Interactions between Youth and Law Enforcement

Police–youth contact consists of any face-to-face interaction between a youth and one or more law enforcement officers[1], including sworn officers serving in municipal police departments; sheriff's departments; state police; and special jurisdiction agencies such as transit, park, and university police (Hyland, Langton, and Davis 2015). Contact can be youth-initiated or police-initiated and may occur in programmatic settings, such as police-led programs (e.g., police athletic leagues), or through day-to-day interactions in community and school settings (Hurst 2007; Goodrich, Anderson, and LaMotte 2014). Some interactions also occur when youths are victims of crime. As gatekeepers to the justice system, police–youth contact can result in informal solutions such as programs and services that divert youth away from system involvement, or arrest and further entry into the criminal and juvenile justice systems (Worden and Myers 2000; Brown, Novak, and Frank 2009; Goodrich, Anderson, and LaMotte 2014). Such decisions during contact with youth can shape the options available to other juvenile justice decision makers in the system (Liederbach 2007).

Police–youth contact occurs often and is most frequent for youths between the ages of 18 and 24 (Eith and Durose 2011). Despite the importance and prevalence of such interactions, limited research has been dedicated to understanding the dynamics of encounters between police and youth (Brown and Benedict 2002; Thurau 2009). Though official police data provides useful context for understanding the prevalence of police–youth contact, the data does not provide information on police–youth interactions in terms of the nature of the incidents or how youth behaviors affect the actions of police officers, and vice versa (Skogan and Frydl 2004; Mastrofski, Snipes, and Supina 1996). Most research focuses on factors that influence the decisions made after juveniles have been arrested (Allen 2005) or youth attitudes toward police (Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen 2009; Flexon et al. 2016; Hagan, Shedd, and Payne 2005; Hardin 2004; Brunson and Weitzer 2009; Wu, Lake, and Cao 2015). While most researchers agree that age and race are factors that consistently influence youth attitudes toward police, there is also no consensus on other factors (e.g., gender, social class) that influence youth attitudes toward the police or when such factors begin to influence police–youth interactions (Brown and Benedict 2002).

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[1] Throughout this literature review, the terms "police officer" or "law enforcement" will be used interchangeably.

There has also been little research on how youth behaviors and decision-making influence police–youth contact (Brunson and Weitzer 2011), or on how officers' concerns for community safety and their own safety influence these interactions.

This literature review will discuss the research relevant to interactions between police and youth. Topics in this review include the prevalence of police–youth interactions, factors that influence such interactions, the role of law enforcement in the juvenile justice system, and the outcome evidence of programs developed to help improve police–youth encounters.

Prevalence of Police–Youth Interactions

For this literature review, "youth" is defined as individuals between the ages of 10 and 24 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2017), although this age range does vary across different datasets. For example, the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) provides arrest rates for each age starting at 10 years. However, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) collects data on police–public contact for youths between the ages of 16 and 24, but does not have data on youths under 16 years.

The information from BJS on contacts between police and the public does show that youths 16 to 24 years are more likely to experience contact with the police than members of any other age group. The data shows that roughly 40 million U.S. residents had face-to-face contact with police in 2008 (the last year for which data is available). Of this group, youths between the ages of 16 and 24 accounted for over one third of interactions (38.1 percent). This group was also more likely to experience multiple contacts with the police and more likely to experience involuntary or police-initiated contact than any other age group (Eith and Durose 2011).

The information below provides an overview of data available on police–youth interactions when the contact 1) is youth-initiated, 2) is police-initiated, 3) results in arrest of youths, and 4) is due to youths being victims.

Youth-Initiated Contact

Contact that is initiated by a youth is considered voluntary and usually involves a youth reporting a crime or requesting police assistance for a non-criminal matter or for information such as directions (Hurst 2007; Goodrich, Anderson, and LaMotte 2014). In 2011, BJS estimated that 31.4 million residents ages 16 and older requested assistance from police at least once (Durose and Langston 2013). Of the total number of police requests for assistance, 18.2 percent were residents ages 16 to 24. Young people were less likely than older adults to request such police assistance. The most common reason youths ages 16 to 24 contacted police for assistance was to report a crime/disturbance/suspicious activity, followed by reporting a non-crime emergency or for other reasons.

Police-Initiated Contact

Contact that is initiated by the police is usually involuntary and involves a police officer stopping a youth on the street or a youth who is driving or riding in a car (Hurst 2007; Goodrich, Anderson, and LaMotte 2014). BJS estimated that 21 percent of police–youth contact occurs during traffic stops (Eith

and Durose 2011). Drivers ages 16 to 24 were the most likely to be involved in a traffic stop and most likely to be ticketed by law enforcement, warned by law enforcement, or allowed to proceed with no enforcement action (Langton and Durose 2013). With regard to stops on the street, 3.1 percent of young people ages 16 to 24 were involved in street stops during 2011, compared with less than 1 percent for all other age groups (Langton and Durose 2013).

However, not all police-initiated contact is for a stop or arrest; such contact can be due to youth and police involvement in school- or community-based prevention programs or diversion programs. For more information on prevention or diversion programs, please see the Outcome Evidence section below.

Contact Resulting in Arrest

Interactions that result in youths' arrest are only a small portion of the interactions that occur between police and youth (Liederbach 2007; Goodrich, Anderson, and LaMotte 2014). Of the contact that results in arrest, data varies on youths under the age of 18 and those between the ages of 18 to 24. After arrest, some youths are referred to court and become formally involved in the justice system, while others may be diverted to programs and services in the community.

Youths Under Age 18. In 2015, there were nearly 1 million arrests of individuals under age 18 [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) 2017]. These youths make up a disproportionate percent of arrests in several crime categories, including index property crimes such as arson, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft; violent index crimes such as robbery; and offenses such as vandalism and disorderly conduct. Since the early 2000s, overall juvenile arrest rates have decreased over time, for both boys and girls, and for each of the major racial and ethnic groups. The number of juvenile arrests has dropped 56 percent between 2006 and 2015 (OJJDP 2017). Law enforcement agencies processed one third of arrested youths within their own agency and referred approximately two thirds of all arrested youths to court for further processing (Sickmund and Puzzanchera 2014). Over 80 percent of delinquency referrals to juvenile courts were made by law enforcement (Hockenberry and Puzzanchera 2017).

Youths Ages 18 to 24. In all states, young people between the ages of 18 and 24 are considered adults, and this data is often analyzed separately from juvenile data. In 2014, there were over 3 million arrests of individuals in this age group (Snyder, Cooper, and Mulako-Wangota 2017). This age group has the highest arrest rates in many of the crime categories. According to the *OJJDP Statistical Brief Book*, in 2012 this age group had the highest rates of arrest for drug law violations and violent crime. For example, youths between 18 and 24 experienced an arrest rate for violent index crimes of over 400 per 100,000 persons in this age group (OJJDP 2014).

Contact Due to Victimization

This type of contact can be either youth-initiated or police-initiated. Many youths come to the attention of law enforcement because of being victims: of child abuse or neglect, of violence in school or in the community, or of a property crime. For example, nearly one in four victims of serious violent crimes known to law enforcement are juveniles (Sickmund and Puzzanchera 2014). Juveniles have been the

victims in 64 percent of sexual assaults, 10 percent of robberies, and 15 percent of aggravated assaults reported to law enforcement, according to the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Although youth victimization rates have been decreasing over the past few decades, juveniles are still more likely than adults to be victims (Sickmund and Puzzanchera 2014).

