

JUVENILE-COURT
STATISTICS
IN
NORTH DAKOTA
1951

PUBLIC WELFARE BOARD OF NORTH DAKOTA.

DIVISION OF RESEARCH & STATISTICS

Bismarck, North Dakota

Report No. 2

JUVENILE COURT STATISTICS IN NORTH DAKOTA

CALENDAR YEAR 1951

The Public Welfare Board has collected, with the cooperation of juvenile court officials, reports of cases handled by four juvenile courts over the state during 1951. The four courts which participated voluntarily in a plan for uniform reporting of juvenile court statistics are located in Fargo, Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Mandan. Data was obtained on delinquency, dependency and neglect, and special proceedings cases.

This juvenile court statistical report is the second such report published by the Public Welfare Board of North Dakota. The first report was published for calendar year 1950 with three juvenile courts participating, namely Fargo, Grand Forks, and Mandan. As was the case in the previous report, it is recognized that the data is limited with only four courts reporting and that there are also delinquency cases which may have been dealt with by individuals without recourse to the courts. Because of these shortcomings it is possible to draw only limited conclusions and determine certain factors contributing to the conditions which foster delinquent children. Consideration must also be given to the lack of uniformity in cases reported by different courts since administrative practices, as well as the functions of each individual court may vary in different communities.

Each time a child is "dealt with" by the juvenile court either officially or unofficially on a new referral it is a case. Consequently one child may be counted as one or more cases during the year. Also each child in a group "dealt with" by the court is counted as a separate case. In this report the term "dealt with" means a referral to the court, by means of a petition, complaint, affidavit, arrest, informal referral or any other method, which is disposed of during the calendar year.

There were 826 children's cases disposed of during the calendar year 1951 involving 767 different children. Of the 767 different children referred to the court, 714 were referred and disposed of once, 47 children were referred to the court and disposed of twice, and 6 children were referred and disposed of three times during the year.

The 826 children's cases in 1951 represented an increase of 22.7 percent over the number of cases disposed of during 1950. Most of this increase (17.5 percent) is due to the fact that one more juvenile court reported this year than in the previous year. "Disposed of" means that some definite action has been taken or that some plan of treatment has been decided upon or begun. Of these 826 children's cases disposed of during 1951, 65.6 percent were delinquency cases, 18.9 percent were dependency and neglect cases and 15.5 percent were cases in which the child was involved in special proceedings. (See Chart 2.) Of these children's cases reported by the four courts, 63.9 percent were disposed of officially and 36.1 percent unofficially. Official cases are those placed on the official court calendar for adjudication by the judge or referee through the filing of a petition, complaint, or other legal paper used to initiate court action. Unofficial cases are those that are not placed on the official court calendar but are adjusted by the judge, referee, probation officer, or other officer of the court.

Chart 1. Percentage Distribution of Juvenile Court Cases by the Four Reporting Courts, Calendar Year 1951

