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Examination of the Effects of Speech Disorders on Juvenile Delinquency and the Potential Benefits of Speech Therapy for Offenders

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KATIE PAPARELLI (Criminology and Criminal Justice, Psychology)

Examination of the effects of speech disorders on juvenile delinquency and the potential benefits of speech therapy for offenders

Sponsor: Megan Parry (Criminology and Criminal Justice)

In the United States, there are currently over 50,000 juveniles housed in youth confinement facilities for delinquent acts ranging from truancy to murder. To decrease that number, it is pertinent to identify possible risk factors of juvenile delinquency, but also to establish impactful preventative strategies as well as reactive solutions. Speech disorders and speech differences have been identified as potential risk factors for juvenile delinquency. Having a speech disorder/difference has an undeniable impact on a child's life, with potentially negative impacts ranging from poor engagement with school and bullying—both risk factors in themselves for juvenile delinquency. Unsurprisingly, researchers have found that an overwhelmingly large number of juvenile offenders show signs of speech disorders. The extensive research—which is detailed and evaluated in this literature review—demonstrates that having a speech disorder is a risk factor of becoming a juvenile delinquent. Due to this, it is imperative that possible treatment and prevention strategies are identified to help prevent these juveniles from entering the juvenile justice system, and barring that, prevent them from recidivating once released. This white paper aims to inform and present solutions to juvenile justice administrators regarding these issues, as well as serve as a means to educate the general public regarding these issues.