

**GIRLS IN THE  
MAINE CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**SPECIAL BULLETIN**

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*University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service*

# Girls in the Maine Criminal Justice System Special Bulletin

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Acknowledgments

## Introduction

The purpose of this brief is to understand the experiences of girls who become involved in Maine's juvenile justice system. The data used for this report include four cohorts of girls who have had contact with the system between 2006 and 2011. The four cohorts are:

- Girls who were adjudicated for the first time and supervised by DJS between 2006-2011 (“First Adjudicated Supervised Youth”) (Table 1);
- Girls who were arrested between 2006 and 2011 (Table 2);
- Girls who were discharged from the Department of Corrections (supervision or detention) between 2006-2011 (Table 3); and
- Girls who were committed to a youth development center between 2006-2011 (Table 4).

The purpose of this analysis is to:

- a. Compare the experiences and outcomes of girls to the experiences of boys, and
- b. Determine if the characteristics and experiences of girls in Maine are aligned with the literature about girls across the country.

This “Special Bulletin” will answer the following research questions:

- What are the characteristics of girls in the correctional system and how are they different from the characteristics of boys in the system?
- What are the pathways into the justice system for girls?
- What types of crimes do girls commit? Do the crimes of girls tend to be more or less severe than those boys tend to commit?
- Do girls score differently than boys on the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), indicating a different level of risk and likelihood of recidivism?
- Are recidivism rates of girls similar to those of boys?
- What are staff attitudes towards working with girls? How do they rate their knowledge and skills in working with girls? Are there differences in attitudes, skills, and knowledge based on the gender of the staff member?
- What are the needs of girls in the system, as reported by the staff who work with them?

## The Maine Context

Nationally, the rate of girls involved in the juvenile justice system is growing (NCCD Center for Girls and Young Women, Nov., 2009). While incarceration rates of all youth are dropping, they are dropping more quickly for boys than girls. Girls compose about 30 percent of all arrests and 15 percent of all incarcerations nationally (NCCD, 2009). The tables below show the number and percent of girls, as compared to boys, who have:

- a. entered supervision (community or facility) for the first time in Maine's juvenile justice system,
- b. been arrested,
- c. been committed to a juvenile facility in Maine, and
- d. been diverted.

Overall, the rate of decrease in the number of first adjudicated supervised youth (FASY) since 2006 was similar for girls and boys, with an overall decrease of 40 percent in the number of girls supervised and 38 percent for the number of boys supervised. As compared to the overall population of youth supervised, girls consistently comprise about 20 percent of the total population of supervised youth.

*Table 1: First Adjudicated Supervised Youth (FASY) in Maine by Gender*

Year	Girls	%Change Per year	% Change Cumulative	Boys	%Change Per year	% Change Cumulative
2006	173 (21.0%)	-	-	652 (79.0%)	-	-
2007	154 (20.9%)	-11%	-11%	582 (79.1%)	-11%	-11%
2008	128 (19.5%)	-17%	-26%	528 (80.5%)	-9%	-19%
2009	121 (22.1%)	-5%	-30%	426 (77.9%)	-19%	-35%
2010	126(22.3%)	+4%	-27%	438 (77.7%)	+3%	-33%
2011	103 (20.2%)	-18%	-40%	406 (79.8%)	-7%	-38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>805 (21.0%)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-40%</b>	<b>3032 (79.0%)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-38%</b>

Arrests of girls, compared to all youth arrests, remains steady from 2006 through 2011, ranging from 27.6 to 30.9 percent. This is very similar to the national average of girls making up 30 percent of all arrests. Additionally, the overall decrease in the rate of arrests of girls (25.0%) is smaller than that of boys (31.6%). Table 3 shows the number and percentage of arrests for girls and boys between 2006 and 2011.

