

❏ IMPROVING POLICE ENCOUNTERS WITH JUVENILES: DOES TRAINING MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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❏ Abstract

Law enforcement training programs rarely address how juvenile developmental differences affect police encounters with aggressive or potentially aggressive juveniles. This neglect is surprising since a large percentage of police threat of or use of force contacts are with juveniles. While additional training represents one strategy to address this shortcoming, it is unclear whether such training affects the police officers' perceptions of juveniles and their attitudes toward handling juvenile aggression. This study examines the effectiveness of an experimental training program designed to improve officers' recognition of juveniles' developmental difference and change their attitudes toward their role in handling aggressive or potentially aggressive juveniles. Results showed that training affected officer responses in the desired direction directly following training and at follow-up. Additionally, these findings indicated that a majority of trained officers who encountered aggressive juveniles utilized verbal techniques from the training and found them effective.

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Police encounters with juveniles are an extremely important aspect of the criminal justice system. National data indicate that police encounters with juveniles are more likely to be police initiated and more likely to result in police use of force than are encounters with members of other age groups (Bureau of Justice Statistics [BJS], 1997, 2001). Other research indicates that juveniles have more negative attitudes toward the police than do adults (Hurst & Frank, 2000) and often consider police officers intrusive or disrespectful during encounters (Friedman & Hott, 1995). Despite the importance of police-juvenile encounters, little research has been devoted to their dynamics. In particular, no research has focused on strategies for improving the nature of police-juvenile encounters, including enhancing officer understanding of juvenile behavior patterns and reducing conflict and officer use of force (Marion, 1998; Vandall, 1981).

This article reports the evaluation findings for a police training program designed to de-escalate juvenile aggression. The program was in response to a growing concern that law enforcement officers in Nebraska currently receive no training on juvenile aggression, its causes, or how to de-escalate it. Specifically, the De-Escalating Juvenile Aggression program was designed to teach officers: (1) the developmental factors that define and contribute to juvenile aggressive behavior; (2) appropriate handling of aggressive juveniles (regardless of charge); and (3) the verbal skills necessary to de-escalate aggressive and potentially aggressive youth.

☒ On-The-Street Encounters

Self-report statistics illustrate the nature of police-juvenile encounters and highlight the need for improving the interaction between police and youth. According to the Police Use of Force Study (BJS, 1997; see also BJS, 2001), 41% of police-initiated contacts and 51% of contacts that involved the threat of or use of force involved juveniles between the ages of 12 and 19. Yet juveniles ranked fourth (19%) in overall contacts with police, fourth in the percentage of contacts without the use of force (12%), and third in contacts that resulted in handcuffing (20%). Self-report data collected in Chicago schools reinforce the problematic relationship between police officers and juveniles. Based on responses from 928 high school students, Friedman and Hotts (1995) found that regardless of past experience with police, over half of all students believed that there were serious problems between police and youth. Moreover, students reported that these problems were fueled by police officers' perceptions of and attitudes toward youth. Research on adolescent psychology helps explain the unique nature of police-youth interactions (Howell, 1997; Steinberg & Cauffman, 1996; Steinberg &

Schwartz, 2000). Adolescent psychology focuses on the cognitive and psychosocial factors that distinguish adolescents from adults, and the bulk of research in this area indicates that adolescent behavior and decisionmaking should be interpreted differently (Grisso & Schwartz, 2000; Steinberg & Cauffman, 1996). Juvenile developmental characteristics such as impulsivity, self-centeredness, and resistance to authority increase the chances that police-juvenile encounters will involve conflict, disrespect, and confrontational behavior. These behaviors, in turn, potentially escalate the encounter and affect a police officer's interpretation of the situation and ultimately his/her course of action (Black & Reiss, 1970; Janeksela, 1999; Klinger, 1996; Lundman, 1994; Lundman, Sykes, & Clark, 1978; Piliavin & Briar, 1964; Sherman, 1980, 1993; Worden, 1989; Worden & Shepard, 1996). Recognition of developmental differences and the ability to handle them without force would arguably help officers in difficult situations; however, developmental distinctions are noticeably absent from law enforcement operating procedures and training programs.