Youths may also come to the attention of law enforcement because they have witnessed or been exposed to another person's victimization such as in situations of domestic/family violence or community violence. For example, the National Survey of Children Exposed to Violence (NatSCEV III), conducted most recently in 2014, found that about 24.5 percent of youths under age 18 reported witnessing violence, including 18.4 percent who witnessed assaults in the community and 8.4 percent who witnessed assaults in the family. Overall, the NatSCEV III found that 60 percent of youths were exposed to some form of violence in the past year (Finkelhor et al. 2015). Therefore, police officers are more than likely to encounter traumatized youths and children exposed to violence (CEV) in their work. Although police may interact with CEV and traumatized youths, they are not often seen as a resource to connect youths to needed mental health/behavioral health services. The Child Development Community Policing Program, developed by the Yale Child Study Center and New Haven Department of Police Services, is an example of an intervention that was designed to enhance police officers' roles in referrals to services for this youth population (Murphy et al. 2005). In 2017, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) released a toolkit for law enforcement agencies that focuses on police responses to CEV and emphasizes the importance of police officers' interactions with youths in situations involving CEV (IACP 2017). For more information on this toolkit, please see the Outcome Evidence section.

Officer Safety

Law enforcement officers have higher rates of work-related injuries or illnesses, compared with other occupations [Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2016]. According to the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) dataset available from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), between 2011–2015, there were 468 incidents where law enforcement officers were assaulted and injured with firearms, knives, or other cutting instruments in the line of duty and where the age of the known offender was provided. Of those 468 incidents, approximately 4.5 percent (21 incidents) were committed by youths under 18, while almost one quarter (112 incidents) were committed by individuals ages 18 to 24. For those under 18, the majority were white and male. For individuals ages 18 to 24, a little over half (53 percent) were black, and the majority were male (FBI 2016). Although this information only reports on a small subset of the total number of officers assaulted and injured with firearms and knives per year, the data suggests that youths under 18 only commit a small number of assaults against police every year, while 18- to 24-year-olds commit a significant number.

With regard to police officers feloniously killed in the line of duty, the LEOKA data from the FBI between 2006–2015 shows that there were 543 incidents in which information on the offender was known. Of those incidents, less than 5 percent (26 incidents) were committed by individuals younger than 18, while about one third (159 incidents) were committed by individuals 18 to 24 years (the race and age breakdown of known offenders was only available for a small fraction of the incidents). The

data shows youths under 18 only committed a small number of police killings every year, while 18- to 24-year-olds committed a large proportion (FBI 2016).

Theoretical Foundation

This section briefly focuses on theories that underlie the research on police–youth interactions.

Procedural Justice and Legitimacy. Part of the research examining youth contact with law enforcement explores perceived procedural justice and beliefs about police legitimacy. The four elements people use when judging fairness of police procedures include 1) the opportunity to express opinions about the situation prior to formal police decision-making, 2) consistent and neutral decision-making and rules, 3) trust in the motives behind police actions, and 4) being treated with dignity and respect (Tyler 1990; Tyler and Huo 2002; Blader and Tyler 2003). Police use of these four elements in encounters with youth can improve attitudes and behaviors during police–youth interactions and create an opportunity to enhance police legitimacy (Hinds 2007; Lee, Steinberg, and Piquero 2010).

Wilson's Policing Style Typology. To carry out their efforts to deter and prevent youth crime, police officers often adopt a variety of policing styles, depending on the norms and values of the communities they serve (Hawdon 2008). In his study of eight communities, James Q. Wilson (1968) identified three ideal types of policing styles: 1) *watchman*, 2) *legalistic*, and 3) *service*, which are aligned with order maintenance, law enforcement, or a combination, respectively. This typology suggests that an understanding of policing styles can help to explain why some officers rarely make arrests and only do so when the violation disturbs public order and why some officers make many arrests even when public order has not been breached. Even though the Wilson's typology is outdated, it still provides a theoretical foundation for understanding law enforcement behaviors and practices today (Wilson 1968; Hawdon 2008).

Deterrence versus Labeling. An ongoing theoretical debate has been looking at the effects of deterrence versus labeling (Wiley and Esbensen 2016). Deterrence theory suggests that crime can be prevented through proactive policing strategies, which strengthen individuals' (and youths') perceptions that they will be caught for delinquent/criminal behavior (Nagin 2013). Conversely, labeling theory suggests proactive policing strategies may increase youths' involvement in delinquent/criminal behavior because of the negative label placed on youths (Schur 1973). This debate is relevant to the discussion of police–youth interactions, because contact with law enforcement (including just being stopped by police) could have long-term negative impacts on youths (Wiley and Esbensen 2016).

Adolescent Development. There are developmental differences between juveniles and adults, which may also impact interactions between police officers and youths. According to the National Academy of Sciences' *Reforming Juvenile Justice* report, adolescents are developmentally distinct from adults in the following three ways: 1) they demonstrate a lack of emotional self-regulation relative to adults; 2) they have increased susceptibility to external social influence, such as peer pressure, relative to adults; and 3) they are less able to properly assess long-term consequences (Bonnie et al. 2013). Although youths may act out in certain ways because they are still developing important emotional, psychological, and cognitive functions, research has found that most youths eventually age out of crime and do not

continue delinquent or criminal behavior into adulthood (Moffitt 1993). Law enforcement could benefit from having an understanding of the stages of adolescent development, as this knowledge could impact how they interact with most youths in the community and schools (IACP n.d.).

Law Enforcement's Role in the Juvenile Justice System

The main purpose of law enforcement is to prevent, control, and deter crime and disorder (Lum and Nagin 2017) to improve community safety. Police officers are the first juvenile justice decision-makers to encounter youth, as they are the first and most frequent legal authorities to respond to crime on the streets, in malls, in schools, in homes, and other settings (Thurau 2009; Tyler and Huo 2002; Tyler, Fagan, and Geller 2014).

Given the environment within which youth crime occurs, usually two types of police officers interact with youths: patrol officers and school resource officers[2] (SROs). Patrol or street-level officers are sworn officers assigned to patrol duties within the community. In 2013, per the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics, local police departments employed about 477,000 full-time sworn personnel (Reaves 2015). About 68 percent of all sworn officers in a police department are assigned to patrol duty and account for most police–public encounters. These officers' responsibilities include observing and monitoring public spaces, controlling traffic or making traffic stops, responding to citizen calls for service, and conducting random preventative patrols of buildings and neighborhoods within their assigned beats or jurisdictions (Skogan and Frydl 2004). Police can use their authority to issue citations, make arrests, and use force. Thus, patrol officers interact with youths for a variety of reasons, including traffic stops, accidents, or responding to calls for service.

In addition, due to growing concerns over juvenile delinquency and school violence (Brady, Balmer, and Phenix 2007), law enforcement officers also work in schools. Overall, SROs may be responsible for patrolling the school, investigating criminal complaints, handling student rule/law violators, and minimizing disruptions during school or afterschool activities (Theriot 2009; Na and Gottfredson 2013). SROs are meant to be safety experts and law enforcers, problem solvers, liaisons to community resources, and educators (Raymond 2010). According to the 2015–2016 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 42 percent of all public schools reported having one or more SRO present once a week, and 11 percent reported having sworn law enforcement officers present (who are not considered SROs). Most middle schools (59 percent) and high schools (68 percent) reported having SROs, compared with only about one third (30 percent) of primary/elementary schools (Diliberti et al. 2017).