Table 2: Youth Arrested in Maine by Gender

Year	Girls	Boys
2006	2,144 (27.6%)	5,623 (72.4%)
2007	1,984 (28.0%)	5,108 (72.0%)
2008	2,060 (30.1%)	4,782 (69.9%)
2009	2,097 (30.9%)	4,682 (69.1%)
2010	1,946 (30.0%)	4,546 (70.0%)
2011	1,607 (29.5%)	3,848 (70.5%)

Commitments of girls in Maine decreased slightly each year from 2006 to 2010 before increasing in 2011, compared to a yearly slight increase in the percentage of boys committed. While the overall number of girls committed is quite small, it is notable that in 2011 the representation of girls committed to a youth development facility in Maine was very similar to the national average of 15 percent.

Table 3: Committed Youth in Maine by Gender

Year	Girls	Boys
2006	14(14.3%)	84 (85.7%)
2007	12 (12.5%)	84 (87.5%)
2008	15(11.8%)	112(88.2%)
2009	11(10.3%)	96 (89.7%)
2010	7(8.0%)	81(92.0%)
2011	12(14.5%)	71 (85.5%)
Total	71(11.9%)	528 (88.1%)

The percentage of youth diverted from the system who are girls has remained consistent over the past five years, ranging from 35.1 percent to 39.6 percent. Girls compose a markedly higher percentage of diverted youth compared to their number among first adjudicated or committed youth. Table 4 shows the number of youth who were diverted between 2007 and 2011, and the percentage of diversions by gender.

Table 4: Diverted Youth in Maine by Gender

Year	Girls	Boys
2007	694 (35.1%)	1,286 (64.9%)
2008	874 (39.5%)	1,341 (60.5%)
2009	890 (37.1%)	1,507 (62.9%)
2010	814 (39.6%)	1,244 (60.4%)
2011	660 (36.4%)	1,155 (63.6%)
Total	3,932(37.6%)	6,533 (62.4%)

\*Note: 2006 rates were excluded from this table. Beginning in 2007, all diverted data was updated by Muskie. Since there was no updated data for the 2006 cohort, they were not comparable to the rates calculated based on updated information.

## The Characteristics of Girls

### Age

National studies have consistently indicated that girls are entering into the juvenile system at younger ages than their male counterparts (NCCD, 2009). Table 5 shows the average age of girls in Maine, as compared to boys, for those entering supervision and those who were committed between 2006 and 2011. The comparison of the average age of girls and boys in Maine shows girls entering supervision and being committed at only a slightly younger age (2 to 3 months younger) than their male counterparts.

Table 5: Average Age at Entry into the Maine Justice System 2006 - 2011

	Supervised Mean (Median)	Committed Mean (Median)
Girls	15.5 years (16)	16.3 years (17)
Boys	15.7 years (16)	16.6 years (17)

### Type of Crime

The chart includes youth who were first adjudicated between 2006 and 2011 and shows the type of crime committed. If a youth committed more than one crime at this time, only the most serious is reported. Types of crime that fall in the “Other” category were excluded for analysis purposes.

As indicated in Table 6, the majority of boys and girls who are adjudicated for the first time have committed property or personal crimes. A greater percentage of the girls committed personal and drug/alcohol crimes (with the exception of 2011) compared to boys.

Table 6: Most Serious Offense at Adjudication: Offense Type 2006 – 2011 FASY (n=3,752)

	Personal		Property		Drugs/Alcohol	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
2006	43.0%	35.1%	45.3%	56.0%	11.8%	8.8%
2007	41.5%	37.7%	50.0%	55.2%	8.6%	7.1%
2008	46.0%	42.3%	41.3%	50.1%	12.7%	7.6%
2009	42.9%	38.9%	47.9%	53.7%	9.2%	7.4%
2010	45.7%	39.6%	42.7%	54.1%	12.1%	6.3%
2011	51.0%	39.9%	44.0%	52.4%	5.0%	7.7%
Total	44.5%	38.7%	45.4%	53.7%	10.1%	7.6%

Table 7 shows the percentage of girls, compared to boys, who entered the justice system between 2006 and 2011 by offense class. As indicated by the chart, the majority of both girls and boys entering the system committed a misdemeanor offense. However, the percentage of girls who commit felonies is smaller than boys. It should be noted that the number of girls committed for a felony is small, ranging from a high of 23 in 2006 to a low of seven in 2011.

In addition, boys, compared to girls, tend to be charged with more than one crime at first adjudication.