The Accreditation Standards for Law Enforcement Agencies (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, 1998) contains a separate chapter related to "juvenile operations," which encourages law enforcement agencies to: (1) address the causes of delinquency through the development of prevention programs and creation of separate juvenile operations or a juvenile officer position; (2) make use of the least coercive among reasonable alternatives; and (3) implement clear procedural guidelines for decisionmaking (p. 44-1). But these standards, along with those in other manuals related to police-juvenile operations, give little attention to juvenile developmental differences and their relationship to the situational dynamics of on-the-street police-juvenile encounters. Similarly, many states have introduced the concept of verbal judo into their law enforcement training to teach officers techniques for de-escalating potentially violent encounters, but the leading manual on verbal judo contains no special instructions related to juveniles (Thompson, 1983).

☒ Reducing Aggression and Conflict

The ability to avoid or de-escalate volatile police-juvenile interactions has several advantages for both juveniles and police officers. Perhaps most importantly, avoiding the use of force decreases the likelihood that juveniles or police officers will be physically harmed (BJS, 1999). Additionally, it reduces the likelihood that negative interaction will detrimentally affect their attitudes and behavior toward one another in the future (Friedman & Hott, 1995; Janeksela, 1999; Leiber, Nalla, & Farnworth, 1998; see also Sherman, 1993; Tyler, 1990). De-escalating situa-

tions can also benefit juveniles directly by affecting police decisionmaking related to arrest, charging, and pre-adjudication detention (Vandall, 1981). Calm situations provide opportunities for gathering information that may reduce the chance of an arrest, reduce the charges given to the youth, and/or reduce the chance of pre-adjudication detention. Decisions about these situations are critical since an arrest can lead to formal processing and the accumulation of a criminal record, charging decisions can lead to more severe sentencing, and pre-adjudication detention can predispose offenders to more severe dispositions following adjudication (Bishop & Frazier, 1988; Frazier & Bishop, 1995; Wordes & Bynum, 1995).

For law enforcement, de-escalating aggressive or potentially aggressive juveniles contributes to the goals of community oriented policing. Negative interaction can create or fuel poor relations with the community, which not only makes a police officer's job more difficult but also stagnates the development of trust and cooperation between the police department and the community (Friedman & Hott, 1995, BJS, 1999; CRS, 1999). Conversely, fostering positive attitudes toward police enlists citizens as "co-producers" of public safety (Janeksela, 1999). Improving the law enforcement's relationship with the community, however, is impossible if police officers are unprepared to handle juveniles effectively and in a manner that is considered fair and impartial by the juvenile, his/her parents, and the wider community (Brandl, Frand, Worden, & Bynum, 1994; Friedman & Hott, 1995).

☒ Program Description

In Nebraska, all new police officers are required to attend 537 hours of training at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island. This training does not include specific training on understanding and handling aggressive juvenile encounters; rather, a 20-hour training section on "special populations" includes 4 hours on juvenile justice procedure (personal communication, Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center, 1999). Additionally, none of the current continuing education training focuses on juvenile offenders. Thus, neither new nor current officers are exposed to the developmental factors that potentially influence juvenile aggression or to verbal techniques helpful in de-escalating juvenile aggression before physical restraint is necessary.

The De-Escalating Juvenile Aggression Training Program was developed by the National Justice Group to address the gaps in law enforcement training related to understanding and handling juvenile behavior and aggression. The curriculum was designed as an eight-hour, single-day training session and was ad-

ministered to three separate groups of officers over the course of three days. During the training, officers were lectured and given role-playing exercises to illustrate the developmental differences between juveniles and adults and the usefulness of verbal techniques to de-escalate potentially aggressive juveniles. In particular, the trainers explained the legal differences between youth and adults, the developmental processes that affect juvenile emotions, the psychological basis for juvenile aggression, and the social factors that influence juvenile aggression (see Appendix A). The purpose of the program evaluation was to measure the program's ability to increase officers' recognition and acceptance of developmental issues related to juvenile behavior and to broaden their perspective on how aggressive or potentially aggressive juveniles should be handled.

