observation had been kept. Pretraining observations had indicated that one out of nine situations resulted in an agreement that was reportedly kept. Post-training observations indicated that five out of nine situations resulted in agreements, which were reportedly kept. The results tend to demonstrate that subjects trained to use negotiation skills at Achievement Place were able to employ such skills after treatment terminated.

In another study problematic parent-youth interactions at home were improved through treatment at Achievement Place.⁴³ The researchers used a home monitoring system to evaluate the endurance of the social skills trained at Achievement Place. The results showed that the program, which employed the homenote system described earlier, had been effective in decreasing the youth's behaviors that were reported by the parents as inappropriate or "bad." For one subject inappropriate behaviors decreased from a pre-treatment level of 45 percent to 0-1 percent during treatment. After treatment the behavior was maintained at the same low level.

These findings on the generalization of treatment effects to other settings and on the endurance of effects after treatment has ended undoubtedly will interest those working directly with juveniles in similar programs. Although the studies described here had only a small number of subjects, the findings were persuasive and the procedures replicable. They suggest that treatment methods can be developed to change specific behaviors; that the treatment described can produce similar effects under different conditions; and that changes brought about through the treatment can last even after it has ended and the juvenile has returned to the environment of his natural family.

Of course, more research must be carried out to extend knowledge about the effects of different treatment procedures, under different conditions, and with more subjects. Still, these beginning efforts by the researchers at Achievement Place are superior to any others pertaining to community-based programs for juveniles and they have produced findings that can be put to practical use.

EFFECTS ON LATER PERFORMANCE IN THE COMMUNITY

A few studies have examined how Achievement Place residents have done in the community after they completed the program. These studies have not used the ABAB and related research designs described earlier. Instead, they contrast groups of Achievement Place graduates with others who have not been in the program. They often rely on official statistics and routinely collected information--records

of police and court contacts, institutional placement, and general academic performance--rather than on behavior observed directly and recorded. The studies by no means are definitive; the sample sizes are small and only study randomly assigned youths to groups for comparison. Yet they are a logical next step for a program that believes increasing appropriate behaviors will lessen the frequency of misconduct generally, prevent placement of their youths in institutions, and improve achievements later.

One study, still in process, has reported preliminary findings for 26 youths who had been through the Achievement Place program (the experimental group) and 37 other youths (the comparison group).⁴⁴ Eight youths in the experimental group and 18 in the comparison group were selected randomly. (Random selection reduces the probability that one group will differ greatly from the other in ways that might cause different outcomes.) These groups form the basis for the first set of comparisons discussed below. The remaining 18 youths in the experimental group and 19 in the comparison group were not assigned randomly. The researchers report comparisons between the randomly established groups separately from those for the groups established through other methods. We will do likewise, presenting data that compares the two groups established through random selection first.

A pool of 26 candidates for the Achievement Place program had been created by a selection committee composed of personnel from the juvenile court, public welfare department, public school, and one of the teaching parents from Achievement Place. The committee applied these selection criteria.

Inclusion

1. Age: the youths usually must be between 12 and 16 years old.
2. I.Q.: the youths should have an I.Q. of at least 70.
3. Locale: the youth must reside within the county.
4. Presenting Problem: the youth's behavior problems and his status with the court, school and his family are such that the youth is in danger of institutionalization in the opinion of the Selection Committee.
5. Court Adjudication: the youth's problems are so serious that the court has or is about to adjudicate the youth.
6. Failure of Less Restrictive or Structured Forms of Intervention: the youth typically will have failed to respond favorably to probation or counseling services available in the community.

7. Family: the youth must have a family in the community (parents, relatives, or foster parents) to return to with the assistance of the program staff.

Exclusion

1. Certain Violent Offenses: a youth who has committed murder, forcible rape, or armed robbery would be excluded from consideration as a candidate for the program. The rationale for this is that the community often is not willing to tolerate the continued presence of a youth in the community after he has committed such a serious offense.

2. Drug Addiction: youths who show a serious physiological dependence on dangerous narcotics (e.g., heroin or barbiturates) as judged by a physician would be temporarily excluded because of the lack of appropriate medical supervision in the Achievement Place facility.

3. Serious Physical Disabilities: a youth with a major physical handicap (e.g., blindness or confinement to a wheelchair) which would not permit normal mobility within the group home, school, or community would be excluded.⁴⁵

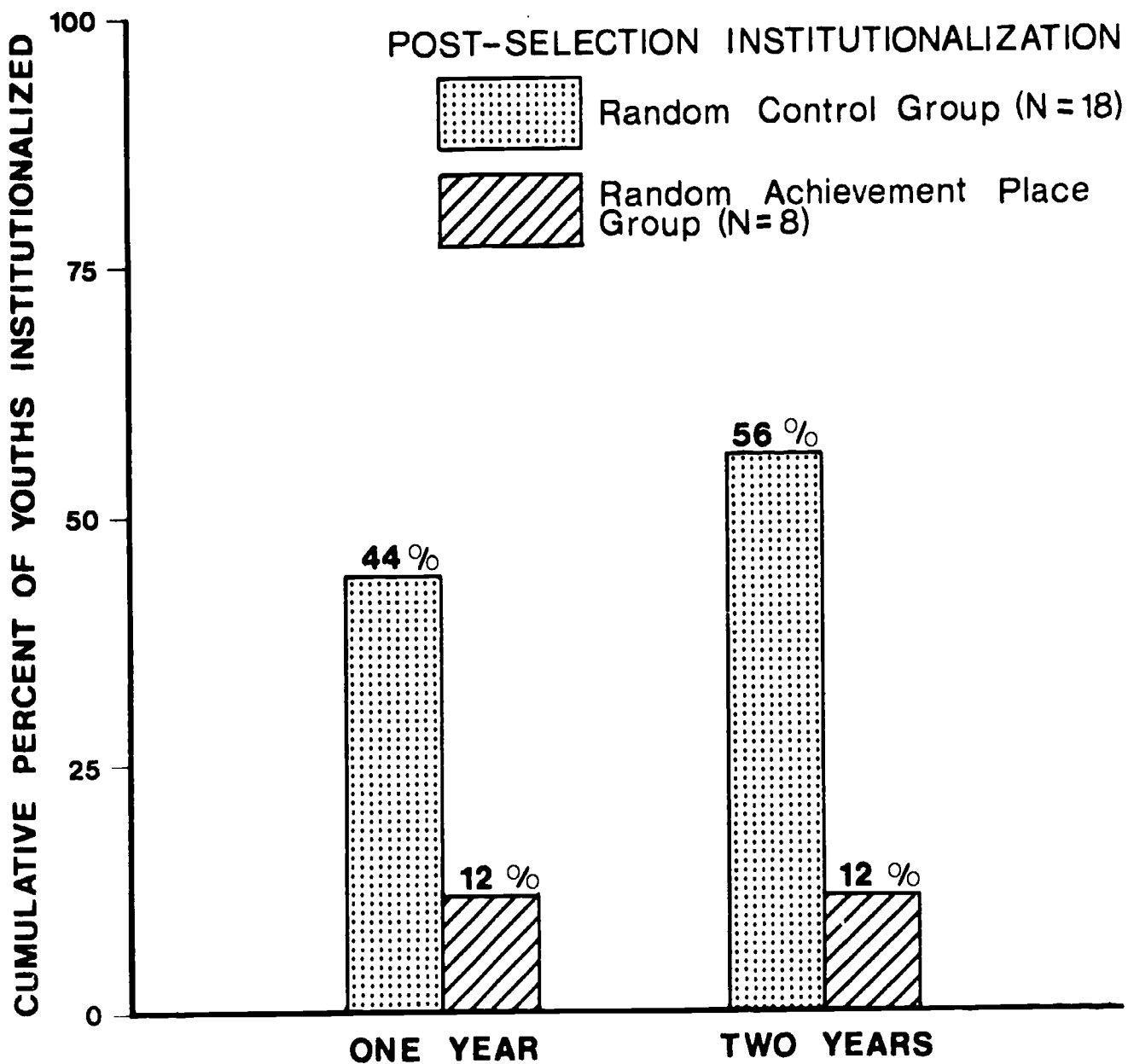
Youths in the selection pool were then randomly assigned to an experimental group and to a control group. Youths in the experimental group were admitted to Achievement Place; youths in the control group became the responsibility of other agencies in the community. What agencies accepted responsibility for which youths and provided what services or treatment is not specified in the reports available.