Table 7: Most Serious Offense at Supervision:  
Offense Class of Crime

	Misdemeanor		Felony	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
2006	86.7%(150)	79.8%(518)	13.3% (23)	20.2% (131)
2007	87.5%(133)	77.2%(448)	12.5%(19)	22.8%(132)
2008	87.5%(112)	78.6%(414)	12.5%(16)	21.4%(113)
2009	87.5%(105)	79.1%(336)	12.5%(15)	20.9%(89)
2010	89.9%(113)	80.8%(354)	10.3%(13)	18.9%(83)
2011	93.2%(96)	82.5%(334)	6.8%(7)	17.5%(71)

Note: Civil crimes were excluded from the chart above due to very few youth (max 3) committing civil crimes.

Table 8: Number of Charges at First Adjudication (FASY)

	One Charge at First Adjudication	More than One Charge at First Adjudication
Girls	63.7%	36.3%
Boys	49.3%	50.7%



## Risk and Recidivism

Risk levels of juveniles in Maine are assessed using the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), hereafter YLS. The YLS measures a youth's level of risk and can be used to predict recidivism. The YLS measures youth behavior in the following domains:

- *Prior and Current Offenses*
- *Leisure/Recreation*
- *Personality/Behavior*
- *Attitudes/Orientation*
- *Substance Use*
- *Family Circumstances*
- *Education/Employment*
- *Peer Relations*

Scores included in analysis were completed within 180 days preceding or 30 days following the first adjudication. Table 9 shows the completion rates of YLS assessments between 2006 and 2011.

Of the 3,837 youth who were placed under supervision between 2006 and 2011, 2,980 had completed YLS assessments. This represents an overall completion rate of 77.7 percent. By gender, the YLS completion rate for boys (78.1%) was slightly higher than that for girls (76.0%).

Table 9: YLS Completion Rates (FASY)

	YLS Completed		Total Cohort	Total Percentage YLS
	Girls	Boys		
2006	132 (76.3%)	512 (78.5%)	825	78.1%
2007	116 (75.3%)	439 (75.4%)	736	75.4%
2008	96 (75.0%)	421 (79.7%)	656	78.8%
2009	96 (79.3%)	336 (78.9%)	547	79.0%
2010	92 (73.0%)	341 (77.9%)	564	76.8%
2011	80 (77.7%)	319 (78.6%)	509	78.4%
<b>Total</b>	612 (76.0%)	2,368 (78.1%)	3,837	77.7%

Scores on the YLS range from 0-42, with higher scores indicating higher risk. Additionally, scores are interpreted as "Low" (0-8), "Moderate" (9-22), and "High" (23-42). Table 10 shows the distribution of supervised youth by gender and level of risk. While the majority of youth are assessed as "moderate risk," a greater percentage of girls than boys are in the high-risk category.

Table 10: Level of Risk and Gender (FASY)

	LOW		MODERATE		HIGH	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
2006	21.2% (28)	36.1% (185)	61.4% (81)	52.1% (267)	17.4% (23)	11.7% (60)
2007	25.9% (30)	30.8% (135)	60.3% (70)	57.6% (253)	13.8% (16)	11.6% (51)
2008	29.2% (28)	42.0% (177)	55.2% (53)	46.1% (194)	15.6% (15)	11.9% (50)
2009	36.5% (35)	41.1% (138)	45.8% (44)	48.2% (162)	17.7% (17)	10.7% (36)
2010	29.3% (27)	39.3% (134)	56.5% (52)	48.4% (165)	14.1% (13)	12.3% (42)
2011	22.5% (18)	44.8% (143)	65.0% (52)	44.8% (143)	12.5% (10)	10.3% (33)
<b>Total</b>	27.1% (166)	38.5% (912)	57.5% (352)	50.0% (1184)	15.4% (94)	11.5% (272)

As indicated in Table 11, girls entering supervision tend to score significantly higher (in four of the six years in the study period) on the YLS, indicating a higher level of risk of recidivism.