Discretion and Decision-Making

An officer's use of authority and discretion when responding to offenses committed by youths plays an integral part in determining which youths formally become a part of the juvenile justice system. Of the nine juvenile justice contact points defined by OJJDP (Feyerherm, Snyder, and Villaruel 2009), there are three (arrest, referral to court, and diversion) where police have the most influence. When faced

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[2] The terms *police officer* or *law enforcement* are used interchangeably to represent both patrol officers and SROs due to the similarities in how they carry out their roles and use discretion (Wolf 2014). However, when there is specific research about SROs, they are noted as such.

with an occurrence of law violation by youths, officers may 1) warn youths about the future consequences of continued antisocial and delinquent behavior and release them, 2) divert[3] youths away from system involvement and refer them to community-based services, or 3) arrest youths and refer them to court (Wilson and Hoge 2013; Potter and Kakar 2002). While there are certainly organizational determinants of police discretion, street-level police officers and SROs have a substantial amount of latitude in selecting how to carry out their work (Mastrofski 2004; Wolf 2014). As laws, statutes, and ordinances can be vague, officers use their discretion to make on-the- spot decisions (Skogan and Frydl 2004). Many officers view policing as a "craft" and rely on the knowledge, skills, and judgment they have acquired through their daily experiences patrolling to make decisions on how to respond to youth crime and delinquency (Willis 2013; Willis and Mastrofski 2016). Such decisions are shaped and guided not only by officer experience, but also by legal and extralegal factors. For more information, please see the Factors that Influence Police–Youth Interactions section.

Investigative Tactics

To aid them in their ability to solve crimes, law enforcement officers are trained in various investigative and interrogation techniques, such as the Reid Technique, which trains them to evaluate verbal and nonverbal cues regarding a suspect's guilt (Inbau et al. 2013).

There is a limited research base on how police use such tactics with juveniles (Feld 2006; Feld 2013). Given that youths are psychosocially different from adults, several researchers have sought to determine whether police are aware of adolescent development theory and have applied that knowledge during their interrogations with youths (Kostelnik and Reppucci 2009; Meyer and Reppucci 2007). Cleary and Warner (2016) found that police officers interview and interrogate youths in the same way as adults, which highlights a need for more research on such training methods, whether they should be used universally, and if the application of such techniques has any impact on the outcomes of youth and police contact. Future research on this topic area may investigate whether intellectual and emotional immaturity of youths increases their risk for poor comprehension and false confessions (Goldstein et al. 2003).

Factors that Influence Police–Youth Interactions

A substantial body of criminological research suggests that interactions between police and youths are often influenced by a convergence of factors and that these factors, including legal and extralegal factors as well as the attitudes and perceptions of law enforcement and youth, can influence police–youth contact (Brown and Benedict 2002, Pope and Snyder 2003; Skogan and Frydl 2004; Brown 2005; Wolf 2014).

Legal Factors

Probable cause is usually required by police to meet the legal grounds for stopping youths, taking them into custody, and making an arrest (Brown 2005). There are certain legal factors that influence police decisions, including seriousness of the alleged offense, the strength of the evidence, presence of a

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[3] For more information on diversion, refer to the *Model Programs Guide* literature review on Diversion from Formal Juvenile Court Processing.

weapon, characteristics of the victim or the willingness of the victim or complainant to press charges, prior police contact with the youth, and prior arrest and criminal record (Alpert et al. 2004). Studies have indicated that when the offense is serious (e.g., a felony) and the available evidence is strong, police are more likely to arrest a youth (Piliavin and Briar 1964; Sealock and Simpson 1998; Myers 2003). When police encounter youths who have had previous police contact, have a conviction for a status offense, or are on probation or parole, they are also more likely to make an arrest (Piliavin and Briar 1964; Pope and Snyder 2003; Myers 2004; Carrington and Schulenberg 2004).

Some analyses have examined the effect of victim characteristics on youth arrest. Pope and Snyder (2003) found that the following characteristics predicted whether an arrest was made: 1) number of victims; 2) victim age, sex, and race; 3) whether the victim was injured; and 4) whether the victim was a family member or acquaintance. If the offense was serious, but the victim requested that no arrest be made, then the police officers may have used their discretion on whether to arrest a youth (Worden and Myer 2000). SROs consider the same legal factors when making arrest decisions, but are more likely to make arrests to maintain order in the school over making arrests due to a violation of the law (Wolf 2014). However, there is a limited body of research that fully explores how such legal factors influence police–youth interactions.

Extralegal Factors

Police officer decision-making is not only influenced by the law (Brown 2005). There are also extralegal factors that influence police decisions to arrest youth, such as 1) the characteristics of the environment in which police–youth contact occurs, 2) the characteristics of the officers and the youths involved in the contact, and 3) the characteristics of the police organization (Black and Reiss 1970; Engel and Calnon 2004; Skogan and Frydl 2004).

Environmental Factors. The characteristics of the environment (e.g., crime level, police patrol presence, socioeconomic level, neighborhood disorganization) influence police behaviors and decisions to arrest (Sanborn and Salerno 2005). In general, research suggests that in areas with high crime and neighborhood disorder, police officers anticipate more danger and threats to community safety; therefore, they are more likely to use physical restraint, authority, and arrests (Skogan and Frydl 2004). In terms of police–youth interactions, Stoudt, Fine, and Fox (2011) found that 73 percent of stops involving youths included at least one environmental factor such as the crime being committed in a high-crime area and the time of day or month. However, factors such as neighborhood disorganization are considered ineffective at predicting police behaviors with youth (Pope and Snyder 2003). Environmental factors also play a part in the role of SROs, who help with problem-solving in schools. SROs also have more opportunities to have informal conversations with students and help refer them to perform community service (Finn and McDeVitt 2005).

Though balancing public safety and law enforcement safety while on patrol are important to consider when discussing interactions that result in police use of force (Office of Community Oriented Policing Services 2012), there is limited research on how working in stressful and dangerous environments influences police interactions (Anshel 2000), especially with youth.

Individual Officer Factors. An officer's age, race, gender, social class, academy and department training, workload, and views of the juvenile justice system are all examples of individual factors that can influence police–youth encounters (Sanborn and Salerno 2005). Younger officers, 34 years of age or less, are more likely to arrest youths than older, more experienced officers (Allen 2005). While neither social class nor gender have a direct influence on the outcomes of most police–youth interactions (Skogan and Frydl 2004), Brown, Novak and Frank (2009) found that the race of an officer can predict use of authority and arrest decisions. Also, in their study of rural officers in Kentucky, Skaggs and Sun (2017) found that the officer's background characteristics, including race, sex, education, having children, and occupational attitudes (such as rehabilitation and dispositional beliefs) were significantly related to authoritative and supportive police behaviors and decisions to arrest.

Officers' workloads can influence their likelihood to enforce certain laws (Sanborn and Salerno 2005), such as juvenile curfew laws[4], especially given that most juvenile crimes occur during the day and the small effect that such curfew laws have on crime (Wilson et al. 2016). Also, Haarr (2001) suggested that the influence of academy training on decision-making in the field depends on how much the training is reinforced by police departments. Many law enforcement officers lack up-to-date training on adolescent brain development and best practices for interacting with youths (Thurau et al. 2013). Overall, there is limited research on the impact of these factors on police–youth interactions (Skogan and Frydl 2004).

Individual Youth Factors. Individual factors related to the youth (e.g., age, race, gender, social class, demeanor) are predictors of police decisions to arrest (Sanborn and Salerno 2005). Youths and males are more likely to be arrested than adults and girls (Mastrofski, Worden, and Snipes 1995; Pope and Snyder 2003, Allen 2005). Black and minority youths are more likely to be stopped, questioned, and arrested than whites (Brown 2005; Conley 1994). But it is unknown if the disproportionate contacts with police are due to racial bias, the perception that more frequent and serious offenses are committed by minority youths than white youths, or some other factor. Also, Piliavin and Briar (1964) suggested that other than having a prior record, a youth's demeanor or "contriteness" was the most crucial factor in police decisions to arrest. A youth who is respectful is more likely to receive a warning, whereas a youth with a negative attitude or who disrespects police officers is four times more likely to be taken into custody or arrested (Lundman, Sykes, and Clark 1978; Allen 2005; Brown, Novak, and Frank 2009). However, the influence of these factors on police–youth interactions has not been fully studied.