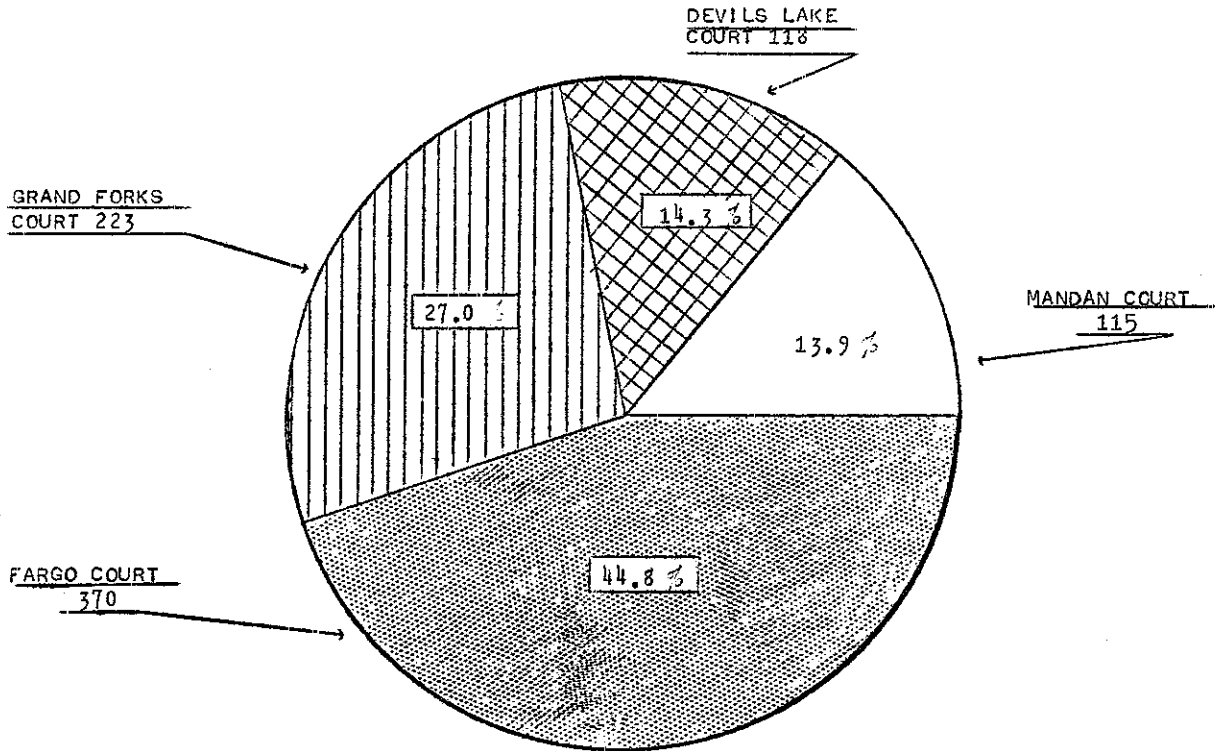


Chart 2. Percentage Distribution of Juvenile Court Cases According to Type, Calendar Year 1951