"Post-selection institutionalization" has been the only outcome measure reported for these two groups so far. Not enough time has passed for the researchers to collect, analyze, and present data on police and court contacts or school attendance. The cumulative percentages of youths placed in institutions one and two years after random selection are presented in Figure 2.

Only one of the eight Achievement Place youths (12 percent) was placed in an institution during the first year following selection for admission. No other youths were during the second year. Eight of the 18 youths (44 percent) who did not live at Achievement Place were placed in an institution during the first year following the selection procedure; two more were so placed in the second.

Figure 2

Cumulative Percent of Youths Institutionalized One Year and Two Years Following the Date They Were Selected or not Selected into the Achievement Place Program



SOURCE: M M Wolf E L Phillips and D L Fixsen, in Achievement Place Phase II, Volume 1, Page 30

Table 1 contains the data upon which Figure 2 is based.

TABLE 1
Achievement Place and Comparison Group Youths by Whether They Were Placed in an Institution or Remained in the Community Within 24 Months Following Selection

	Achievement Place Youths		Comparison Group Youths	
	#	(%)	#	(%)
Placed in institution	1	(12)	10	(56)
Remain in community	7	(88)	8	(44)
Totals	8	(100)	18	(100)

Source of Data: Montrose M. Wolf, Elery L. Phillips, and Dean L. Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, Vol. 1, Figure L, p. 30.

The numbers are small but the relationship can be examined for strength by use of the statistic gamma* and for statistical significance by use of Fisher's Exact Test.⁴⁶ Gamma is .80, showing a rather strong relationship in the expected direction--that is, in favor of Achievement Place. Fisher's Exact Test is .494, meaning that the probability that the relationship would occur by chance rather than due to differences arising from residing at Achievement Place or not is one in 20 or less.

Although tentative, these findings do suggest that the Achievement Place program with its Teaching-Family Model is accomplishing one of its primary goals: providing a community-based program that reduces the frequency of placing youths adjudicated for delinquency in institutions.

The study's second set of comparisons are those between the remaining youths in the experimental and comparison groups that were not selected randomly. The groups were constructed in the following ways. Those assigned to the experimental group were the first 18 youths admitted to the Achievement Place program by its selection committee. The 19 youths assigned to the comparison group were youths who had been committed "to the state's Boys School over the preceding three years and...who, in the opinion of the probation officer, would have been eligible for admission to Achievement Place as an alternative to institutional treatment."⁴⁷

* Gamma is a statistic measuring the strength of the relationship. It ranges in value from -1.0 to +1.0.

The two groups differed in important ways as may be seen in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Police and Court Contacts and School Attendance During The Year Preceding Admission Into Achievement Place and Boys School

	Mean Police and Court Contacts Per Year	Percent of Youths Attending School
Achievement Place Youths N = 18	2.89	72%
Boys School Youths N = 19	3.89	44%

Source: M.M. Wolf, E.L. Phillips, and D. L. Fixsen, Achievement Place II, vol. 1, p. 35.

On the average the youths at Achievement Place had had fewer contacts with police and courts during the year preceding admission to the program than had those youths sent to the Boys School (2.89 compared with 3.89). A larger proportion of them also had been attending school (72 percent compared with 44 percent).

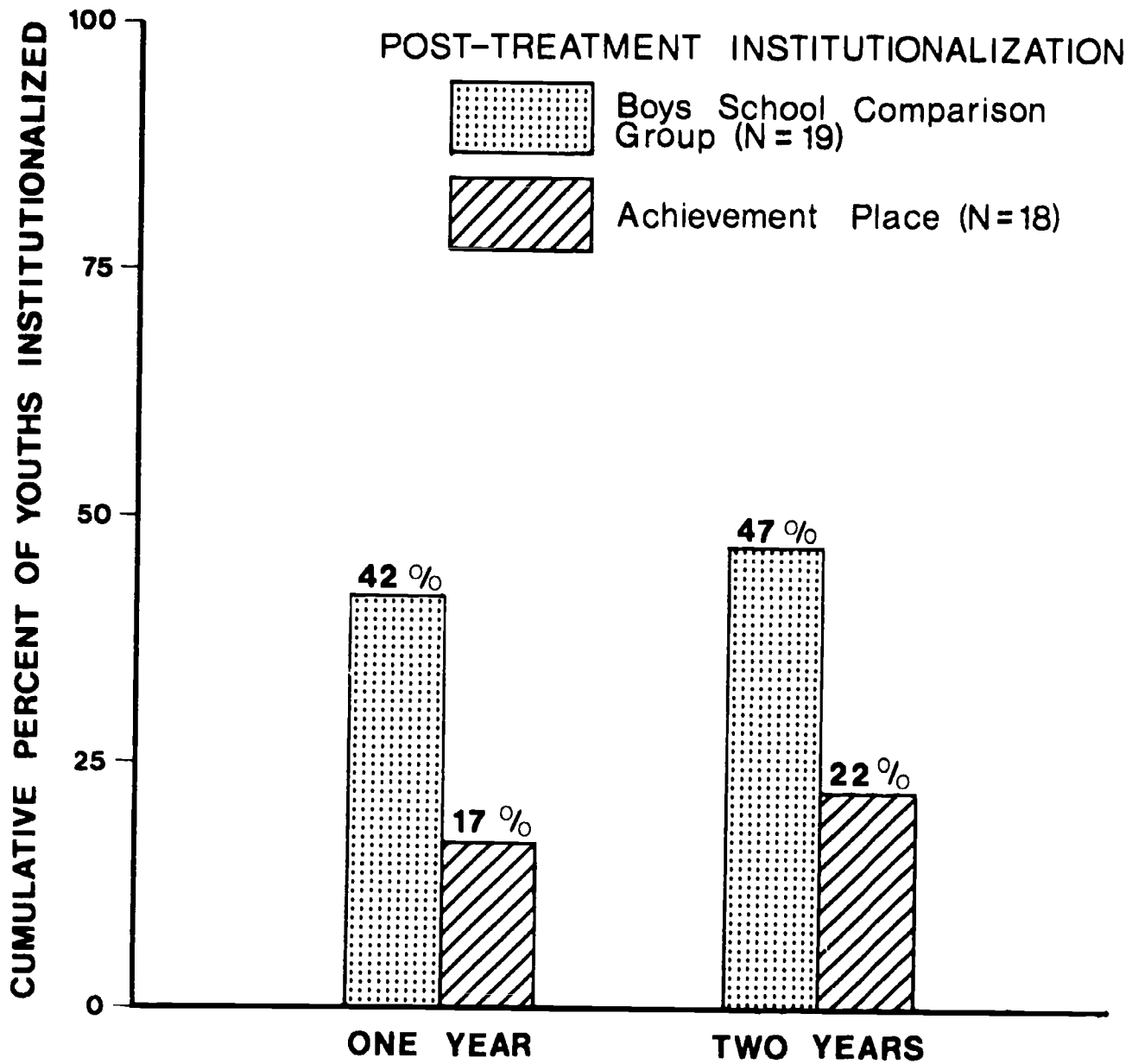
Youths in the two groups also differed in age when they entered their programs. The Achievement Place youths averaged 13 years and 3 months and the Boys School youths 14 years and 6 months. To address these differences between the groups the researchers tried to show that age differences did not account for the differences in mean number of police and court contacts nor in the percentage of youths attending school. But their method and its explanation is unclear to us and so are not included here.