Table 11: Average YLS Score for FASY Youth Entering Supervision

	2006	N	2007	N	2008	N	2009	N	2010	N	2011	N	TOTAL
<b>Girls</b>	14.58***	132	14.37*	116	14.28***	96	13.15	96	13.16	92	14.31***	80	14.02***
<b>Boys</b>	11.96	512	12.85	439	11.59	421	11.61	336	11.94	341	10.92	319	11.88

\*Indicates ( $p < .1$ ) \*\*\*Indicates ( $p < .01$ )

It is worth noting that of youth discharged between 2006 and 2011, girls scored higher at intake, on average, on every domain of the YLS, with significant differences in the following domains: Education/Employment, Family Circumstances/Parenting, Leisure/Recreation, Peer Relations, Personality/Behavior, and Substance Abuse. Thus, girls are entering supervision scoring significantly higher on six of the eight domains.

It is also worth noting that while risk levels for all youth tend to decrease from intake to discharge from supervision, girls have higher risk levels at discharge than their male counterparts. Table 12 shows the average scores at intake and discharge for all youth who were discharged from supervision between 2006 and 2011. Scores were matched and calculated only for youth with completed assessments at both points in time.

Table 12: Risk Scores

Year	Gender	Sample Size	Mean Intake Score	Mean Discharge Score
2006	<b>Boys</b>	213	12.87	10.23
	<b>Girls</b>	75	13.04	11.08
2007	<b>Boys</b>	267	12.17	9.56
	<b>Girls</b>	80	15.71	12.43
2008	<b>Boys</b>	248	12.53	9.76
	<b>Girls</b>	73	15.29	11.52
2009	<b>Boys</b>	254	11.72	9.37
	<b>Girls</b>	71	14.14	10.85
2010	<b>Boys</b>	216	10.52	8.03
	<b>Girls</b>	68	12.72	8.13
2011	<b>Boys</b>	225	11.41	8.55
	<b>Girls</b>	80	13.79	9.66
Total	<b>Boys</b>	1,423	11.89	9.27
	<b>Girls</b>	447	14.15	10.65

\*\*\*All differences from intake to discharge were statistically significant ( $p < .01$ )

The following table shows the average length of supervision (in months) for girls compared to compared to boys. Despite their slightly higher assessed risk, girls are supervised for a shorter period of time.

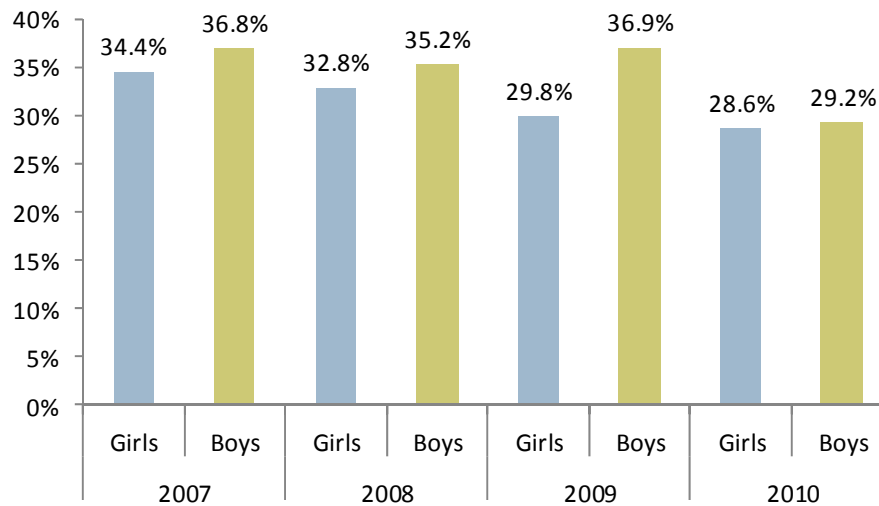
*Table 13: Average Length of Supervision in Months*

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	TOTAL
<b>Girls</b>	12.6	13.2	13.2	12.3	13.1	12.3	12.8
<b>Boys</b>	16.2	16.0	17.3	16.9	16.6	15.3	16.4

\*\*\*All differences are statistically significant (<.01) for all years

Figure 1 shows the overall percentage of girls and boys who recidivated. Boys had slightly higher recidivating rates than girls.