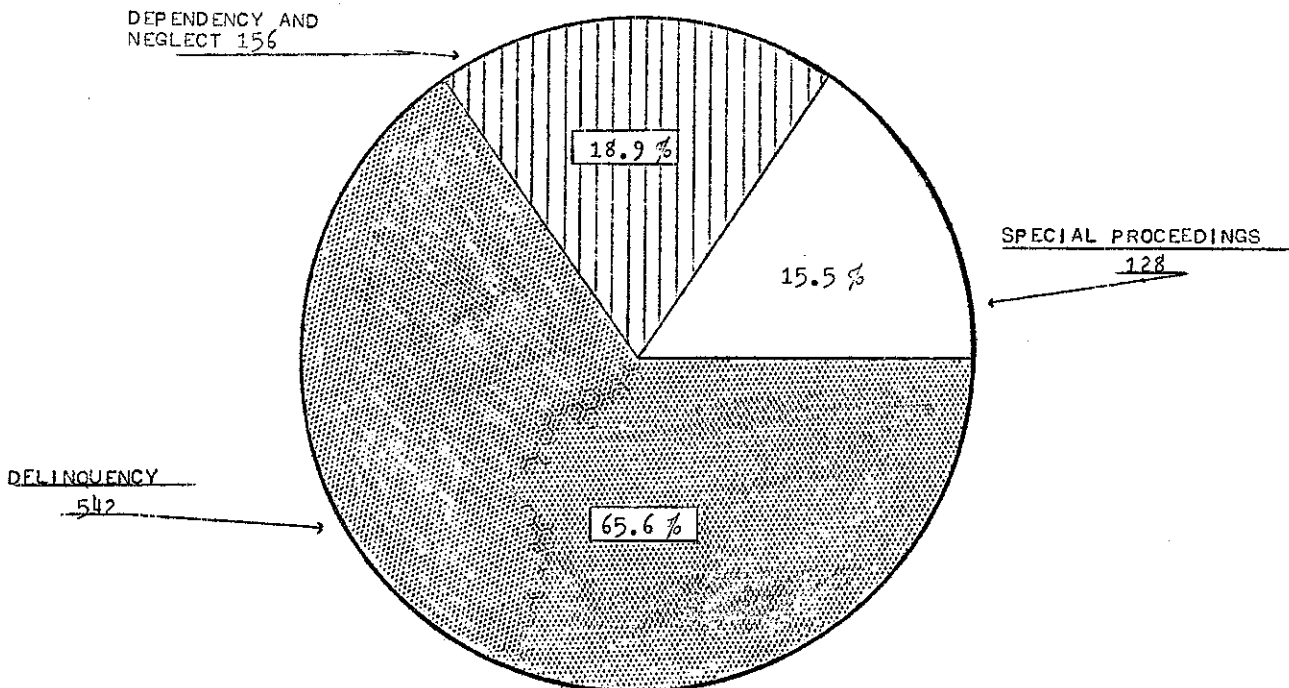


Table I. Children's Cases Disposed of by Four Courts* in North Dakota

Calendar Year 1951

Classification	Total		Judicial Districts			
			First		Second	Sixth
	Number	Percent	Fargo Court	Grand Forks Court	Devils Lake Court	Mandan Court
			Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Total Cases	826	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Disposed of:						
Officially	528	63.9	24.6	26.0	100.0	33.9
Unofficially	298	36.1	15.4	74.0	-	66.1
Delinquency Cases	542	65.6	63.8	71.7	78.0	47.0
Disposed of:						
Officially	325	39.3	53.0	14.8	78.0	3.5
Unofficially	217	26.3	10.8	56.9	-	43.5
Dependency and Neglect Cases	156	18.9	15.9	22.9	17.8	21.7
Disposed of:						
Officially	83	10.1	11.6	5.8	17.8	5.2
Unofficially	73	8.8	4.3	17.1	-	16.5
Special Proceeding Cases	128	15.5	20.3	5.4	4.2	31.3
Disposed of:						
Officially	120	14.5	20.0	5.4	4.2	25.2
Unofficially	8	1.0	0.3	-	-	6.1

* As reported by juvenile commissioners at Fargo, Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Mandan.