The results of comparing post-treatment institutionalization for youths in these two groups are presented in Figure 3. The researchers summarized the findings in the following way.

Approximately twice as many of the youths who went to the Boys' School were institutionalized after their treatment as were youths who participated in the Achievement Place program. By the end of the First year post-treatment, 37 percent of the

Figure 3

Cumulative Percent of Youths Institutionalized One Year and Two Years Following Release From Treatment in an Institution (Boys School) or Achievement Place



SOURCE: M M Wolf, E L Phillips and D L Fixsen in Achievement Place Phase II, Volume 1, Page 30

Boys' School youths had been reinstitutionalized and 17 percent of the Achievement Place youths had been institutionalized. These figures include the inprogram failures for both programs.

During the second year the cumulative percent of youths institutionalized after their original treatment program increased to 47 percent for the Boys' School group and to 22 percent for the Achievement Place youths. Thus, approximately twice as many youths from the Boys' School group were receiving further institutional treatment after having completed their original treatment program.⁴⁸

Again, the researchers noted that there may have been reasons other than or in addition to Achievement Place that might explain the differences.

Preliminary information also has been made available on a study comparing three groups: (a) 16 youths committed to Achievement Place, (b) 15 youths committed to the Boys School of Kansas, and (c) 13 youths placed on formal probation supervision.⁴⁹ All youths had been adjudicated initially by the Douglas County Juvenile Court in Lawrence, Kans., but the placement decisions had not been made randomly.

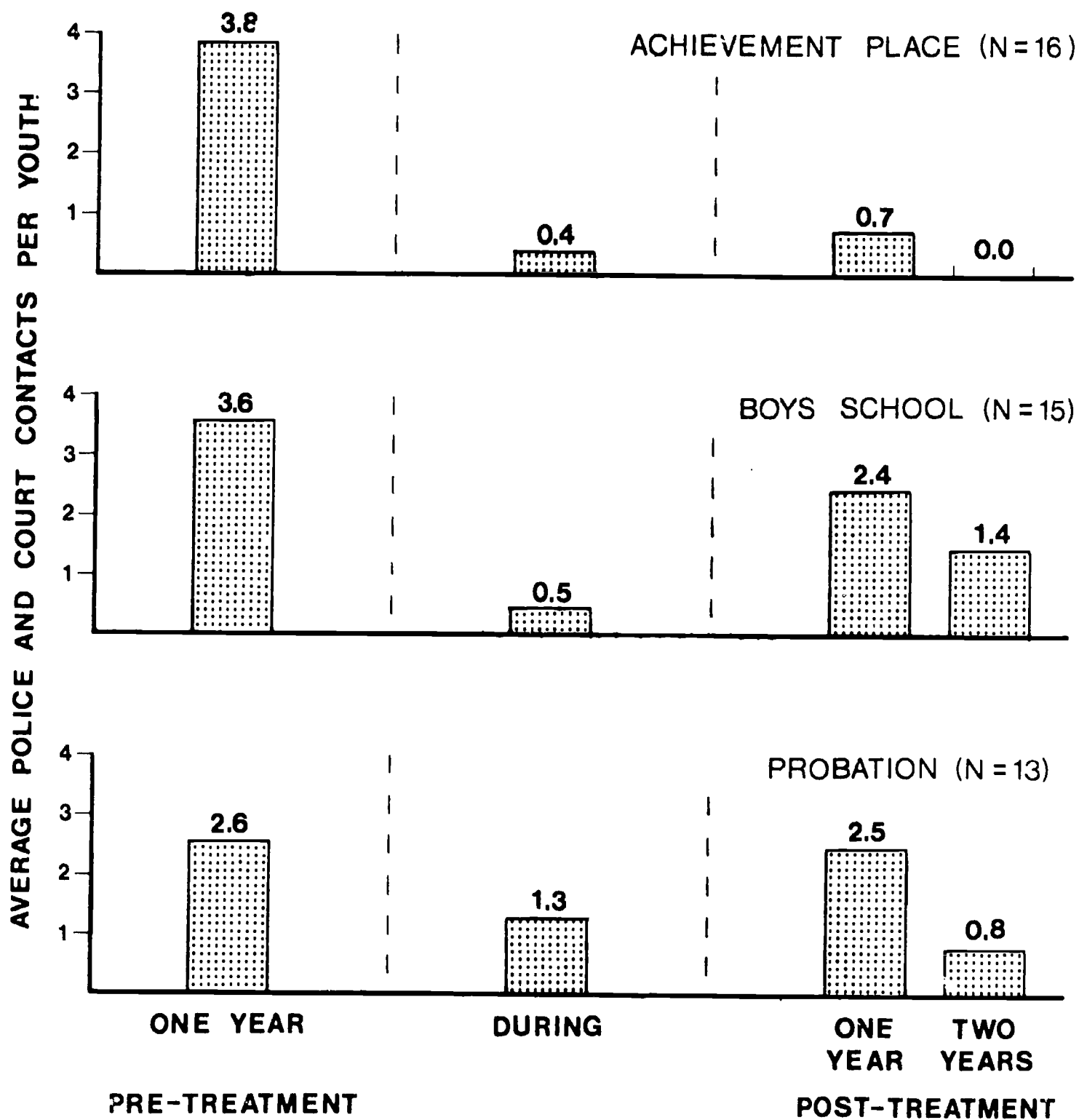
All 44 youths had terminated services and had been released from supervision for at least a year at the time the data reported here were assembled. Police and court contacts, post-release institutionalization, school attendance, and school classes passed were compared for the three groups.

Average police and court contacts per youth are shown in Figure 4. All youths had had between 2.5 and 4.0 police and court contacts during the 1-year period prior to their formal adjudication. Youths sent to Achievement Place and to the Boys School averaged 3.6 and 3.8, respectively; the youths placed on formal probation averaged 2.6. Post-treatment in police and court contacts increased during the first year after treatment for those who had been in the Boys School or on probation, while those of Achievement Place youths decreased. During the second year average police and court contacts decreased for youths in all three groups.