Organizational Factors. A police department's culture and beliefs are reflected in their practices, policies, and procedures, and thereby in their officers' decisions and actions (Skogan and Frydl 2004; Chappell, MacDonald, and Manz 2006). There are a host of practices and strategies that police officers employ to prevent or reduce youth violence in communities, which have the potential to influence police–youth interactions. Proactive policing practices such as order-maintenance/zero-tolerance policing, hot spots policing, or community- and problem-oriented policing[5], are law enforcement efforts

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[4] For more information, refer to the *CrimeSolutions.gov* practice profile for Juvenile Curfew Laws, which can be found at: https://www.crimesolutions.gov/PracticeDetails.aspx?ID=58
[5] For more information on community/problem-oriented policing, refer to the *Model Programs Guide* literature review on Community- and Problem-Oriented Policing.

designed to prevent crime from occurring (Eck and Maguire 2000; Skogan 2006; Sherman and Weisburd 1995; Braga et al. 2001). Though criminological evaluations of these practices primarily focus on adult crime, some studies suggest that 1) an analysis of the pattern and geographical location of youth crime is essential to crime reduction efforts; 2) youth crime is strongly concentrated in places likely to attract juvenile activity, such as schools and/or youth centers, shops/malls, and restaurants; and 3) these hot spots are important opportunities for violence prevention (Baumer et al. 1998; Sickmund, Snyder, and Poe-Yamagata 1997; Weisburd, Morris, and Groff 2009). Though such strategies do not necessarily lead to disproportionate application of police practices, they do contribute to a substantial number of interactions between police and youth and lead to more juvenile arrests.

Consequently, police and youth often hold vastly different views of law enforcement practices (Gau and Brunson 2010). Though law enforcement rationale behind these practices is intended to reduce instances of youth violence or crime and improve youth and community safety, youths may interpret such strategies as additional police presence or "surveillance" in their schools and communities as an indication that they are viewed as untrustworthy, suspicious, and potential criminals (Fine and Smith 2001; Michie 2001; Fine et al. 2003; Brunson and Weitzer 2009; Nordberg et al. 2016). This is discussed further in the Youth Attitudes and Perceptions section below.

Law Enforcement Attitudes

There is relatively little research on attitudes of law enforcement toward youth. Some research suggests that the individual officer factors and organizational factors (noted above) may influence their attitudes. In addition, other factors, such as punitive attitudes toward offenders and proactive personality types, may also influence their attitudes (Furnham and Alison 1994; Mohr and Luscri 1995).

Furthermore, officers may perceive criminal conduct by a youth as being different than similar behavior from an adult and may use different responses (Brown, Novak, and Frank 2009). For example, when a juvenile is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, police are more likely to release the youth than to make an arrest; in the case of underage drinking, police are also more likely to offer assistance (Worden and Myer 2000). Parker, Mohr, and Wilson (2004) examined Australian police officers' punitive attitudes toward offenders and their likelihood to divert adults and youths. The likelihood to divert adults was predictive of officers' likelihood to divert youths; however, the officers diverted adults and youths for different reasons. The study found that police officers' attitudes toward youth and education level were significantly correlated to their likelihood to divert youths, whereas officers' ages were the strongest predictor of their likelihood to divert adults (i.e., older officers were less likely to divert). However, this study was based on scenarios, not actual police-youth interactions, with police officers in another country. Therefore, additional research is needed with regard to law enforcement attitudes toward youths, and how these attitudes may impact police-youth interactions.

Youth Attitudes and Perceptions

The relevance of examining youth attitudes toward police has been established in the literature (Stewart, Morris, and Weir 2014), and studies that have explored youth–police relations have found that youths' attitudes toward law enforcement directly influence their willingness to engage with the police (Forman 2004; Solis et al. 2009; Murphy 2015). Compared with the research on the attitudes of law enforcement toward youth, there has been considerable attention dedicated to examining predictors of youth attitudes toward law enforcement (Brown and Benedict 2002; Flexon, Greenleaf, Dariano, and Gibson 2016; Hagan, Shedd, and Payne 2005; Hardin 2004; Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth 1998; Taylor et. al. 2001; Wu, Lake, and Cao 2015). In general, research has found that demographic factors, community factors, and perceptions of procedural justice impact youths' perceptions of and attitudes toward law enforcement.

Demographic Factors. Numerous studies have found a relationship between a youth's demographic factors (including age, race, and gender) and their attitudes toward law enforcement. For instance, *age* has been examined in studies comparing youths with adults and in studies comparing older youths with younger youths. These studies have generally found that youths hold a less favorable opinion of police than adults (Taylor et al. 2001; Brown and Benedict)[6] and that younger youths have more favorable attitudes toward police than older youths (Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen 2009; Hagan, Shedd, and Payne 2005; Redner-Vera and Galeste 2015). For example, in their study of students in Chicago, Hagan, Shedd, and Payne (2005) found that ninth graders perceived less criminal injustice (i.e., racial disproportionalities in American rates of arrest, imprisonment, and capital punishment), compared with tenth graders. However, not all studies found age to be a significant influence (e.g., Wu, Lake, and Cao 2013).

Race appears to be the most examined of the demographic variables. Various studies have found that race influences youth attitudes toward police (e.g., Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen 2009; Flexon, Greenleaf, Dariano, and Gibson 2016; Hardin 2004; Brunson and Weitzer 2009; Hurst, Frank, and Browning 2000), and some of these studies have found that race is one of the most robust factors in determining such attitudes (Nordberg et al. 2016; Taylor et. al. 2001; Wu, Lake, and Cao 2015; Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth 1998). For example, in their study of male youths either accused of delinquency or adjudicated as delinquent in one of four Iowa counties, Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth (1998) found that minority youths consistently expressed more negative views of the police than did white youths, and that race/ethnicity was the strongest predictor of perceptions of police fairness and police discrimination. When studying 13- to 18-year-old students across multiple U.S. cities, Wu, Lake, and Cao (2015) found that both black and Latino students were significantly less satisfied with police than white students. Nevertheless, some studies did not find race to be significant. Hurst (2007) found that race was not a significant predictor of attitudes toward police, in his examination of rural high school students in Southern Illinois.

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[6] Some researchers have argued that youths' less favorable opinions of police result from defining "the police" globally rather than more explicitly (Watkins and Maume 2012). Schuck and Rosenbaum (2005) found, in their research on residents' attitudes toward police, that there is strong support for the need to differentiate between global and neighborhood (i.e., explicit) perceptions of law enforcement. However, this topic area is not discussed in this literature review.

Other studies have gone further to examine *ethnic identity*. For example, Redner-Vera and Galeste (2015) found that Native American youths who identify closely with their ethnic group indicated negative attitudes toward law enforcement. Studies also suggested that Latinos have negative attitudes toward the police (Rengifo and McCallin 2017; Rengifo and Fratello 2015). When examining self-report data from African American juveniles who committed offenses, Lee, Steinberg, and Piquero (2011) found that those with a stronger sense of ethnic identity perceived more police discrimination, but also reported more positive beliefs about police legitimacy. But few, if any, studies have examined how the attitudes of African American parents and elders toward police, passed down via racial socialization, have influenced youth–police contact (Brunson and Weitzer 2011).