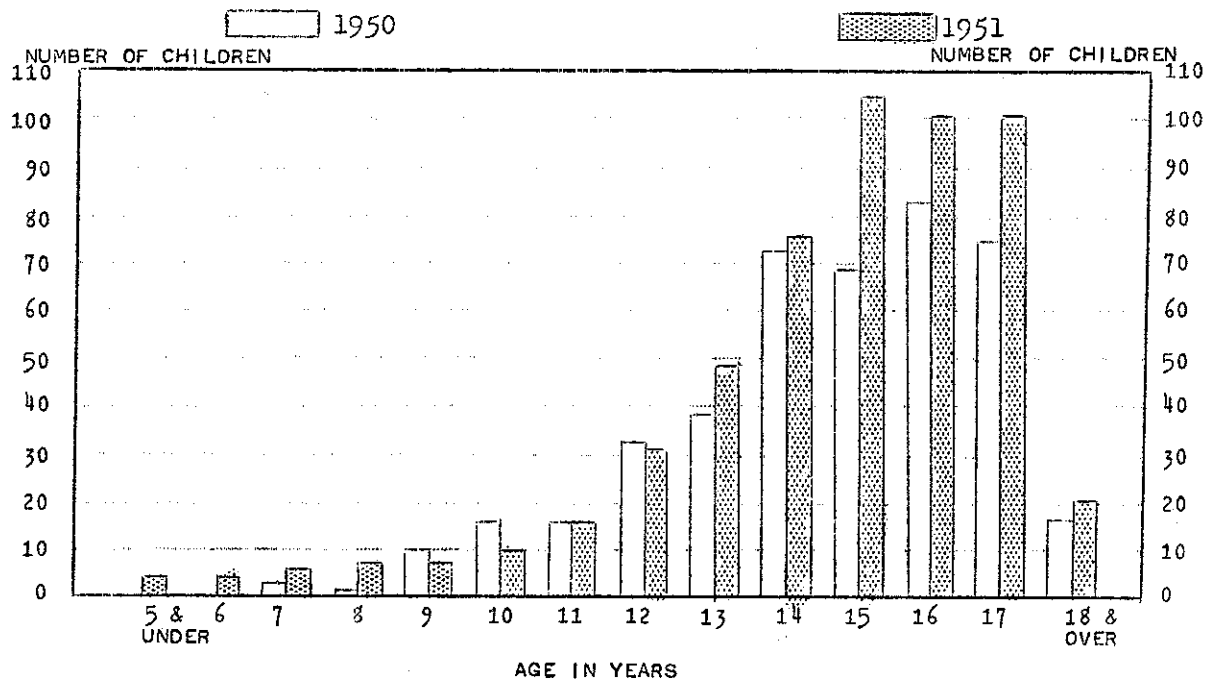
DELINQUENCY CASES

There were 542 delinquency cases referred to the four courts reporting during 1951. This represented an increase of 24.5 percent over the previous year. Most of this increase was caused by the inclusion of one more juvenile court this year than in the previous year. As can be seen in Table II there is a large age range, but only 7.5 percent of the children are age 10 or under. In 1950 the same figure was 6.9 percent. The most common age for delinquency was 14 through 17 years which represented 70.6 percent of the cases. This same age range accounted for 69.2 percent of the cases in the previous year. In Calendar year 1951, 77.3 percent of the 542 delinquency cases were boys and 22.7 percent girls. The median age was 15.5 years. For calendar year 1950, 81.8 percent were boys, 18.2 percent girls and the median age was 15.6 years.

Table II. Delinquent Children Classified by Age and Sex
Calendar Year 1951

Age in Years	Sex					
	Total		Boys		Girls	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Percentage Distribution	100.0		77.3		22.7	
Total	542	100.0	419	100.0	123	100.0
5 years and under	4	0.7	4	0.9	-	-
6 years	4	0.7	4	0.9	-	-
7 years	7	1.3	2	0.5	5	4.1
8 years	8	1.5	6	1.4	2	1.6
9 years	8	1.5	5	1.2	3	2.4
10 years	10	1.8	9	2.1	1	0.8
11 years	16	3.0	15	3.6	1	0.8
12 years	32	5.9	22	5.3	10	8.1
13 years	48	8.9	36	8.6	12	9.8
14 years	76	14.0	61	14.6	15	12.2
15 years	105	19.4	79	18.9	26	21.1
16 years	101	18.6	72	17.2	29	23.6
17 years	101	18.6	87	20.8	14	11.4
18 years and over	21	3.9	16	3.8	5	4.1
Not Specified	1	0.2	1	0.2	-	-

Chart 3. Number of Delinquent Children by Age
Calendar Years 1950 and 1951



Source of Referral

During calendar year 1951 the most frequent source of referral was police, representing 62.7 percent of the delinquency cases. Although this was true for both boys and girls it was true to a greater extent for the boys. The next most common source of referral for both the boys and girls was "other source" accounting for 24.6 percent of the cases. "Other source" includes a neighbor or a friend of the child, the person injured, a prosecutor, justice of the peace, railroad police, department store, theater and so forth. This was followed by school department representing 5.7 percent of the cases, parents or relative 5.2 percent, other court 0.9 percent, and social agency 0.9 percent of the cases. The two most frequent sources of referral, police and "other source", account for 92.6 percent of the boys but only 69.1 percent of the girls. However, school department and parents or relatives represent 29.3 percent of the girls compared to only 5.5 percent of the boys. See Table III for more detailed breakdown by source of referral and by sex.