Data giving the percentage of youths in each group who were placed in an institution after release from the initial dispositions are in Figure 5. Again, the Achievement Place youths compared favorably. During the first 12 months after treatment 6 percent of the Achievement Place youths, 13 percent of the Boys School youths, and 31 percent of the youths on probation were adjudicated again and placed in an institution. At the end of 24 months, 19 percent of the Achievement Place youth, 53 percent of the Boys School youths, and 54 percent of the youths on probation had been adjudicated again and placed in an institution.

Figure 4

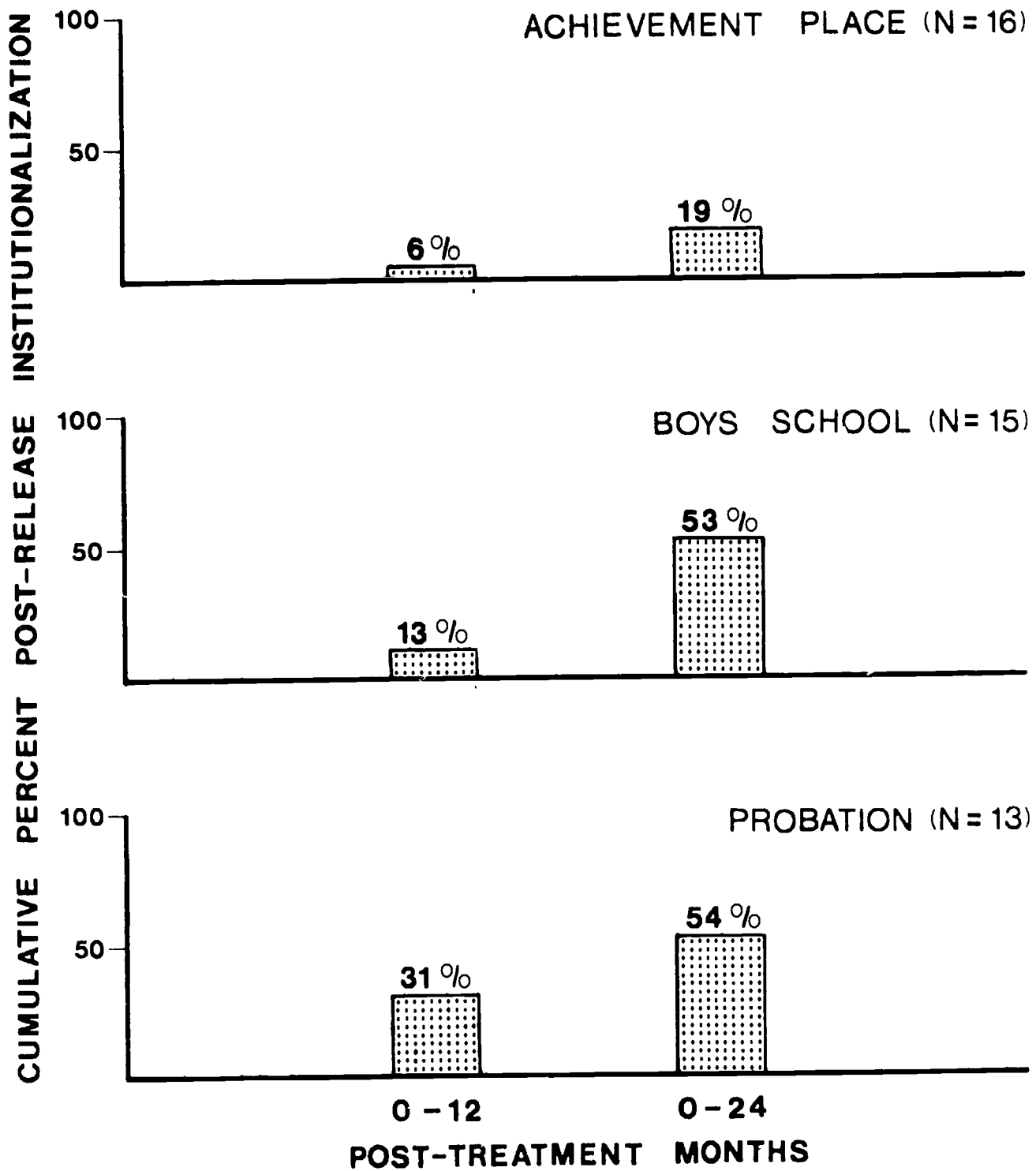
Average Number of Police and Court Contacts for Each Youth for Youths Who Were Adjudicated and Placed in Achievement Place, Boys School, or Probation



SOURCE: DL Fixsen, EL Phillips and MM Wolf, "Training Teaching-Parents to Operate Group Home Treatment Programs", in Achievement Place Phase II, Volume 2

Figure 5

Cumulative Percent of Recidivism for Youths Who Were Placed in Achievement Place, Boys School, or Probation



SOURCE: DL Fixsen, EL Phillips and MM Wolf "Training Teaching-Parents to Operate Group Home Treatment Programs", in Achievement Place, Phase II, Volume 2

Although the researchers reported that all the boys were "considered" to be potential candidates for Achievement Place at the time of the adjudication, they cautioned against making unwarranted influences from these findings.

The boys were not randomly assigned to each group. Rather, they were committed to each treatment by the local juvenile court for reasons that we cannot specify. Therefore, any differences among the three groups can be attributed to initial differences among the boys committed to each group or to the effects of each treatment. That is, the differences among the groups may be due to a "population effect" or to a "treatment effect."⁵⁰

The researchers also pointed out that although the above measures depict differences between the groups compared, the measures represent failure and not success.⁵¹ Thus, they also collected data on two aspects of school behavior: school attendance and percent of classes passed. Figure 6 presents data on school attendance for Achievement Place, Boys School, and probation youths for one year prior to treatment and for one and three semesters after treatment.

All three groups were approximately equivalent in percent attending school (75-77 percent) before treatment. During treatment school attendance improved for all three groups. (Achievement Place and probation youths attended public schools in Lawrence, Kans., and the Boys School youths attended school at the institution). At the end of three semesters 90 percent of Achievement Place youths, 9 percent of Boys School youths, and 37 percent of probation youths were attending school.