An additional question related to program effectiveness is the program's ability to change police behaviors as a result of changing their attitudes and giving them verbal techniques to use. To date, research in this area has not supported the link between attitude and behavior change despite its intuitive appeal (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Gilbert, Fiske, & Lindzey, 1998; Mastrofski & Parks, 1990; Worden, 1989). Worden considered this relationship, or lack thereof, between police officer attitudes and behaviors, suggesting that personal attitudes have little effect because other factors such as the nature of the job, organizational factors, training, socialization within the organization, and specialization have a prevailing influence on behavior regardless of personal attitudes. Although the current study is unable to fully examine this question, follow-up results from trained officers should provide preliminary insight into the extent to which officers used the techniques they learned at training and their usefulness.

☒ Methodology

Participants

Thirty-eight officers from three police departments in Sarpy County, Nebraska, participated in the training program. The largest department (Bellevue) had 58 officers at the time of the training and the remaining two departments (La Vista and Papillion) each had 23. Ranking officers in each department independently selected officers to attend the training. The primary criteria used to select officers were officer schedules (balancing day-shift and night-shift officers) and task assignment. Table 1 shows the number of officers who attended from each department.

An outcome evaluation was conducted using a treatment group of officers (i.e., trained officers) and a comparison group (i.e., untrained officers). Since random assignment was not possible, the treatment group included officers selected

☒ Table 1
Distribution of Trained Officers by Police Department

Department	Officers in Department	Officers in Training	Percentage in Training
Bellevue	58	21	36%
LaVista	23	2	9
Papillion	23	15	65
Total	104	38	37

to attend the training program, and the comparison group included all remaining officers in each department. Pretest surveys were distributed at the station houses one week prior to training, and the completed surveys were delivered to researchers in a sealed envelope. Posttest surveys were completed by the trained group of officers immediately following the training session and pretest scores were used as posttest scores for the untrained group. Five months after the training, both groups were asked to complete a short survey and trained officers were asked to participate in a short interview. Table 2 summarizes the completion rates for each survey across each group of officers. Officers who did not complete one of the surveys were excluded from the analyses, leaving 34 officers in the trained group and 49 officers in the untrained group.

☒ Table 2
Completion Rates Across Trained and Untrained Police Officers

Officer Group	N	Percentage Completing Surveys		
		Pretest	Posttest	Follow-Up
Trained	38	100%	100%	91% (n = 34)
Untrained	66	91%	91%	82% (n = 49)

Design and Procedure

Both the trained and untrained officers responded to a series of statements related to the curriculum of the program. Specifically, 10 items were selected to measure how officers viewed juvenile behavior and how such behavior should be handled. Factor analysis, using the principal components method, was used to determine whether these items measured one or more factors. Two factors were identified, which accounted for 43% of the variance. The items that loaded on each factor were then converted into scales and tested for reliability. The first scale (Handle) included items that measured officers' views of their role in han-

dling aggressive juvenile offenders. This scale had an alpha of .66 (see Appendix B for a list of the items used to create this scale). High scores on this scale represent responses consistent with program goals. The second scale included items that measured the relationship between developmental needs and juvenile behavior, specifically aggressive behavior. Reliability analysis produced a poor alpha (.38) for this scale; consequently, these four items were retained as individual items. High scores on each of these items also represent responses consistent with program goals.

In addition to these items, officer characteristics, officer perceptions of training, and officers' current use of physical tactics with juveniles were measured. Officer characteristics included gender, race, age, and level of education. Gender was coded as a dummy variable, using 0 for males and 1 for females; race was coded as a dummy variable using 0 for other and 1 for white; and level of education was dichotomized into high school only (coded 0) and more than a high school diploma (1). Age captured officers' age at the time of the survey using the following age ranges: 20-29 (coded 1); 30-39 (2); 40-49 (3); 50+ (4). Officers also reported whether they had children (coded 1) or not (0) and their number of years of experience as police officers. They were then asked about the extent and quality of their previous training on handling juveniles and whether they felt it was adequate. A five-item Likert scale response format was used to capture officer responses to each of the following questions:

1. My police training has adequately prepared me for dealing with aggressive juveniles.
2. My police training has provided me with the skills to counsel aggressive juveniles.
3. I think that additional training on how to deal with aggressive juveniles would be helpful.

