

Juvenile justice and delinquency theory: crjs315 - 1402a - 02

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Head Start Juvenile Delinquency Treatment Program in Florida, United States
In the America every single person is affected by juvenile crime including families, teachers, parents, and neighbours. It usually affects the perpetrators, crime victims and the bystanders. The delinquent rates have on the rise. Programs such as Head Start have been initiated so as to attempt to reduce these delinquency rates. The program targets the early developmental stages of a child. It also addresses the risk factors that will make a child to engage in delinquent behaviour in the later years of growth. This makes Head Start a high quality early intervention program since focuses on the holistic and general aspects of the child's life other than targeting the crime itself, in addition to being cost effective.

Location

While some programs may be successful, others have very minimal or no impact at all. The Head Start program is adopted in Florida.

Program's cost effectiveness

Treatment in community settings is considered to be more cost effective (Lundman, 2003). Currently, majority of the money in crime prevention goes towards incarceration. Head Start program provides value for money and it is a better investment of government resources than prison and other criminal justice responses (Welsh & Farrington, 2009, p. 871).

Positive impacts of the program

The program has been found to greatly deter crime for the children involved since they happen in the development of the child, and also focus on the holistic and general aspects of the child's life other than targeting the crime itself.

Head Start is a high quality early intervention program. This is because it assists set a pattern that deters delinquency in the child's later years. The children who participate in this program are less likely to drop out of school or engage in delinquent behaviour. According to Mitchell and Williams (1999), early intervention programs such as Head Start program lowers aggression rates and other antisocial behavior, increase IQ scores and executive functioning, and better elementary school achievement.

The other benefit of the program is that it builds strong family and children ties. It provides support to the system of parental involvement and education improving family and children functioning (Zigler, 1994).

Curbing juvenile delinquency

As cited by Greenwood (2008), the most successful programs are ones that prevent the youth from engaging in delinquent behaviours. This program that targets the pregnant teens, their at-risk infants and education for their at-risk children usually includes work with parents or home visits. Head Start will assist reduce future crime since it focuses on the child's general life since infancy.

Besides, the program will help in curbing crime because it focuses on the risk factors that make one engage in crime, in the later stages of life. This is because the program offers support to parental involvement and education to enhance family and child functioning.

Negative sides of the program

Theoretically, rehabilitation focuses on the correction programs for juveniles. On the contrary, in practice, as it occurs with the adult programs, the juvenile rehabilitation program may be poorly implemented (Zagar, Busch, &

Hughes, 2009).

The other negative side of the program is that there is no complete way of predicting that children will behave in criminal and delinquent way in future. There are various risk factors that have been found to associate with these behaviours (Lipton, Martinson & Wilks, 2008), such as poor parental supervision, poor child-rearing practices, low family income, criminal parents and siblings, large family size, low intelligence, poor housing, and low educational attainment.

Petrosino, Petrosino and Buehler (2003) argue that program in certain instances it leads to more offending behaviour.

Suggestions for improving the program

Strengthening the implementation of Head Start could substantially reduce future criminality.

The state officials that permit this program need to employ rigorous evaluation in order to ensure that they are not causing more harm to the same citizens they are pledging to protect (Petrosino, Petrosino, & Buehler, 2003). Next, treatment in community settings is considered to be more effective. Lastly, the other suggestion is that strengthening and implementation of the existing delinquency prevention and rehabilitation program could substantially reduce future criminality.

Reference List

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