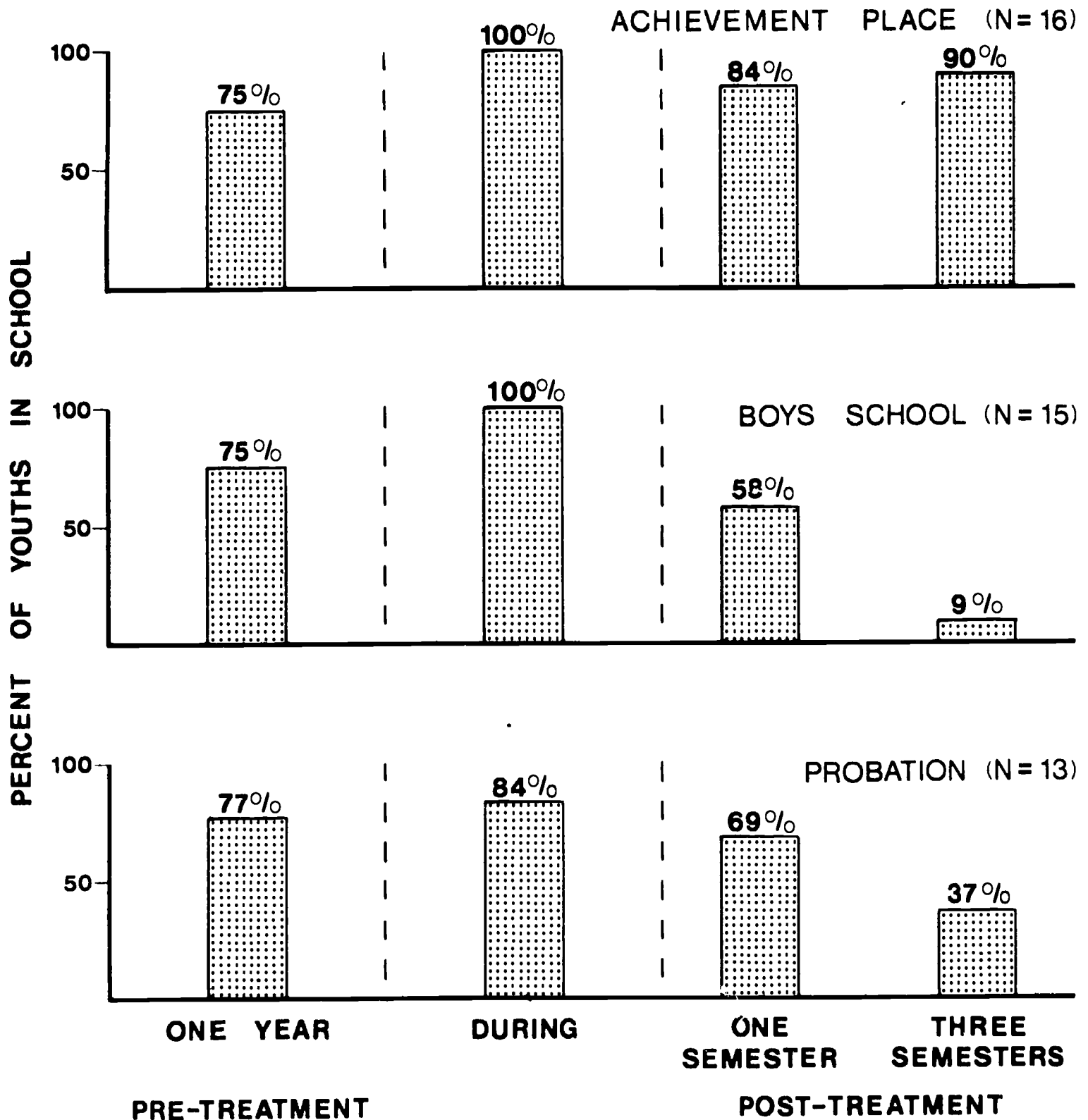
Another measure of school performance was the percent of classes passed before, during, and after treatment. The results are in Figure 7. All three groups were somewhat similar before treatment. Achievement Place and Boys School youths were much the same during treatment in that they passed nearly all classes. However, by the second semester after Achievement Place, youths were passing 91 percent of all their classes, compared with 40 percent for the Boys School youths and 30 percent for the probationers.

The researchers concluded that:

These school data indicate that the Achievement Place youths were similar to the youths in the other two groups prior to treatment but after treatment were more successful than the Boys School youths or probation youths in terms of staying in school and passing classes. These data indicate that the Achievement Place youths are passing their classes and progressing toward the graduation requirements for junior high and high school.

Figure 6

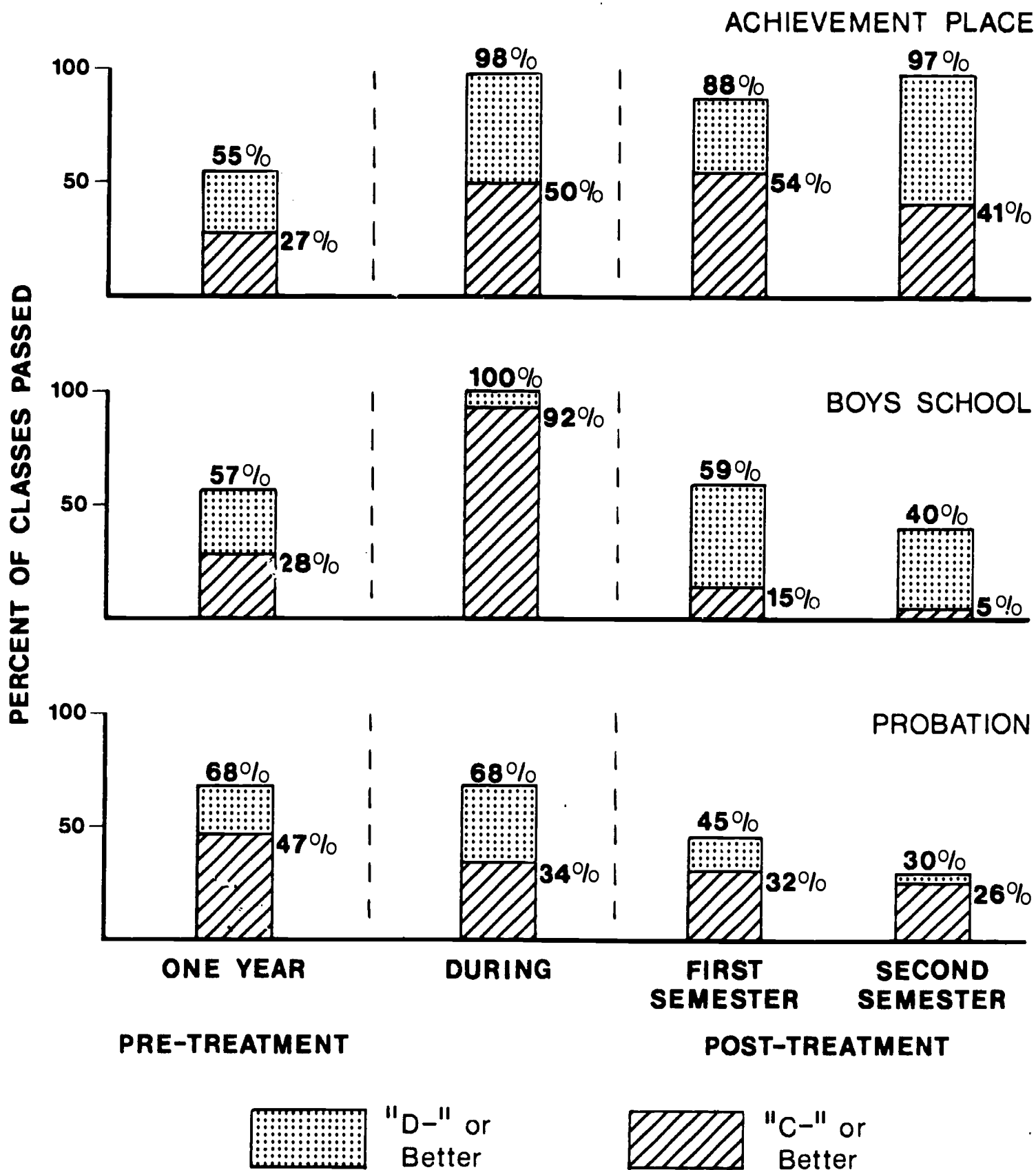
Percent of Youths Attending School at Least 45 Days Out of Each 90-Day Semester for Each Group



SOURCE: DL Fixsen, E L Phillips, and M M Wolf "Training Teaching-Parents to Operate Group Home Treatment Programs" in Achievement Place Phase II, Volume 2

Figure 7

Percent of Classes Passed With a "D-" or Better or With a "C-" or Better for the Youths in Each Group Who Attended School



SOURCE: DL Fixsen, E L Phillips, M M Wolf, "Training Teaching-Parents to Operate Group Home Treatment Programs", in Achievement Place, Phase II, Volume 2

The police, court, and school data indicate that the Achievement Place youths are progressing much better than their peers who were sent to the Boys School or placed on probation. As indicated earlier, these data may reflect a "treatment effect" or a "population effect" attributable to the initial differences among the youths because the youths were not randomly assigned to the groups.⁵²

Indeed, the data presented to date tentatively suggest that Achievement Place youths do better than the other youths with whom they have been compared. However, because of lack of randomization in all but one study, the evidence must be considered suggestive only and remain "preliminary," as stated by the researchers themselves. It may be that similar research carried out elsewhere would not produce the same results. Some jurisdictions, knowing the difficulties of carrying out controlled evaluations of such programs, may judge the findings sufficient for their purposes. Others may not.