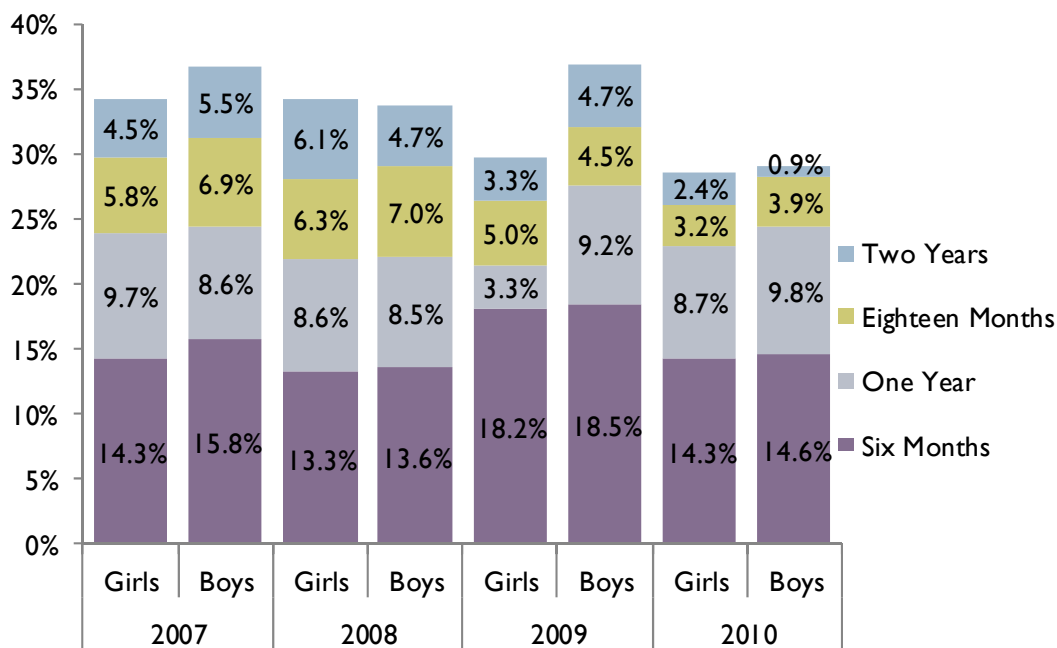
*Figure 1: Percentage of Youth Who Recidivated*



Recidivism rates for girls and boys were calculated at several points in time: within the first six months following discharge, between six months and one year, between one year and eighteen months, and between eighteen months and two years. Results indicated that in general, girls and boys recidivate at similar rates, despite the higher risk levels of girls.

As Figure 2 indicates, girls and boys tend to recidivate at similar rates within each time period. It should be noted that the two-year rate in 2010 reflects only a portion of youth who recidivated during that time, as the full two-year term had not been completed at the time of this report.

Figure 2: Time to Recidivate by Gender



Of the 71 girls who were committed between 2006 and 2009, 50 were released into Community Reintegration<sup>1</sup>. Of those 50 girls, 27 were returned to the youth development facility, 19 were not returned, and 4 were still in Community Reintegration. Of those who were returned, 70 percent were technical violations, 7 percent were for adjudicated charges, and the remaining were “Other” or “Unknown” reasons.<sup>2</sup>

### Survey Results

To better understand what strengths girls present, the barriers they face once in the system, and staff attitudes and opinions of supervised and committed girls, Muskie School researchers developed and administered a survey to Juvenile Community Correctional Officers (JCCOs) and facility staff on the girls unit at Long Creek Youth Development Center. The survey was developed based on a review of literature. The Maine’s Girls Case Management team reviewed it for content. Research staff administered the survey at Regional Team Meetings. Forty-one JCCOs and 8 facility staff completed the survey. Data were analyzed using mixed methods. To analyze qualitative data on staff perceptions as to why girls are detained, two researchers collectively developed overall categories and themes. Some responses fell into more than one category.

### Staff Attitudes

The table below shows the percent of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the identified statements, related to their beliefs around best practices when working with girls.