Finally, officers were asked whether they used physical means to restrain juveniles in the past (coded 1) or not (0). Table 3 contains the means and standard deviations for each of these variables by officer group.

Three separate analyses were performed to examine the effectiveness of training on officer attitudes. First, the characteristics of the trained and untrained officer groups were compared. Since the treatment and comparison groups for this evaluation were not selected randomly, it is possible that these groups differ in ways that might affect the survey results. Chi-square tests were used to determine differences for the dummy and interval variables, and *t*-test comparisons were used to determine differences for continuous and Likert response variables. Finally, *t*-test comparisons were used to establish whether the officer responses changed across the pre-, post-, and follow-up survey points and whether any changes found for trained officers differed significantly from the untrained officer group.

Results

Comparison of trained and untrained officer characteristics and attitudes toward previous training are shown in Tables 3 and 4. Only two significant differences were found between the two groups: race and use of physical force.

☒ Table 3

Comparison of Officer Characteristics Across Untrained and Trained Officers

Characteristic		Untrained Officers	Trained Officers	Chi-Square
Gender	Mean	.06	.08	.22
	Standard Deviation	.24	.29	
Race	Mean	.96	.82	4.24*
	Standard Deviation	.20	.39	
Age	Mean	2.22	2.03	2.27
	Standard Deviation	.87	.80	
Have children	Mean	.73	.71	.08
	Standard Deviation	.45	.46	
Education	Mean	.94	.91	2.29
	Standard Deviation	.24	.29	
Use physical means	Mean	.94	.79	3.96*
	Standard Deviation	.24	.41	

* $p < .05$

☒ Table 4

Comparison of Experience and Perceptions of Training Across Untrained and Trained Officers

Item		Untrained Officers	Trained Officers	<i>t</i>
Years as an officer	Mean	11.89	9.54	1.44
	Stand. Deviation	8.20	6.84	
My police training has adequately ... prepared me for dealing with aggressive juveniles.	Mean	3.90	3.88	.08
	Stand. Deviation	.80	.73	
My police training has provided me with the skills to counsel aggressive juveniles	Mean	3.20	3.23	-.11
	Stand. Deviation	1.07	1.07	
I think that additional training..... on how to deal with aggressive juveniles would be helpful.	Mean	4.02	3.91	.52
	Stand. Deviation	.81	1.08	

Specifically, 18% of the trained officers were non-white officers compared to only 4% of the untrained officers, and trained officers were less likely to use physical means to restrain juveniles than untrained officers (79% and 96%, respectively). Both of these items are meaningful in that they demonstrate some level of difference between the treatment and comparison groups used in this evaluation. No other significant differences were found across officer characteristics, including previous use of force, officer experience, and perceptions of training.

Trained Officer Comparisons

Next, three types of effects were measured to assess changes in officer attitudes toward handling juveniles after the program: short-term, long-term, and overall. The short-term effect measured the change in trained officer responses directly after the program (i.e., a pretest/posttest comparison), the long-term effect captured the extent to which the short-term effect dissipated over time (i.e., posttest/follow-up comparison), and the overall effect measured whether reduction of the short-term effect resulted in no effect or simply a reduced effect (i.e., pretest/follow-up comparison).

Pre/post test comparison results for trained officers are displayed in Table 5. Overall, there were three significant changes in the desired direction directly after training. Officers were more likely to respond that juvenile aggressive behavior was related to the offender’s age and development (“Control” and “Changes”), and officers were more likely to view their role with aggressive juveniles as proactive and helpful (“Handle”).