COSTS OF THE ACHIEVEMENT PLACE PROGRAM

One concern about new programs is what they will cost. Residential programs, of course, usually require considerable capital investments as well as operating costs. Information is available on these costs for the Achievement Place program in Lawrence, Kans., for the years 1969 and 1971; they have been compared with estimates of similar costs for institutions by researchers at Achievement Place. That information is presented here in Table 3. Also provided are the substantive comments on comparative costs offered by researchers who have worked on the development, operation, and evaluation of Achievement Place. For 1969, Table 3 shows that

...the cost of operating a Teaching-Family model group home for six to eight youths is about \$4,100 per youth per year. This includes all the costs of operating the facility, administrative costs, costs of the materials for the treatment program, salaries for the teaching-parents, and so on. The cost of operating the Boys School (an institution for about 225 delinquent boys) in Kansas was about \$10,000 per youth per year.

...the original investment needed to purchase an older home, renovate it, and furnish it for use as a group home is about \$6,000 per bed. This compares to the cost of more than \$20,000 per bed for the state to build a large institution.⁵³

TABLE 3

Comparisons of Operating and Capital Investment Costs
for Achievement Place and an Institution:
1969 and 1971

	Operating Costs Per Youth, Per Year		Capital Investment Per Bed ¹	
	1969 ^a	1971 ^b	1969	1971
Achievement Place	\$4,100	\$4,400	\$5,800	\$6,000
Institution	\$9,800	\$6,000 ^c \$12,000	\$22,000	\$20,000 \$30,000

1. Capital costs for Achievement Place refer to costs incurred for the purchase and renovation of a residence for use as a group home. The capital costs for Boys School refer to an estimate of the per-bed costs for building an institution in each year.
- a. Source for 1969 cost: From D.L. Fixsen et al., "Training Teaching Parents to Operate Group Home Treatment Programs", p. 12.
- b. Source for 1971 cost: E.L. Phillips et al., The Teaching Family Handbook, 1972, p. 316.
- c. These estimates are given as ranges since actual costs will vary depending on type, size, and location of the institution.

Thus, to build a Boys School for 250 youths and to operate it for one year would cost about \$8 million. To purchase, renovate, and furnish about 36 group homes for 250 youths and to operate them for one year would cost about \$2.5 million, a saving of about \$5.5 million during the first year. Thereafter, the yearly operating costs of the Teaching-Family group home program would be about half the operating costs of the Kansas Boys School.⁵⁴

For 1971, the Teaching-Family model of treatment also appears less expensive to establish and maintain than the institutional program. Operating expenses per youth for 1971 were about \$4,300 compared with costs ranging between \$6,000 and \$12,000 per year per youth at the Boys School (excluding capital and aftercare costs). In addition, the cost for purchase and renovation of the

Achievement Place facility was about \$50,000, or about \$6,000 per bed. The researchers reported this cost in most institutions to be approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000 per bed during 1971.⁵⁵ During 1974, the cost per youth per day at the Achievement Place program in Lawrence, Kans., averaged \$15 compared with \$44 at the Kansas State Boys School.⁵⁶

The researchers at Achievement Place draw the following conclusions from the comparisons of capital and operating costs.

The principal savings in operating costs at Achievement Place is in personnel. Most state institutions hire ward attendants who work on a shift basis to supervise the youths. Additional personnel include psychiatrists and psychologists to treat the youths, social workers to work with the parents, teachers to operate their school, maintenance men, cooks, secretaries, bookkeepers, and other administrative personnel.

Many of the people hired by in institution are necessary only because of the large size of the facility, the large number of youths served, and the distance from the youths' home to the institution. At Achievement Place and other group homes based on the teaching-family model, an unpaid Board of Directors handles the money and the administration of the group home, and the teaching-parents carry out the treatment and supervisory functions.⁵⁷

The figures on the building and operating costs show that there are many clear financial advantages to a community-based program. Because the program is community-based there is no need to duplicate the facilities and resources that are already available to youths in their community, such as schools, recreational centers, medical facilities, etc. Also the group home facility can be resold should the need for treatment diminish.⁵⁸

We can only add that the computation of any program's true costs per youth is a complex procedure. Some administrative costs, for example, must be pro-rated for all youths in the program; it is not possible, ordinarily, to allocate specific administrative costs to specific youths. It is also the case, as the researchers at Achievement Place pointed out, that the costs of certain services provided Achievement Place youths by other agencies are not included in the computations. Strict comparisons of the program's cost should include all costs, noting who incurs them. Many jurisdictions planning alternative programs may have to support all the costs of both continuing an institution-based program and a new community-based program.

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

The researchers on Achievement Place have been able to document that the program's interventions have succeeded in changing many behaviors of youths living at the group homes. They have begun to extend their research to question whether the interventions can modify behaviors in places other than the home itself, such as at school or in the natural home. They have initiated research needed to study the effects of the interventions on several behaviors after youths have completed the program.

The readers will recognize that additional studies will have to be carried out on many of the behavioral issues we have discussed. Small samples and individual case successes have not yet provided sufficient evidence on many points.

It is evident from other studies in the behavioral literature that both the use of a point system and the use of a social reinforcement system will change behavior. At this date, the literature on Achievement Place does not indicate which components of the motivation system are necessary to achieve the results they have reported. This is unfortunate, at least for those who may wish to start such a program but wonder if it cannot be simplified. For example, would the program be just as effective without the self-government system? Or without the social reinforcement system? Is it necessary to begin a similar program with all three systems or could a program incorporate first the point system, then the social reinforcement, and then the self-government system? Or does order of presentation matter at all? The relative contributions of each of the three systems to the results that have been reported remain to be determined empirically.

We raised a related point earlier in discussing the effects of the treatment given youths while they lived at Achievement Place. An unanswered question is: Would treatment procedures such as "training and feedback" work as well outside of the context of the ongoing program? (This is probably a question of little importance to the researchers at Achievement Place but might become important, for example, to nonresidential programs that may wish to train youths for jobs.) Although the literature on Achievement Place does not provide information on such matters, we do not mean to fault the program by raising them. No research effort can hope to answer all questions; careful research often results in new questions.

What Achievement Place has accomplished is impressive. Many of the studies are of good quality: they are replicable and contribute to a growing record of success for the Teaching-Family model. That record is the most extensive and informative one by far that has been made available for any program used as an alternative to juvenile justice processing.⁵⁹

It is in this context that we believe an assessment of Achievement Place cannot be made at this time. The literature on Achievement Place has been written, for the most part, to share advances in a treatment technology with other behavioral psychologists. Several important facts about the program have not been reported, at least in the sources we have been able to find.