Finally, some studies have found that *gender* influences attitudes, with female youths showing more favorable attitudes than male youths (Hagan, Shedd, and Payne 2005; Hardin 2004; Redner-Vera and Galeste 2015). However, not all studies have found gender to be a significant influence (e.g., Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen 2009; Wu, Lake, and Cao 2015). For example, Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen (2009) found that after accounting for theoretical factors such as levels of delinquency, victimization, police contact, and community factors, gender was not a significant factor in predicting attitudes toward police.

Delinquency versus Prosocial Attitudes and Behaviors. Participation in delinquent activities, attitudes favorable to delinquent involvement, or commitment to delinquent peers or delinquent norms predict attitudes toward police (Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen 2009; Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth 1998; Redner-Vera and Galeste 2015). In their study of juveniles in Iowa, Leiber and colleagues (1998) found that youths with delinquent attitudes were more likely than others to believe that the police discriminate against minorities; this belief was not affected by their actual contacts with the police. Redner-Vera and Galeste (2015) found that Native American youths who reported higher levels of delinquency and delinquent peers indicated more negative attitudes toward police.

However, involvement in conventional activities, such as religious activities, athletics, school activities, and employment, has been shown to have a positive effect on attitudes toward police. Wu, Lake, and Cao (2015) found that social bonds, particularly commitment to school and attachment to their fathers, were significant predictors of juveniles' perceptions of the police; with many youth respondents believing that police officers were hard-working, friendly, and respectful toward people like them.

Community Context. Much research has focused on exploring how contextual factors (e.g., where people live and community conditions) affect how youths view law enforcement. For example, researchers who have investigated more than one community have found significant differences in youth attitudes toward police by city of residence or type of neighborhood (Taylor et al. 2001; Brunson and Weitzer 2009). In their analysis of youths in six cities, Wu, Lake, and Cao (2015) found that youths from some cities had significantly more positive views of police than their counterparts in other cities. Differences have also been found between youths living in rural and urban communities. In his analysis of youths participating in the GREAT program (discussed in the Outcome Evidence section below), Hardin (2004) found that juveniles living in small rural/suburban areas held more favorable attitudes than those living in large urban areas. Similarly, Hurst and Frank (2000) found that youths living in

urban areas held less favorable attitudes than those living in suburban areas.

Perceptions of crime and disorder also predict youths' attitudes toward police (Maxson, Hennigan, and Sloane 2003; Reisig and Parks 2000; Cao et al. 1996; Jesilow and Meyer 1995). Redner-Vera and Galeste (2015) found that the safer youths reported feeling in their neighborhood, the more likely they were to report positive attitudes toward police. Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen (2009) found that lower levels of strain (e.g., poverty, unemployment) in the community were associated with more favorable attitudes toward police among a diverse group of youths across the United States. Hurst (2007) found that juveniles who believed that crime had increased within their neighborhood expressed less satisfaction with the police.

Contact with Police and Perceived Procedural Justice

Police contact has consistently been found to influence youth attitudes and perceptions toward law enforcement, with much of the research showing that youths who have more contact with police hold less favorable attitudes (Brick, Taylor, and Esbensen 2009; Hagan, Shedd, and Payne 2005). In their examination of youths living in three high-crime Philadelphia neighborhoods, Carr, Napolitano, and Keating (2007) found that most of the youths were "negatively disposed toward police," which was based on their negative encounters with law enforcement (p. 446). Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth (1998) found that although delinquent youths' attitudes toward police did not develop solely as a function of police contact, these contacts did have an effect: whether youths were warned and released, brought to the police station, or wrongly accused predicted a juvenile's respect for police, perceptions of police fairness, and perceptions of police discrimination toward minorities.

As mentioned above, proactive law enforcement policies often result in an increase in interactions between police and youths. Fine and colleagues (2003) found that even though youths recognized the benefit of reduced crime, increased police presence also led them to 1) mistrust the police and other adults in authority, 2) feel alienated and unsafe in their communities, and 3) feel unwelcomed in public spaces. Similarly, Hurst (2007) found that youths who reported seeing the police outside their neighborhoods, on a regular basis, were less positive toward police in general and were more likely to negatively assess police job performance. Such attitudes are more prevalent in poor and minority communities because of concerns with how these practices have led to disproportionate minority contact or the disproportionate representation of minority youths in the juvenile justice system (Conley 1994). For example, Brunson and Miller (2006) found that urban minority young men are primary recipients of proactive policing efforts and are likely to have accumulated negative experiences in their interactions with law enforcement.

Part of the research examining youth contact with law enforcement explores perceived procedural justice and beliefs about police legitimacy. Researchers have found that the citizens' feelings about police legitimacy depend more on their perceptions of how police treat them than their success in reducing crime; thus, support for and confidence in police depends on perceptions of police officers' motives more than whether the outcome was favorable (Gallagher et al. 2001). The link between police legitimacy and procedural justice has also been found in studies of youths, but these studies have been conducted primarily outside the United States (Hinds 2007; Murphy and Gaylor 2010). This link is

important because cooperation with police is most effectively harnessed when youths view police as legitimate (Hinds 2009; Lee et al. 2011; Murphy and Gaylor 2010).

For example, in their study of encounters between youths and police officers in Chicago, Friedman, Lurigio, Greenleaf, and Albertson (2004) found that youths, who felt that officers had disrespected them or others, were also less likely to trust and respect the police or to believe that officers are fair or care about the community, when compared with youths who felt respected by officers. Also, in their research on ethnic minority, San Francisco-based youth gang members, Novich and Hunt (2017) found that male and female gang members regularly experienced disrespectful police behavior in terms of physical and verbal abuse. Their findings indicated that these exchanges contribute to negative attitudes, fear, and distrust of police, while respectful interactions are meaningful and can contribute to positive attitudes toward officers. Perceptions of procedural justice can also be developed secondhand, in addition to direct contact (Rosenbaum et al. 2005). Hurst (2007) found that juveniles who had seen or heard of police misconduct toward a third party were consistently less positive in their attitudes toward law enforcement.

In addition to affecting attitudes, some research has found that implementation of proper procedural justice components can diminish the link between police-initiated contact and increased delinquency. Slocum, Wiley, and Esbensen (2016) found that the negative consequences of being stopped or arrested are mitigated (but not eliminated) when contact is perceived favorably. Pickering and Klinger (2016) also suggested that enhancing police legitimacy can increase law enforcement safety and reduce the amount of force used during interactions. Thus, police use of procedural justice is important for improving youth attitudes toward police, encouraging cooperation with police, and decreasing the negative impacts of police–youth contact.

Overall, each of the factors that influence police–youth interactions—police attitudes and perceptions, youth attitudes and perceptions, legal factors, and extralegal factors—can all influence and interact with each other for a different impact. For example, youth are the group most likely to engage in antisocial and delinquent behaviors leading to crime, and police target their strategies to prevent such crimes and ensure public safety. However, in treating youths as threats to order, police contribute to their negative attitudes toward law enforcement (Forman 2004). Such attitudes and perceived unfair treatment during an interaction can lead juveniles to mistrust the police and show less respect during interactions. This lack of respect can result in law enforcement officers changing their attitudes toward youths, leading to a level of hostility that results in a negative youth–police encounter (Hinds 2007). Even one negative contact with law enforcement can outweigh 10 positive contacts (Skogan 2006), reinforce and magnify previously held negative attitudes (Leiber et al. 1998), and thereby hinder the ability of police and youth to form positive relationships. Poor police–youth relationships impede the willingness of youths to cooperate with and support the police (Forman 2004), which negatively affects law enforcement's ability to be effective at violence prevention. Unfortunately, very limited research has been conducted on the impact of such factors on police–youth relationships or on the rapport between law enforcement and youth. However, research does suggest that such relationships are forged during each police–youth contact and that the nature of the contact impacts the relationship (Hinds 2007).

