

# Detention Assessment Instrument

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Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice  
Fall 2002

# Rationale

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- Legislative mandates
- Increased consistency
- Reduce inappropriate detention admissions

# Rationale

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## Legislative Mandates

- Senate Bill 66 (2000) amended §16.1–284.1 to include:
  - “That the Department of Juvenile Justice shall establish guidelines for use by their Court Service Unit personnel when making recommendations to the court regarding the secure detention of juveniles.”
- Chapter 978 of the Acts of Assembly of 2000

# Rationale

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## Need for Consistency

- Currently different detention rates across CSUs due to:
  - Differences in youth and offending patterns
  - Differences in local community standards
  - Differences in staff's decision-making

# Rationale

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## Reduce Inappropriate Admissions

- Data suggests detention is used for something other than controlling the more “serious” juvenile offenders

# Development

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- Contract with NCCD
- Inter-agency Task Force
- Consensus approach

# Development

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- Determine instrument's items
- Assign weights to each item
- Designate scores for each decision category
  - release to community
  - detention alternative
  - detain

# Pilot Study

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- Pre-tested instrument to determine:
  - Its impact on the number of detention admissions and detention alternatives
  - Whether the type of youth being detained and released are those that the instrument's designers intended
- Adjustments to the instrument were made based on results of the pilot test

# Pilot Study

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- Conducted between August – October 2001
- NCCD conducted training statewide on study process
- Looked at 514 detained youth and 465 non-detained youth (eligible for secure detention per COV)

# Pilot Study

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- Pilot test data collection form was the instrument with no weights
- After detention decision was made, staff completed the form
- NCCD retroactively scored each juvenile based on weights and determined what *would have happened*