Most of our questions are about how the Teaching-Family model developed at the original Achievement Place has been adapted for use in other communities and court jurisdictions. The general questions we have are three in number: (1) Who can the program be used for? (2) What can it be used as an alternative to? (3) Has its use had any unexpected and unfavorable consequences?

WHO CAN ACHIEVEMENT PLACE BE USED FOR?

Information is needed about the Teaching-Family model's success with different kinds of youths. What have been the age distributions at the group homes? Can males and females be treated at the same facility or is it best to group them separately? Do differences in the strengths of youths' families affect how the model is applied or the results it obtains? Is the model more useful to courts in jurisdictions with smaller populations or can it be used in the largest cities as well?⁶⁰

WHAT CAN ACHIEVEMENT PLACE BE USED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO?

A fair assessment of any alternative program requires information about the specific juvenile justice process to which it relates. The functions of a program can be understood only if the sources of and criteria for referral are known. Similarly, knowledge of the procedures and criteria used at intake to and termination from the program is needed to place measures of success and failure in proper content.

Achievement Place has been described as a dispositional alternative to probation or commitment to an institution. It appears to be a program that also might be used as an alternative to court referral, intake, or adjudication. But to consider its use in these ways, additional information is needed on the model's experience with youths of varying backgrounds (including most recent offense and offense histories) and with receiving referrals from other sources. There is some evidence in the literature that the program model has been used for children considered dependent and neglected and for other youths with no official classification. But the reports are too few in number and provide too little detail for us to say anything more.

HAS ACHIEVEMENT PLACE HAD UNEXPECTED OR UNFAVORABLE CONSEQUENCES?

We know little about the failures at Achievement Place. Like nearly all treatment literatures, this one does not dwell on its failures. What, if anything, is done about recalcitrant youths

whose behaviors do not change as desired? What has happened to those youths who have not succeeded at Achievement Place? Have they been disposed of more harshly than they would have been if they had not been sent to the program? Does official recording of the fact of residence at Achievement Place influence decisions about youths who get into trouble later? Also, are some children sent to Achievement Place who could be treated just as effectively in their own homes?

Adequate assessment of any kind of program model requires at least some information on the above questions in order to determine the suitability of the model for different social contexts. We have little information about how varying social contexts might affect the operations and outcomes of the Teaching-Family model developed at Achievement Place. The information that researchers studying the Achievement Place program have provided is considerable. It can be used by jurisdictions planning to establish a group home program, individuals working directly with youth, and administrators considering ways to evaluate the effects of treatment methods used in their programs. Our questions have been set forth here to encourage continued study of the Teaching-Family model--to add to the already impressive body of knowledge accumulated by the researchers whose work we have reported here.

NOTES

1. Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, Public Law 93-415. 93d Congress, S. 821, (September 7, 1974).
2. Elery L. Phillips et al., The Teaching Family Handbook. (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas, 1972).
3. Elery L. Phillips, "Achievement Place: Token Reinforcement Procedures in a Home-Style Rehabilitation Setting for 'Pre-delinquent' Boys," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 1, no. 3 (1968): 213-223.
4. Tucson, Ariz.; Santa Paula, Calif.; Kansas City, Kans.; Lawrence, Kans.; Boys' Town, Neb.; Las Vegas, Nev.; Morganton, N.C.; and Houston, Tex.
5. This attempt to do so by no means replaces the excellent reviews which have appeared in various scholarly journals. Two compendia of reports on Achievement Place and its applications are available from the National Institute of Mental Health: Achievement Place: Behavior Modification with Pre-delinquents, Final Report from Grant MH 16609 (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Mental Health Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency, 1971); and Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 2., Final Report for Grant MH 20030 (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Mental Health Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency, 1974).
6. Dean L. Fixsen et al., "The Teaching Family Model of Group Home Treatment," in Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 2.
7. Montrose M. Wolf, Elery L. Phillips, and Dean L. Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Mental Health, Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency, 1974), pp. 8-9.
8. _____, "The Teaching Family: A New Model for the Treatment of Deviant Child Behavior in the Community," in Behavior Modification, ed. S.W. Bijou and E. L. Ribes-Iresta (New York: Academic Press, 1972), pp. 51-62.
9. Dean L. Fixsen et al., "The Teaching Family Model."
10. Wolf, Phillips, and Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 1, p. ii.
11. Ibid., p. ii.
12. Elery L. Phillips et al., The Teaching Family Handbook, pp. 55-56.
13. See, for example, F. L. Girardeau and J. E. Spradlin, "Token Rewards in a Cottage Program," Mental Retardation 2 (1964): 345-355; T. L. Bourgeois, "Reinforcement Theory in Teaching the Mentally Retarded: A Token Economy Program," Perspectives in Psychiatric Care 6 (1968); T. Ayllon and N. H. Azrin, The Token Economy: A Motivational System for Therapy and Rehabilitation (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969); J. J. Boren and A. D. Colman, "Some Experiments on Reinforcement Principles Within a Psychiatric Ward for Delinquent Children," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 3 (1970):29-37; A.E. Kazdin and R.R. Bootzin, "The Token Economy: An Evaluative Review," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 5 (1972):343-372; and A. E. Kazdin, The Token Economy: A Review and Evaluation (New York: Plenum Press, 1977).

As interest in the utilization of the token system increased, research and experimentation on the applicability of the token system to a wide range of populations over a wide range of settings also increased. The token system, for example, has been used in psychiatric settings with varied patient groups in open and closed wards (e.g., Gripp and Magaro, 1972; Ayllon and Azrin, 1968; Atthow and Krasner, 1968); with the mentally retarded (e.g., Giradeau and Spradlin, 1964; Kazdin and Craighead, 1973; Thompson and Grabowski, 1972); in classroom settings (e.g., Birnbauer and Lawler, 1964; Ascare and Axelrod, 1973; Flowers, 1974); with predelinquents (Stumphauzer, 1973; Davidson and Seidman, 1974; Braukmann and Fixsen, 1975; with adult offenders in varied prison settings (McKee, 1970; Jenkins, Witherspoon, De Vine, deValera, Muller, Barton, and McKee, 1974; Boren and Colman, 1970); with geriatric patients (e.g., Sachs, 1975; Libb and Clements, 1969); and with stutterers (e.g., Andrews and Ingham, 1972). See bibliography for complete citations.

14. Several reviews of various behavioral methods and their applications with delinquents are available. For example, see C. J. Braukmann et al., "Behavioral Approaches to Treatment in the Crime and Delinquency Field," Criminology 13 (1975):299-331, and C. J. Braukmann and D. L. Fixsen, "Behavior Modifications with Delinquents," in Progress in Behavior Modification, ed., M. Hersen, R. M. Eisler, and P. M. Miller, (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

15. There are also three variations of a temporary point system for use when a youth gets into trouble. This system is essentially the same as the Daily Point System except that a larger daily point difference (20,000 instead of 10,000) is required in order to exchange points for privileges. The length of time a youth must remain on the temporary system is determined in the Family Conference.