☒ Table 5
Paired T-Test Comparisons for Pre- and Posttest Results: Trained Officers Only

		Mean	Change	t
Handle Scale (Handle)	Pretest	3.47	.48	5.86***
	Posttest	3.95		
Juveniles are unable to control..... their emotions. (Control)	Pretest	2.41	.59	2.63*
	Posttest	3.00		
Juvenile aggression has a..... recognizable basis. (Basis)	Pretest	2.44	-.15	-.90
	Posttest	2.29		
Physical and emotional changes..... during adolescence make juveniles more aggressive than adults. (Changes)	Pretest	3.12	.44	2.77**
	Posttest	3.56		
Aggressive juveniles can be helped. (Helped)..	Pretest	2.00	.15	.96
	Posttest	2.15		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 6 shows a deterioration of short-term effects at follow-up since all measures decreased from their posttest levels. Two of these changes were statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level and one was marginally significant ($p < .10$).

☒ Table 6

Paired *T*-Test Comparisons for Posttest and Follow-Up Results: Trained Officers Only

		Mean	Change	<i>t</i>
Handle Scale	Posttest	3.95	-.12	-2.26**
	Follow-up	3.83		
Juveniles are unable to control their emotions. (Control)	Posttest	3.00	-.18	-.77
	Follow-up	2.82		
Juvenile aggression has a recognizable basis. (Basis)	Posttest	2.29	-.20	-1.04
	Follow-up	2.09		
Physical and emotional changes during adolescence make juveniles more aggressive than adults. (Changes)	Posttest	3.56	-.30	-1.97*
	Follow-up	3.26		
Aggressive juveniles can be helped. (Helped)	Posttest	2.15	-.36	-2.42**
	Follow-up	1.79		

* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$

Although these decreases represented a reduction in program effect, they did not represent a complete loss of the effect. According to pre-test/follow-up comparisons, shown in Table 7, Handle scale scores were significantly different at follow-up compared to pretest levels, and a positive change in the item, "Juveniles are unable to control their emotions" was significant at $p < .10$. Table 7 also displays one negative effect. Officer responses to the item "Juvenile aggression has a recognizable basis" decreased significantly at follow-up from pretest levels.

Trained and Untrained Officer Comparisons

Although trained officer attitudes appeared to change after their participation in the training program, it is unclear whether these changes can be attributed to the program. To test the validity of these results, trained and untrained officer means were compared at each test point. If the means did not differ before the program but differed after the training, there is evidence that trained officer changes were attributable to the program. The results for trained/untrained officer comparisons across pre-, post-, and follow-up survey points are displayed in Table 8.

☒ Table 7
 Paired *T*-Test Comparisons for Pretest and Follow-Up Results: Trained Officers Only

		Mean	Change	<i>t</i>
Handle Scale	Pretest	3.47	.36	4.47***
	Follow-up	3.83		
Juveniles are unable to control their emotions. (Control)	Pretest	2.41	.41	1.78*
	Follow-up	2.82		
Juvenile aggression has a recognizable basis. (Basis)	Pretest	2.44	-.35	-2.17**
	Follow-up	2.09		
Physical and emotional changes during adolescence make juveniles more aggressive than adults. (Changes)	Pretest	3.12	.14	.87
	Follow-up	3.26		
Aggressive juveniles can be helped. (Helped)	Pretest	2.00	-.21	1.42
	Follow-up	1.79		

* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$

☒ Table 8
 Paired *T*-Test Comparisons Across Trained and Untrained Officers

	Pretest Comparisons			Posttest Comparisons			Follow-Up Comparisons		
	Mean	Diff.	<i>t</i>	Mean	Diff.	<i>t</i>	Mean	Diff.	<i>t</i>
Handle Scale									
	Trained	3.47	.05	.30	3.96	.44	-3.89**	3.83	.50
Untrained	3.52			3.52			3.33		
Juveniles are unable to control their emotions. (Control)									
	Trained	2.41	.24	.98	3.00	.35	-1.36	2.82	.19
Untrained	2.65			2.65			2.63		
Juvenile aggression has a recognizable basis. (Basis)									
	Trained	2.44	.16	-.82	2.29	.01	-.05	2.09	.07
Untrained	2.28			2.28			2.02		
Physical and emotional changes during adolescence make juveniles more aggressive than adults. (Changes)									
	Trained	3.12	.02	-.07	3.56	.46	-2.20*	3.26	.24
Untrained	3.10			3.10			3.02		
Aggressive juveniles can be helped. (Helped)									
	Trained	2.00	.04	-.20	2.15	.19	-.91	1.79	.43
Untrained	1.96			1.96			2.22		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