<sup>1</sup> Community Reintegration refers to the time after commitment during which a youth may still be under supervision.

<sup>2</sup> This data was as of July, 2012.

Overall, staff recognized the importance of using gender responsive programs and strategies and having a relationship with youth. Notably, 89 percent of staff report that they currently use a trauma-informed approach when working with girls.

There was less agreement among staff concerning availability of resources available when they are interacting with girls, whether rewards are more effective when working with girls, the need for additional training, and whether a relationship was *more* important when working with girls than with boys.

Table 14: Staff Survey Results: Attitudes n=49

	% Strongly Agree or Agree
I think it is important to use gender responsive strategies when working with girls.	95%
I think it is important to develop a relationship when working with all youth.	94%
I think girls under supervision tend to have different needs than boys.	91%
I think it is important to offer gender specific programming (programs that are gender specific).	89%
I use a trauma informed approach when working with girls.	89%
I think it is important to separate girls from boys in their programming.	80%
I can access resources and support if I am struggling with girls on my caseload.	71%
I think rewards are more effective than punishment when working with girls.	67%
I need additional training to better work with girls.	61%
I think a relationship is more important to develop when working with girls.	56%

*\*Note that Strongly Agree and Agree were combined due to printing error on some survey that did not provide an "Agree" option.*

### Do Girls in Detention and Commitment Have Different Needs Than Boys?

All staff were asked whether girls in detention/commitment tend to have different needs than boys. Seventy-one percent (35) of the 49 responding staff answered "Yes". While descriptions of differing needs varied, the 13 staff who opted to provide explanations consistently responded that relationships were more important with girls, girls are more likely to have needs related to past trauma, and girls are more emotional than boys. The table below shows some of the explanations staff provided as to how youth needs differ by gender.

Table 15: The Different Needs of Girls and Boys in Detention/Commitment n=13

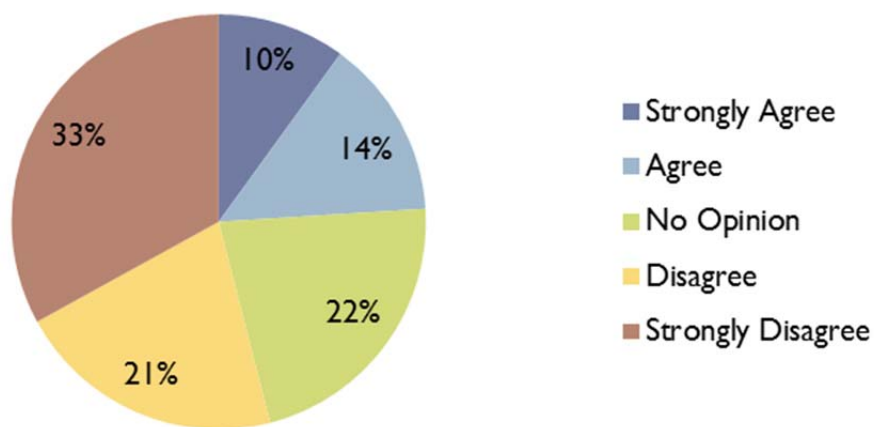
Yes	No
<p>“Tend to be more drama filled”</p> <p>“Relationships are very important”</p> <p>“They are much more relational”</p> <p>“Relationships very important and often trauma histories require different responsiveness”</p> <p>“With the training we have received the understanding of trust and relationship is key”</p>	<p>“Male or female, each person should be treated differently”</p> <p>“Services may need to be specific to girls. However, some girls can fit well into boys programming”</p>

There were differences in the perceptions of girls’ needs based on the gender of the staff member. Of those who completed the survey, 39 provided their gender. Twenty-one male staff and 18 female staff responded. Eighty-three percent of female staff agreed or strongly agreed that the needs of girls were different from those of boys, compared to 62 percent of male staff who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

### Staff Preference for Working with Girls

Staff were also asked on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the extent to which they agreed with the statement, “I prefer to work with girls, as compared to boys.” The majority of staff disagreed or strongly disagreed (54%) that their preference was to work with girls.