Outcome Evidence

There have been several types of programs implemented in various jurisdictions across the country that were designed to improve interactions between police officers and youths. These include school- or community-based prevention programs; police-led diversion programs (or diversion programs in which police are involved); police training programs; and community-based policing programs. Some are designed specifically to improve police–youth relationships (such as police athletic leagues). Others incorporate elements that are designed to improve interactions between police and youth, but their primary goals may be different (such as substance use prevention for the DARE program). With other programs, such as those implemented by police in the community, the overall goal is to improve community safety and reduce crime rates; however, as these programs provide an opportunity to have police and youth interact with one another, the ultimate goal is to change behaviors related to crime and delinquency.

The sections below provide an overview of 1) research on particular prevention programs, diversion programs, police trainings, and community-based policing interventions; and 2) a review of the outcome evidence currently available for such programs. There is a brief discussion at the end of the section about the limitations of available research on programs involving youth and law enforcement.

Prevention Programs

Prevention programs are designed with specific goals (such as the prevention of substance use or gang involvement) and target the general youth population. A few programs also have secondary goals of improving law enforcement and youth interactions, primarily by having police officers implement the programs. Below are examples of prevention programs that bring together law enforcement and youths in various settings. The research discussed for the programs below focuses primarily on studies that examined measures of police–youth interactions (such as attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions), when available.

- The primary goal of the original *Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)*[7] curriculum (which was provided in classrooms between 1983 and 2009) was to teach effective peer resistance and refusal skills so that adolescents could say "no" to drugs and to their friends who wanted them to use drugs. The program was a partnership between schools and local police, as police officers implemented the program in the classroom. As Shuck (2013) explained, DARE had the potential to improve youths' attitudes and perceptions toward police by "(a) opening lines of communication between officers and youth; (b) by humanizing the police; and (c) by enabling adolescents to observe officers engaging with youth in a helpful manner rather than in an enforcement role" (p. 582). There have been several evaluations looking at the effectiveness of the original DARE curriculum, although not many have specifically examined changes in students' perceptions of police. In a 1994 evaluation of DARE, Rosenbaum and colleagues found there was no statistically significant effect on students' perceptions of police, although the direction of the effect was in favor of DARE. Conversely, a meta-analysis by Ennett and

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[7] The *CrimeSolutions.gov* program profile for DARE can be found at:
https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=99

colleagues (1994) found that DARE did have a statistically significant positive effect on perceptions of police (mean effect size=0.13). Shuck (2013) used data from a longitudinal randomized controlled study of DARE to examine the developmental trajectory regarding youths' perceptions of police as they aged from adolescence to young adulthood. The results showed that DARE was associated with a delay in the decline in adolescents' positive attitudes about the police when youths were in 5th or 6th grade, as well as a strong rebound effect when youths were in 11th or 12th grade, suggesting there may be long-term benefits of DARE participation on youths' perceptions of police.

- The *Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT)*[8] program is a school-based, gang- and violence-prevention program with three primary goals: 1) to teach youths to avoid gang membership, 2) to prevent violence and criminal activity, and 3) to assist youths in developing positive relationships with law enforcement. The program uses a cognitive-based curriculum that teaches skills such as conflict resolution, responsibility, appreciating cultural diversity, and goal setting (Esbensen et al. 2001). Like DARE, the program primarily uses uniformed law enforcement personnel to teach students. Some GREAT programs use SROs to implement the program, while others rely on patrol officers (Esbensen et al. 2012). A quasi-experimental design by Ramsey, Rust, and Sobel (2003) found that while there was a significant improvement in the experimental group's attitudes toward police officers from pretest to posttest, there were no significant differences between experimental and control group students at posttest. However, a longitudinal quasi-experimental study by Esbensen and colleagues (2012) found that the program had a small, positive effect on prosocial attitudes toward the police. GREAT students reported a statistically significant and more positive opinion of police officers than students in the control group at the 1-year follow up.

- *Police Athletic League (PAL)* programs were developed to prevent juvenile crime and violence by providing civic, athletic, recreational, and educational opportunities for youths, including basketball, boxing, and mentoring. A study by Rabois and Haaga (2002) of a PAL basketball program in an urban area found that, while police officers' attitudes toward youths significantly improved from the pretest to posttest, youths' attitudes toward police did not significantly change. However, the study was limited by a small sample size and the lack of a comparison group.

- The *Teen and Police Services (TAPS) Academy* is an 11-week police mentorship program in Houston, Texas. Police mentors are paired with youths who have been placed in juvenile detention, alternative schools, or other restrictive settings. Like DARE and GREAT, the program was designed to confront issues between police and youths. The goal of the TAPS Academy is to reduce the social distance between youths and police officers. Police–youth groups meet weekly to discuss topics such as drug prevention, bullying, and gang violence. An evaluation by Jones, Penn, and Davenport (2015), using a single-group, pretest–posttest design, found that youths who participated in the TAPS Academy showed significant improvement in measures of social distance, with certain subgroups (such as Hispanic/Latino and male youths) reporting

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[8]The *CrimeSolutions.gov* program profile for GREAT can be found at:
https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=249

more favorable perceptions of police. However, the study was also limited by a lack of comparison group, short follow-up period, and lack of behavioral measures.

- *Police Working with Youth in Non-Enforcement Roles* was a program funded by the State of Connecticut that allowed local communities to develop programs to enhance positive police interactions with youths. Communities could offer different types of programs. Some communities offered *police academies*, which were law enforcement classes and seminars that included lectures, demonstrations, military drills like those conducted at adult police academics, and field trips to police facilities (Anderson, Sabatelli, and Trachtenberg 2007). Some communities offered *police explorers/scouts* programs, which involved youths participating in police operations that were designed to develop their interests in the law enforcement field. Youths learned about basic skills and procedures (such as traffic control, crime prevention, bomb threat response, and emergency first aid). A few communities also offered *afterschool/mentoring programs*, where police worked with youths in many ways, such as on field trips and in sports-related activities. A 2007 evaluation by Anderson, Sabatelli, and Trachtenberg looked at outcome measures, including youth personal adjustment, social competencies, positive adult–youth connections, and positive youth–community connections; overall, there were no statistically significant differences between youths who participated in the programs and those who did not participate. However, the study did not directly measure youths' perceptions or attitudes toward police. The study also did not examine the independent effects of the various types of funded programs.

- The State of Connecticut also funded *Police and Youth Interaction Programs,* which were designed to promote positive youth development by engaging police and youths in community activities. Police officers interacted with youths in non-law enforcement roles and participated in activities such as ropes courses or bowling. Programs included team-building components, leadership opportunities for youths, and community service projects. Unlike the Police Working with Youth in Non-Enforcement Roles program, Police and Youth Interaction Programs were not allowed to use police-oriented curricula such as DARE, police academies, or police explorer activities. A pretest–posttest study by Goodrich, Anderson, and LaMotte (2014) found that there was a statistically significant improvement in youths' attitudes toward police over time. For police, attitudes toward youths also improved over time, but the change did not reach statistical significance. Although the study did examine not only youths' attitudes, but also police attitudes, the study was limited by the absence of a comparison group.

Diversion Programs

There are various types of diversion programs that may involve interactions between law enforcement and youth. One approach is *police-initiated diversion* programs. Police-initiated or police-led diversion programs can include cautions, warn and release, and referrals to services. These programs provide an alternative to processing youths in the juvenile justice system and tend to target those suspected of minor offenses (such as misdemeanors or status offenses) or those with no prior records. Diversion typically occurs prior to referral to court (i.e., precharge) and at the discretion of the arresting officer (Tallon, Spadafore, and Labriola 2016).