None of the pretest means were significantly different between groups, which indicates that there were no group differences prior to training on these measures. The strongest program effect at posttest and follow-up was found for the Handle scale. Group means for this scale were virtually identical at pretest (mean difference = .05), but trained officer means differed significantly from untrained officer means at posttest (mean difference = .44) and follow-up (mean difference = .50). Although the trained group experienced a slightly diminished effect at follow-up, the difference was still significant.

Results for the remaining four individual items were not as favorable. The change for only one item, "Physical and emotional changes during adolescence make juveniles more aggressive than adults" was significantly different from untrained officer responses at posttest, but not at follow-up. Unexpectedly, untrained officer responses to the item "Aggressive juveniles can be helped" increased, while trained officer responses decreased; otherwise, none of the trained officer responses to individual items was significantly different from untrained officer responses at follow-up.

Follow-Up Responses to Verbal Techniques

Trained officers were asked to participate in a follow-up interview, which included open-ended questions regarding the importance of this training (see Table 9). Overall, 83% of the trained officers ($n = 35$) found the training worthwhile. Additionally, 26% reported that they had had a confrontation with an aggressive juvenile since the training, and of these officers, 89% used the verbal techniques learned at the training. Sixty-seven percent of the officers who used these techniques thought they were effective tools in handling the situation.

☒ Table 9
Follow-Up Responses From Trained Officers

	n	%
Is this type of training needed?	35	83%
Number of officers with aggressive juvenile confrontations since training	35	26
Did officer use counseling skills in any of these confrontations?	9	89
Were these skills effective?	9	67

Note. Thirty-five officers agreed to participate in the follow-up interview. One of these officers was excluded from earlier analysis because he/she did not complete an earlier survey.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the De-Escalating Juvenile Aggression Program was able to increase officer awareness of juvenile developmental factors, change officer attitudes toward handling aggressive juveniles, and teach officers verbal skills to de-escalate aggressive and potentially aggressive youth. Both short- and long-term effects were found for changes in officer attitudes toward handling aggressive juveniles at posttest and follow-up, and a short-term program effect was found for one item related to juvenile development at posttest. Findings also showed that almost all of the trained officers who encountered aggressive juveniles utilized verbal techniques to de-escalate aggression and found them effective. In sum, these results support the notion that training provides an avenue for improving the nature of police encounters particularly when aggressive or potentially aggressive juveniles are involved.

The utility of these results ultimately rests upon the relationship between changes in officer attitudes and corresponding changes in behavior. Previous research on the relationship between attitudes and behaviors has not produced evidence that the two are connected (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Gilbert et al., 1998), but research in the area of police attitudes and behavior has been limited to date (for example, see Mastrofski & Parks, 1990; Worden, 1989). Resolving the issues surrounding this debate is beyond the scope of the current study, but preliminary results from follow-up surveys provided some evidence that providing information in combination with skills (i.e., verbal de-escalation techniques) may yield changes in officer behavior (Palmerino, Langer, & McGillis, 1984; Ropers & Calkins, 1979).

The findings of this study prompt additional research on this topic. Expanding the evaluation to include the observation of police behavior would play a critical role in resolving this issue as well as providing a more thorough assessment of training effectiveness. Another direction for future research is the expansion of the De-Escalating Juvenile Aggression program to different communities in order to measure the impact of agency philosophies, department organizational structures, juvenile crime rates, and community demographics on the effectiveness of training. Future research should also improve upon the limitations of the current study by increasing the number of officers involved in training and randomly assigning officers to treatment and control groups.