The first variation is a "fine" requiring a youth to earn more points to exchange for privileges. The second variation is a credit system. A youth on this system is expected to perform an extra job (e.g., doing the dishes) each day without receiving points. For extremely serious behavior (e.g., assault, car theft) the third variation may be implemented in which the youth may have to earn as much as 1,500,000 points (in increments of 25,000 points per day) over 60 days. It should be emphasized that in any system, privileges (e.g., going home on weekends, free time) can be removed. For more detail, see Phillips et al, The Teaching Family Handbook, p. 87.

16. Phillips et al., The Teaching Family Handbook, p. 60.

17. Ibid., p. 55.

18. Ibid., pp. 12-14.

19. Ibid., p. 11.

20. Ibid., pp. 29-54.

21. Ibid., p. 37.

22. Ibid., p. 29.

23. Ibid., p. 102.

24. Ibid., p. 104.

25. S. A. Hoefler and P. H. Bornstein, "Achievement Place: An Evaluative Review," Criminal Justice and Behavior 2 (1975):146-168.

26. Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research (Chicago: Rand-McNally Publishing Co., 1963).

27. Other designs are used as well including group and multiple baseline designs. The ABAB reversal design is the design most frequently used by researchers at Achievement Place.

28. For a more complete review of single subject research design, see M. Hersen and D. H. Barlow, Single-case Experimental Designs: Strategies for Studying Behavior Change (New York: Pergamon Press, 1976).

29. J. S. Bailey et al, "Modification of Articulation Errors of Predelinquents by Their Peers," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 4 (1971):265-281.

30. J. S. Bailey, M. M. Wolf, and E. L. Phillips, "Home Based Reinforcement and the Modification of Predelinquent's Classroom Behavior," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 3 (1970):223-233.

31. C. L. Braukmann et al, "An Analysis of a Selection Interview Training Package for Predelinquents at Achievement Place," Criminal Justice and Behavior 1 (1974):30-42; and D. L. Fixsen, E. L. Phillips, and M. M. Wolf, "The Teaching-Family Model of Group Home Treatment," in Closing Correctional Institutions: New Strategies for Youth Services, ed. Y. Bakal (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1973).

32. J. S. Werner et al, "Intervention Package: An Analysis to Prepare Juvenile Delinquents for Encounters with Police Officers," Criminal Justice and Behavior 2 (1975):55-8.

33. R. E. Kifer et al, "Training Predelinquent Youths and Their Parents to Negotiate Conflict Situations," Journals of Applied Behavior Analysis 7 (1974) 357-364.

34. Housekeeping and self-maintenance: Elery L. Phillips et al., "Achievement Place: Modification of the Behaviors of Predelinquent Boys Within a Token Economy," Journals of Applied Behavior Analysis 4 (1971); Elery L. Phillips et al., "Behavior Shaping Works for Delinquents," Psychology Today (June 1973); and Elery L. Phillips, "Achievement Place: Token Reinforcement Procedures in a Home-style Rehabilitation Setting for 'Pre-delinquent' Boys," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 1 (1968).

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Vocational behavior: H. E. Ayala et al., "Achievement Place: Training of Job-related Behaviors in Predelinquent Girls," paper presented at American Psychological Association, New Orleans, La., September, 1974.

Attitudes, Self-Concepts, Emotional Behavior: D. S. Eitzen, "The Effects of Behavior Modification on the Attitudes of Delinquents," Behavior Research and Theory 13 (1975):295-299; D. M. Maloney et al., "Improvement in Several Attitudes of Troubled Adolescents: Preliminary Program Evaluation Report from the Bringing It All Back Home

Group Home Project for Youths in Trouble," Western Carolina Center Papers and Reports 5 (1975); D. S. Eitzen, "The Self-Concept of Delinquents in a Behavior Modification Treatment Program," Journal of Social Psychology 99 (1976):203-206; D. S. Eitzen, "Impact of Behavior Modification Techniques on the Locus of Control of Delinquent Boys," Psychological Reports 35 (Dec. 1974):1317-1318.

Conversational Skills: N. Minkin et al., "The Social Validation and Training of Conversation Skills," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 9 (1976): 127-140; J. S. Bailey et al., "Modification of Articulation Errors of Predelinquents by their Peers," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 4 (1971):265-181; G. D. Timbers, E. L. Phillips, and M. M. Wolf, "Peer Correction of Articulation Errors of a Pre-Delinquent Youth," Proceedings of the American Psychological Association (1970).

School Performance: K. A. Kirigin et al., "Modification of the Homework Behavior and Academic Performance of Predelinquents with Home-Based Reinforcement," paper presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1972; J. S. Bailey, M. M. Wolf, and E. L. Phillips, "Home-Based Reinforcement and the Modification of Predelinquents; Classroom Behavior," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 3 (1970):223-233; D. M. Maloney, K.B. Maloney, and G. B. Timbers, "Improved School Grades and Reduced Truancy: Preliminary Program Evaluation Report No. 1 from the Bringing It All Back Home Project for Youths in Trouble," Western Carolina Center Papers and Reports 5 (1975).

35. These issues are often referred to in the literature on behavioral methods by the term generalization. However, the term has other meanings as well and so has not been used in the text of this paper.

36. Elaine H. Phillips et al., "Achievement Place: The Training of Social Skills," in Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 2 (Washington, D. C.: National Institute of Mental Health, Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency, 1974).

37. P. D. Turnbough et al., "Monitoring Youths' and Parents' Behavior in the Natural Home," (submitted to the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis).

38. This quotation summarizing the study cited in the previous footnote is taken from Wolf, Phillips, and Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 1, pp. 16-17.

39. H. E. Ayala et al., "Achievement Place: The Training and Analysis of Vocational Behavior," in Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 2, and summarized in Wolf, Phillips, and Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 1, pp. 20-24.

40. Ibid.

41. Ayala et al., "Achievement Place: The Training and Analysis," p. 21.

42. R. E. Kifer et al., "Training Predelinquent Youths and Their Parents to Negotiate Conflict Situations," Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis 7 (1974).

43. P. D. Turnbough et al., "Monitoring Youths' and Parents' Behavior in the Natural Home," in Wolf, Phillips, and Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 2.

44. Wolf, Phillips, and Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 1.
45. Ibid., pp. 27-28.
46. For an explanation of Fisher's Exact Test please see Hubert M. Blalock, Social Statistics (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), pp. 287-291.
47. Wolf, Phillips, and Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 1, p.34.
48. Ibid., pp. 32 and 34.
49. Dean L. Fixsen et al., "Training Teaching-Parents to Operate Group Home Treatment Programs," in Wolf, Phillips, and Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 2.
50. Ibid., p. 5.
51. Ibid., p. 7.
52. Ibid., p. 10.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Elery L. Phillips et al., The Teaching Family Handbook, p. 316.
56. Elery L. Phillips et al., Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 1, p. 44.
57. D. L. Fixsen, M. M. Wolf, and E. L. Phillips, "Achievement Place: A Teaching-Family Model of Community-Based Group Homes for Youths in Trouble," in Wolf, Phillips, Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 2.
58. Wolf, Phillips, and Fixsen, Achievement Place: Phase II, vol. 1, pp. 43-44.
59. There is a literature criticizing the theory underlying behavioral modification and the ways it has been applied in various settings, especially correctional ones. We have looked for and have not found any criticism of these kinds directed at Achievement Place.
60. At issue is the adaptability of the Achievement Place model to different conditions. We do not know, for example, if the model has been tried in large cities like New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, or Los Angeles.

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