A survey of law enforcement agencies by Tallon, Spadafore, and Labriola (2016) found that 21 percent

of respondents had a formal, agency-wide police diversion program (including programs for both adults and juveniles). Of those reporting a police diversion program, juvenile diversion programs were the most prevalent type (89 percent).

With regard to research on police-led diversion programs, a meta-analysis by Wilson and Hoge (2013) on the effects of youth diversion programs (including police-led and court-based programs) found that caution programs had a statistically significant positive effect in reducing recidivism, compared with traditional justice system processing, especially for low-risk youths. Similarly, in a recent meta-analysis by Wilson, Brennan, and Olaghere (2017) of studies looking at the effects of police-initiated diversion programs to prevent delinquency, overall findings indicated that diversion was associated with lower rates of recidivism, and that this effect was statistically significant.

Restorative justice programs also provide ways for law enforcement to proactively respond to juvenile offending and strengthen ties to the community, by having police officers play an active role in program services (Hipple and McGarrell 2008). For example, in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, a *Police-Based Family Group-Conferencing Program* was implemented, based on the Wagga Wagga model from Australia (Baffour 2006). The program targeted juveniles who had committed their first offenses, which were not felonies, drug/alcohol, or sex offenses. Trained on-duty police officers served as facilitators among juveniles, their victims, and their family and friends, to discuss the harm caused by the juveniles' offenses and appropriate reparation for the harm. A study by Baffour (2006) did not find statistically significant impacts of the program on youth participants. McCold (2003) examined the impact of the program on law enforcement's attitudes toward their activities and roles as police. The study found that the attitudes, organizational culture, and role perceptions of 18 police officers who participated in the Bethlehem study did not significantly change. However, the study also found that youth participants, victims, and parents reported high rates of satisfaction and perceptions of fairness with the police-based restorative justice response.

Another example, the *Indianapolis (Ind.) Family Group Conferencing*[9] diversion program, targeted young juveniles (no older than 14) who had committed their first offenses. The program was implemented with police officers and sheriff's deputies serving as facilitators. The goal was to break the cycle of youths' offending before it reached the stage of repeat offending (McGarrell et al. 2000). A 2007 study by McGarrell and Hipple, however, showed overall mixed results in terms of recidivism rates of youth participants. The study authors also compared the outcomes of conferences coordinated by municipal police officers, compared with Indianapolis school police officers. The results showed a statistically significant decrease in the hazard rate for arrest by the municipal police officers (17 percent), when compared with the school police officers. This suggested that patrol officers may be more appropriate facilitators than school police officers; however, the study authors cautioned that there were various reasons why the outcomes from cases involving municipal police officers differed from the school police officers, and that it was not clear what accounted for the observed differences. A 2008 study by Hipple and McGarrell compared family group-conferencing sessions facilitated by police officers with those facilitated by civilians. The study found that conferences run by police were

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[9]The *CrimeSolutions.gov* program profile for Indianapolis Family Group Conferencing can be found at: https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=250

procedurally similar and resulted in similar recidivism rates as those run by civilians (although police facilitators were found to lecture youth participants more than civilian facilitators did). The findings suggest that police can serve as facilitators in a family group-conferencing diversion program, without interfering with the process and intent of the program.

Results from a recent meta-analysis of restorative justice programs and practices showed police cautioning and other diversion programs had the largest positive effect on delinquency outcomes, compared with other restorative justice program types, suggesting that these programs might be effective for low-risk and first-time youth offenders (Wilson, Olaghere, and Kimbrell 2017).

Police Training Programs

There have not been many police training programs focusing specifically on law enforcement and youth interactions that have been designed and evaluated. The 2013 Census of Law Enforcement Training Academies found that although 97 percent of academies provided juvenile justice law/procedures training, the average number of hours of instruction required for recruits was only 10 hours, compared with 71 hours required for firearms skills (Reaves 2016). Below are some examples of police training programs specifically focused on improving interactions between law enforcement and youth.

- *Baltimore Outward Bound Police Insight Program* is a 1-day program that brings together police officers and middle school youths to participate in team-building activities (such as ropes course or wall-climbing challenges) in an outdoor setting outside the city. While youths volunteer to participate, the program is a part of a mandatory training curriculum for the Baltimore Police Department. Police officers and youths participate in various group activities, with the overall goal of improving the quality of officer–youth interactions (Broaddus et al. 2013). Although there has been a qualitative study of the program, there has not been a formal evaluation conducted.
- *Effective Policing with Youth* is a 1-day policing training curriculum designed to reduce disproportionate minority contact (DMC) in Connecticut by decreasing the odds that interactions between police officers and youths will lead to arrest, especially for minority youths. The goals of the training are to improve officers' awareness of DMC; increase officers' knowledge of youth behavior and strategies for interacting with youths; improve officers' attitudes toward youths; increase the likelihood that interactions between police and youths will have a positive outcome; and increase the likelihood that youths will respond positively to police (Sanderson et al. 2008; LaMotte et al. 2010). LaMotte and colleagues (2010) conducted an experimental design study of the training program and found that, at the 5- to 7-month follow-up period, officers who participated in the training displayed statistically significant increases in their knowledge scores as well as significant improvements in attitude measures, compared with the non-trained control group. However, the study focused on measures of attitudes and knowledge and did not examine changes to police officers' actual behaviors. Therefore, it is still unclear if the training program impacts interactions between police officers and youths.
- *De-Escalating Juvenile Aggression Training Program* was a 1-day training curriculum designed to teach selected police officers in Nebraska about developmental factors that can contribute to juveniles' aggressive behavior, appropriate methods to handle aggressive juveniles, and verbal

skills needed to de-escalate aggressive (and potentially aggressive) youths (Herz 2001). Specifically, the curriculum focused on the differences between adults and juveniles, the developmental process that impacts juveniles' emotions, and the psychological and social factors that affect juvenile aggression. Herz (2001) conducted a pretest–posttest study with an unmatched comparison group to examine the effects of the curriculum on police officers' attitudes toward handling juveniles. At the 5-month follow up, trained officers showed statistically significant, positive improvement on the Handle Scale (which measured officers' views of their role in handling aggressive juveniles), compared with untrained officers. However, there were no other differences between the groups on any other attitudinal measure. The study also did not measure police officers' changes in behaviors, if any, as a result of participating in the training program.

- Chicago Police Department's (CPD's) *Crisis Intervention Team for Youth (CIT-Y)* Training is a 5-day course to teach police officers how to respond to youths with mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders (Skorek and Westley 2016). The CIT-Y training was designed to prepare CPD officers to identify youths in crisis, assess their risk of harm, and use de-escalation techniques to respond to youths and reduce trauma for those involved (including the officers, youths, and the youths' families). Participation in the training is voluntary, but officers are required to have already completed the adult CIT training. The goals of the training include diverting youths in crisis away from the justice system to community-based mental health treatment, and promoting safe interactions between police and youths with mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders. Skorek and Westley (2016) used a pretest–posttest study design to examine the training's impact on officers' knowledge relating to the curriculum objectives. Officers' knowledge of risk and de-escalation and service call disposition (but not identification) significantly improved from pre- to posttest (a comparison group was included, but only in the pretest analysis before the training; posttest analysis only included training participants). As with previous research, the study did not include measures of officers' behaviors following the training; the lack of a comparison group at posttest also limited the ability to assess the trained officers' knowledge of responding to youths appropriately.