The prospect of providing officers with additional training to deal more effectively with aggressive or potentially aggressive juveniles remains a promising venture (Friedman & Hott, 1995; Vandall, 1981). As key players in the criminal and juvenile justice systems, police officers need to have information that will

assist them in making well-informed decisions regarding appropriate courses of action when dealing with juveniles. Given the role of police discretion in these encounters, it is also reasonable to assume that such information may potentially be helpful in structuring an officer's decisionmaking process and reducing the need to threaten or use force when confronting an aggressive juvenile. Perhaps most importantly, helping officers achieve greater awareness of the factors that influence juvenile aggression will equip them with the skills to communicate more effectively, thereby increasing officer safety and promoting positive relations with the wider community.

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❁ APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF TRAINING CURRICULUM

- ◆ Introduction Video
- ◆ Why Juveniles Are Legally Different from Adults

Provided a description of federal (e.g., Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act) and state laws that distinguish juveniles from adults and the implications of these laws for law enforcement. Additionally, the consequences for violating these laws for states and law enforcement officers were presented.
- ◆ The Basis of Juvenile Aggression

Described three major bases for aggression: physical, psychological, and social. A definition of each was given in addition to examples that illustrated the impact of these factors on juvenile behavior and decisionmaking. Each section also included a discussion period in which the instructor asked officers to analyze the examples.
- ◆ Why Juveniles Become Aggressive

This section provided officers with an overview of the theories and research on juvenile development and aggression. Specifically, the instructor highlighted how the following needs/situations lead to frustration and/or aggression among juveniles: (1) love and belonging; (2) power and importance; (3) fun and pleasure; (4) freedom and choice; (5) triggering events; and (6) pain avoidance and goal frustration. Each of these factors was defined and illustrated with examples.
- ◆ Role Playing with Interactive Video

Provided officers with the opportunity to apply information learned to taped scenarios.
- ◆ Differences Between Adult and Juvenile Aggression

The instructor distinguished adult aggression and juvenile aggression in three ways: the ability to control aggression, deliberate v. emotional aggression, and directed v. unbridled aggression. Adult aggression is controlled, deliberate, directed, while juvenile aggression is more often uncontrolled, emotional, and unbridled. The differences, in turn, have implications for police encounters with aggressive juveniles.

- ◆ **Law Enforcement Training Is Primarily Adult Oriented**
The instructor reviewed standard law enforcement training and illustrated how it is more directed at handling adult aggression than juvenile aggression. The implications of this were also discussed.

- ◆ **Juvenile Aggression De-Escalation Techniques**
Various scenarios were used to show the limitations of traditional training techniques. Next, the instructor described the “Juvenile Aggression Control Model,” which provides a guide to officers in the de-escalation of aggressive and potentially aggressive youth. This model includes assessing the situation for danger and applying methods that increase the officers’ listening and counseling. Additionally, the officers were provided with a method to verbally de-escalate aggressive juveniles: **ESCAPE**. Explore the juvenile’s point of view, allowing venting; Share your point of view without being judgmental; Connect to juvenile’s feelings and reactions; Alternative behaviors discussed; Plan to implement a solution; Execute the solution.

- ◆ **Role Playing with Interactive Video**
Provided officers with the opportunity to apply information learned to taped scenarios.

Note. This curriculum was drawn from a variety of sources, which are available from the author or the Nebraska Justice Group. Program evaluators had no involvement in the development or design of this program.

❁ APPENDIX B

HANDLE SCALE ITEMS

Item	Factor Loading
Police officers should be more tolerant of juvenile resistance than adult resistance.	.560
Police officers can make a difference with juvenile offenders.	.694
Police officers are obligated to help troubled juveniles because they are less capable of helping themselves.	.589
Police can control aggressive juveniles without using force.	.616
De-escalation of juvenile aggression through verbal rather than physical techniques is preferred.	.510
Social factors play a major role in juvenile aggression.	.604
Kronbach's Alpha for Scale of Items	.661
Likert Scale Response Categories: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree	