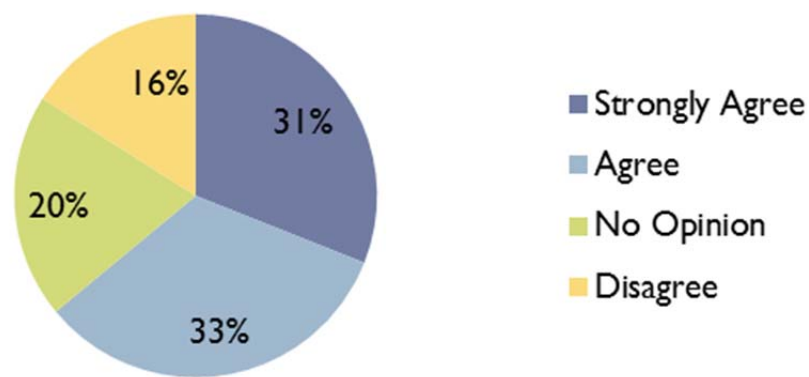
Figure 3: “I Prefer to Work with Girls, as Compared to Boys” n=49



Staff preference for working with girls was also explored based on the gender of the staff member. The majority of male and female staff disagreed with the statement, “I prefer to work with girls as compared to boys.” However, 39 percent of female staff agreed or strongly agreed with the statement as compared to 19 percent of male staff.

Staff were also asked how strongly they agreed with the statement, “Girls are more difficult to work with than boys.” Sixty-four percent of staff surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that girls are more difficult to work with than boys. Notably, none of the staff surveyed reported strongly disagreeing with the statement. These results were similar for both male and female staff.

Figure 4: Girls are More Difficult to Work with than Boys n=49



When staff were asked, “What makes girls more difficult to work with?” the most common responses were:

- girls are more emotional
- the impact of trauma makes girls more difficult
- their “attitude” and “drama”
- their mood and behavior is more likely to be influenced by peers

### Girls’ Needs and Staff Skills

Staff were also asked to rate the prevalence of issues facing the girls they are currently working with (1=none, 2= some, 3=most, 4=all), as well as to rate their own skills, in working with girls having had those experiences (1= none, 2=moderate, 3=intermediate, 4=expert). Table 16 shows the responses of staff who answered both questions.

Many staff reported having the highest level of skills in substance abuse, MH disorders, emotional abuse, and traumatic event, many of which are prevalent issues for the girls in their care.

*Table 16: The Issues Facing Girls and Staff Readiness to Handle Them*

	Prevalence	Staff Skills
Traumatic Event (n=45)	2.87	2.40
Substance Abuse (n=45)	2.82	2.56
Mental Health Disorders (n=46)	2.67	2.46
Emotional Abuse (n=44)	2.61	2.43
Complex Trauma (n=43)	2.60	2.28
Neglect (n=45)	2.36	2.29
Domestic Violence (n=45)	2.31	2.38
Sexual Abuse (n=44)	2.30	2.36
Physical Abuse (n=45)	2.29	2.40
Rape (n=41)	2.12	2.34
Pregnancy/Parenting(n=44)	1.89	2.34
Gender Identity Struggles (n=41)	1.71	2.12

Staff were also asked to identify from their perspective, what they saw as the struggles for girls once they are in the system. Twenty-six staff answered the question. The chart below summarizes the major themes.

*Table 17: Struggles for Girls Once They Enter the System (n=26)*

For All Girls	
<b>Self-Confidence and Hope</b>	
Lack of self-confidence and hope Disbelief in their ability to change Disbelief in their ability to stick to the changes they have made Struggle to stay hopeful for a positive future	
<b>Relationships</b>	
Girls tend to be involved in difficult relationships with family and peers Girls need to be taught about healthy vs. unhealthy relationships	
<b>Specifically for Community Supervised Girls</b>	<b>Specifically for Committed Girls</b>
<b>Family Support</b>	
Engaging the girls' families as supports Working with families to provide supervision	Girls being away from home and their family Girls transitioning back to unchanged homes
<b>Substance Abuse</b>	
Staying sober Not enough treatment programs	Drug withdrawals



The four common themes among supervised and committed staff concerning girls were Self-Confidence and Hope, Relationships, Family Support, and Substance Abuse. In regard to Self-Confidence and Hope and Relationships the struggles reported were similar for all girls.