- *Youth-Police Initiative (YPI)* brings together at-risk adolescents and police officers who patrol their neighborhoods, with the goal of building better relationships (Watts and Washington 2014). The program (usually 6 or 7 days long, over a 2-week period) takes place in a neighborhood-based setting, which is convenient for all participants. The first week of YPI focuses on teaching youths about specific interaction skills such as public speaking. Police officers join the training during the second week and learn about interacting and building relationships with youths. Youths and police officers share their life stories during the program and are encouraged to ask each other questions. Team-building activities are also part of YPI, to have youths and officers work together on a more informal basis (Watts and Washington 2014). Although there has been an evaluability assessment of the program, there has not been a formal evaluation conducted.

- In 2017, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) released a toolkit for law enforcement agencies entitled *Enhancing Police Responses to Children Exposed to Violence: A Toolkit for Law Enforcement.* The toolkit discusses topics such as on-scene protocols, police responses to children's traumatic stress, responding to the needs of children at scenes of

domestic violence, and the importance of police–youth interactions in situations involving CEV. The toolkit was designed to help police play an important role in ensuring that victimization and exposure to violence does not lead to harmful and negative outcomes for youths such as involvement in delinquency or gangs, substance use, or posttraumatic stress disorder (IACP 2017). However, the impact of the toolkit has not been formally evaluated.

Community-Based Policing Programs

The programs above were specifically designed with a primary (or secondary) goal of improving police–youth interactions and relationships. The policing programs described below are not necessarily designed with the intent to improve police–youth relations, but do involve interactions between law enforcement and youths in the community.

- *Operation Ceasefire*[10] is a problem-solving police strategy in Boston, Massachusetts, which seeks to reduce gang violence, illegal gun possession, and gun violence in communities. The goals of the program are to carry out a comprehensive strategy to apprehend and prosecute offenders who carry firearms, to put others on notice that offenders face certain and serious punishment for carrying illegal firearms, and to prevent youths from following the same criminal path. A study by Braga and colleagues (2001) found a reduction in youth homicides, citywide gun assaults, and calls for service. A 2005 study by Braga and Pierce also found a statistically significant reduction in the percentage of recovered handguns.

- *Operation Peacekeeper*[11] is a community and problem-oriented policing program that was implemented in 1997 to address gun violence among youth gang members in Stockton, California. The program's goal was to reduce gang involvement among urban youths ages 10 to 18 and decrease gun-related violence among gang-involved youths. It was modeled after Operation Ceasefire, which was implemented by the Boston Police Department. An evaluation by Braga (2008) demonstrated that Operation Peacekeeper was associated with an overall 42 percent decrease in the monthly number of gun homicide incidents in Stockton.

- In response to high numbers of gang crimes, the Dallas Police Department implemented the *Anti-Gang Initiative*[12]. The goal of the initiative was to reduce gang-related crime among juveniles in Dallas using specialized police strategies. The program implemented three main suppression tactics: 1) aggressive curfew enforcement, 2) aggressive truancy enforcement, and 3) simple saturation patrol. Fritsch and colleagues (1999) found statistically significant decreases in violent gang-related offenses in areas targeted by the initiatives, but no significant reductions in gang-related offenses reported to police.

- The *Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project (GVRP)*[13] was a comprehensive, community-wide program designed to reduce serious violence in Chicago's gang-ridden Little

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[10]The *CrimeSolutions.gov* program profile for Operation Ceasefire can be found at:
https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=207
[11]The *CrimeSolutions.gov* program profile for Operation Peacekeeper can be found at:
https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=51
[12]The *CrimeSolutions.gov* program profile for the Dallas Anti-Gang Initiative can be found at:
https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=174
[13]The *CrimeSolutions.gov* program profile for Little Village GVRP can be found at:
https://www.crimesolutions.gov/ProgramDetails.aspx?ID=278

Village neighborhood. The main goal of the GVRP was to reduce the extremely high level of serious gang violence, first at the individual gang member level, and then at the aggregate (especially gang and community) level. The foundation of the GVRP was the Comprehensive Gang Model (also known as the Comprehensive Community-Wide Gang Program Model, the Comprehensive Gang Prevention and Intervention Model, and the Spergel Model). The five core elements of the Comprehensive Gang Model are 1) community mobilization, 2) social intervention, 3) provision of social opportunities, 4) suppression, and 5) organizational change and development of local agencies and groups. Overall, an evaluation by Spergel and colleagues (2003) found mixed results. The GVRP appeared to have had a statistically significant effect in reducing arrests for violent crimes, serious violent crimes, and drug crimes; however, it did not affect arrests for property crimes or total arrests.

Limitations to Research

Overall, the strength of the evidence and the rigor of the program evaluations differ across the types of programs related to law enforcement and youth interactions. For example, DARE and GREAT have been evaluated using randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs (QEDs), respectively. But other prevention programs (such as police athletic leagues) have not yet been rigorously evaluated. In addition, for those programs that have been evaluated (whether with RCTs, QEDs, or simple pretest–posttest designs), one limitation to the research has been the outcome measures. Most studies have examined attitudes or perceptions of youths or police after participating in a program or training, but rarely measured the impacts on actual behavioral changes. When behavioral change is measured, as with community-based policing programs, it is often measured as changes in crime rates, which may not reflect changes in police–youth interactions.

Another limitation to the research is that there are some programs that law enforcement and youth considered to be successful, but are not recognized as a part of the evidence. This is due in part to the fact that program evaluations are not typically qualitative in nature or do not incorporate implementation science in their analysis. There is a limited amount of research that examines whether programs are being implemented as designed or if findings from impact evaluations can be operationalized to inform day-to-day practices between police officers and youth (Booz Allen Hamilton 2018).

Conclusion

Interactions between law enforcement and youth, whether youth-initiated or police-initiated, occur often and in many different settings, such as on the street, in malls, in schools, as well as other public or private places. Concerns with youth, officer, and community safety are always present during these interactions, but the available information suggests that there is much that is still unknown about the nature of police-youth contact. Though law enforcement officers have higher rates of work-related injuries (BLS 2016), youths under the age of 18 only commit a small number of assaults and police killings every year (FBI 2016). Although the juvenile arrest rate has been declining for many years, there were still nearly 1 million arrests of individuals under age 18 in 2015 (OJJDP, 2017). These statistics underscores the complicated nature of police-youth contact, and the importance of understanding and improving interactions.

During such encounters, there are several legal, individual, organizational, and environmental factors that affect police officers' perceptions of youth and the decisions that they make. These factors can also influence youths' perceptions and behaviors toward law enforcement. However, there is no consensus on the overall impact of such factors, or whether one factor, such as officers' concerns for community safety and their own safety, compete with other factors, such as youths' perceived demeanor toward police. Despite a limited understanding of interactions between law enforcement and youth, there are several programs, including prevention programs, police-led diversion programs, and community-based policing programs, that are either specifically designed to improve interactions or incorporate secondary elements that can have an impact on interactions between police officers and youth. Yet, an analysis of the available research and outcomes evidence suggests that more research is needed to improve the quality and applicability of research on law enforcement and youth interactions.

In 2017, OJJDP convened a group of researchers, practitioners, and federal staff to discuss the current state of research on interactions between law enforcement and youth; the goal was to identify research strategies that could inform OJJDP's efforts to support officer, youth, and community safety. From the meeting, the following considerations regarding future research were identified:

1. There are often multiple stakeholder groups and a single evaluation may not be able to determine a program's impact for all groups simultaneously. Thus, future research can a) seek to better understand the often-competing factors that influence youth–police interactions; and b) measure different types of interactions and experiences occurring between youth and law enforcement.

2. Some law enforcement–youth activities thought to be successful by practitioners are not evidence-based programs or practices. Thus, future research can a) balance the confines and structure of research with the practical needs of law enforcement and communities; b) include evaluations that consider law enforcement's perspective about programs and their definition of a successful impact on youth interactions; and c) help translate research findings into practice within the field (Booz Allen Hamilton 2018).

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