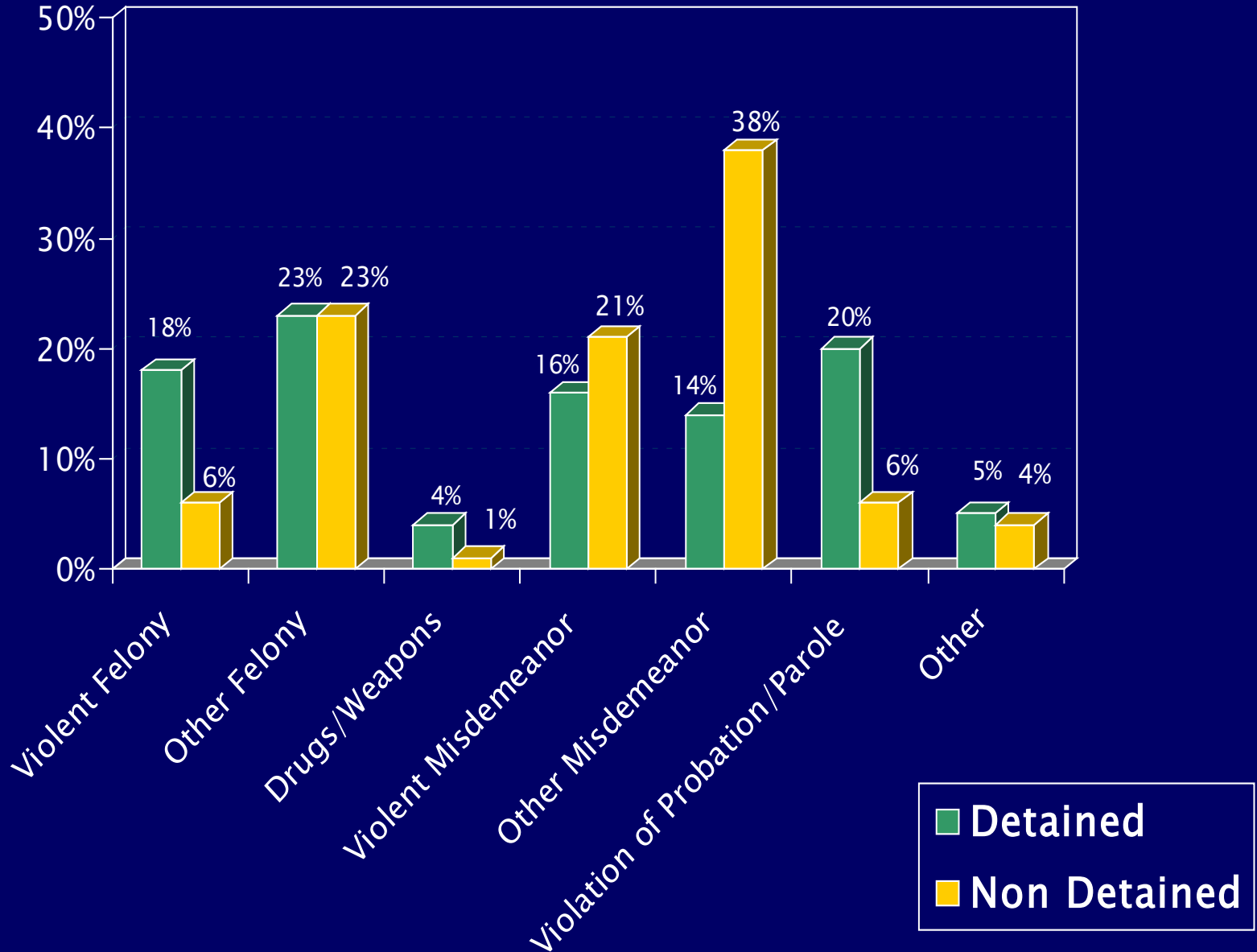
# Pilot Study

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## Results

- Youth detained under current practice are a more serious population of youth than those not detained
- Youth with similar characteristics are frequently handled in different ways

# Most Serious Current Charge



# Characteristics of Detained and Non-Detained Youth from Pilot Study

Instrument Measure	Detained N = 514	Not Detained N = 465
Additional charges in current referral	40%	30%
Prior adjudication(s) of guilt	67%	37%
Pending petitions	32%	18%
Pending felony petition	10%	4%
On probation	43%	21%
On parole	7%	1%
FTA history	11%	4%
Escape/Runaway history	27%	9%

# Pilot Study

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## Results

- Implementing the DAI would result in a higher percentage of more serious offenders within the detention population
- Implementing the DAI helps with resource utilization and public safety concerns

# Comparative Characteristics of Current and DAI-Indicated Admissions to Detention

Characteristic	Current Detention Admissions N = 514	DAI-Indicated Detention Admissions N = 336
<b>Most Serious Offense</b>		
Person, Weapon, Drug Felony	22%	42%
Other Felony	23%	23%
Misdemeanor & Status	35%	23%
Violation of Probation/Parole	20%	12%
<b>1 + Additional Felony Charges</b>	18%	26%
<b>1 + Prior Felony Adjudications</b>	28%	36%
<b>1 + Pending Petitions</b>	32%	44%
<b>On Probation/Parole</b>	50%	50%

# Implementation

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DJJ Procedure 9135

# Implementation

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## Procedure

- DAI used only for pre-dispositional detention decisions
- DAI does not address *Code of Virginia* requirements for detention eligibility (§16.1–248.1)

# Implementation

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## Procedure

- DAI to be completed:
  - During regular office hours
  - After regular office hours
- Not required for ICJ juveniles
- Consider results if making recommendation at detention hearing

# Implementation

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## DAI Completion

- Identifying information
- Seven items
- Total score
- Overrides
- Decision

# Implementation

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## Juvenile Tracking System

# Evaluation

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- DJJ Research and Evaluation Unit
  - (Debbie Anchors - lead evaluator)
- Implementation Questions
  - Is the DAI being used as directed by procedure?
    - Review of automated data from JTS
    - Examination of the use of overrides
  - On-call vs. "business hours" differences
  - What are the challenges to implementation?

# Evaluation

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## ■ Impact Questions

- Has use of the DAI changed the number and type of juveniles being detained/not detained?
- What are the outcomes for juveniles not detained (e.g., FTA, new offenses while released)?

## ■ Monitoring

- Provide periodic reports on DAI related activities for CSUs to use in quality control monitoring