However, struggles were related to Family Support and Substance Abuse were different for girls depending on whether they were in community or facility supervision. For girls in the community, family struggles related to the engagement of the girl’s family in treatment and working with the family to support and supervise their child. For committed youth, being away from home was a struggle, as well as later returning home, often to unstable home environments that had not changed while the girls were residing at the facility.

For Substance Abuse struggles, girls in the community struggled to stay sober, and finding available treatment programs was difficult. For those in the facility, the most common struggle was dealing with drug withdrawal symptoms.

Additional struggles were identified by staff specifically for supervised youth and included: the lack of availability of trauma-informed, female-only, gender-specific programs in the community; a need for additional housing options for girls (as a safe place to live is a struggle for some girls under supervision); and employment, coping, and independent living skill instruction.

Staff were asked whether the struggles for girls were different from those of boys once they are discharged from the system. The most common responses were that girls struggled more than boys with staying sober and staying away from negative peers once released. Additional struggles are noted in the table below.

*Table 18: Needs of Released Girls*

<b>Girls Released from Supervision</b>	<b>Girls Released from Facility</b>
Getting treatment in programs that are trauma- and gender-informed	Losing relationships that have been formed with staff
Staying in treatment	Slipping back into old habits
Managing unstable, conflicting home life	Making new, positive friends
Struggling to become more independent	
Staying positive and focused on goals	

Finally, the Muskie School researchers asked staff to provide the top five reasons they thought girls were detained, based on their own experience/perception. We did not ask staff to rank their responses, so we looked only at the frequency of responses from staff. The chart below shows the top ten responses staff provided as to why girls are detained. Examples are included for categories created as a result of merging. Responses such as “Substance Abuse” do not include examples, as all responses were very similar in that category.

1. **New charges** *Included responses such as new crime, new charges, theft, assaults, violence.*
2. **Substance abuse**
3. **Mental health/trauma reactions** *Included responses such as unmet MH needs, no services to stabilize, emotionally unstable, trauma symptoms, explosive behavior, danger to others, fights with authority, and mental and sexual abuse.*
4. **Probation violation**
5. **Personal safety** *Included responses such as being a risk to herself, unsafe behavior, at risk of victimization, and sexual activity.*
6. **Family discord/conflict** *Included responses such as fights with parents, conflict with parents, parents being frustrated, family concerns, poor or no relationship with parent, and parent not cooperative.*
7. **They have nowhere to live, or their living environment is unsafe**
8. **Running away**
9. **They aren’t engaging in treatment or school**
10. **Peers** *Included responses such as girls getting in trouble because of their peers, under influence of their peers, and because of the “bad boyfriend.”*

## Summary

This report indicates that girls in the juvenile justice system have different needs than boys. Among the findings:

- Girls score higher on the YLS, indicating they are higher risk, but this does not align with other data indicating that girls recidivate at similar rates to boys and tend to be adjudicated for less serious and fewer offenses.
- Among staff surveyed, 25 percent preferred working with girls as compared to boys.
- Many staff found girls to be more difficult to work with and community staff in particular felt that they lacked access to support and resources in working with the difficult girls they are assigned.
- Gaps in staff-reported prevalence of issues facing girls and the staff's ability to address those issues were also identified, yet a number of staff reported that they did not need additional training to help them better serve girls.
- Finally, staff provided insight into the reasons girls are detained that are directly related to physical and psychological trauma reactions and symptoms.

## References

NCCD Center for Girls & Young Women. (2009). Girls do matter. Retrieved from [http://nccdglobal.org/sites/default/files/publication\\_pdf/girlsdomatter.pdf](http://nccdglobal.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdf/girlsdomatter.pdf)

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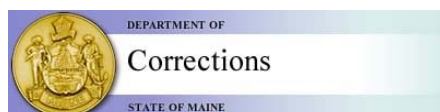
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