In 1950 the percentage distribution of delinquency cases by source of referral was as follows: police 73.4 percent, "other source" 16.2 percent, parents or relatives 4.5 percent, probation officer 2.8 percent, school department 2.1 percent, social agency 0.7 percent and other court 0.3 percent of the cases.

During 1950 the Fargo and Mandan courts reported data on source of referral for 289 cases, compared to four courts in 1951 which reported data on 542 cases. The increase of 253 cases in 1951 over 1950 can be attributed to the addition of two courts.

Table III. Delinquent Children Classified by Source of Referral and by Sex
Calendar Year 1951

Source of Referral	Sex					
	Total		Boys		Girls	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	542	100.0	419	100.0	123	100.0
Parents or Relatives	28	5.2	12	2.9	16	13.0
Police	340	62.7	281	67.1	59	48.0
Other Court	5	0.9	5	1.2	-	-
School Department	31	5.7	11	2.6	20	16.3
Social Agency	5	0.9	3	0.7	2	1.6
Other Source	133	24.6	107	25.5	26	21.1

Reason for Referral

The largest number of cases (32.1 percent) were referred for other delinquent behavior such as violations of liquor, drug or narcotic, curfew, or fish and game laws followed by 19 percent referred for other theft. Other theft includes picking pockets, shoplifting, stealing automobile accessories or parts, forgery, fraud, extortion, passing bad checks, blackmail, stealing a bicycle or motorcycle. Traffic violation accounted for 11.4 percent of the cases and act of carelessness or mischief 10 percent. These four reasons accounted for 72.5 percent of the reasons for referral. The reasons for referral are not the same when boys and girls are compared. It seems that a greater percentage of boys than girls display an aggressive type of behavior. Nearly 40 percent of the boys were referred for some kind of stealing compared to 6.5 percent of the girls. The girls were more apt to be referred because of truancy, running away and being ungovernable.

During 1950 the four most common reasons for referral were other theft (23.0 percent), other delinquent behavior (20.1 percent), act of carelessness or mischief (14.2 percent) and sex offense (9.3 percent). Traffic violation represented only 5.9 percent of the cases in 1950. See Table IV for the number and percent of delinquent children classified by reason for referral and by sex.

Table IV. Delinquent Children Classified by Reason
for Referral and by Sex
Calendar Year 1951

Reason for Referral	Sex					
	Total		Boys		Girls	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	542	100.0	419	100.0	123	100.0
Automobile Theft	24	4.4	24	5.7	-	-
Burglary or Unlawful Entry	37	6.8	37	8.8	-	-
Robbery	9	1.7	9	2.1	-	-
Other Theft	103	19.0	95	22.7	8	6.5
Truancy	28	5.2	13	3.1	15	12.2
Running Away	25	4.6	11	2.6	14	11.4
Being Ungovernable	9	1.7	3	0.7	6	4.9
Sex Offense	4	0.7	2	0.5	2	1.6
Injury to Person	6	1.1	6	1.4	-	-
Act of Carelessness or Mischief	54	10.0	47	11.2	7	5.7
Traffic Violation	62	11.4	56	13.4	6	4.9
Other Delinquent Behavior	174	32.1	112	26.7	62	50.4
Conditions Injurious to Morals	2	0.4	1	0.3	1	0.8
Commitment of Mentally Defective Child	1	0.2	1	0.3	-	-
Other	4	0.7	2	0.5	2	1.6

Place of Care Pending Court Disposition

Of the 542 delinquency cases disposed of by the four reporting juvenile courts in 1951, 71.8 percent were allowed to remain in their own or other family home or institution while awaiting consideration of their case. Slightly over one fourth (26.4 percent) of the children referred for delinquency received some kind of detention care overnight or longer in: Jail or police station (12.5 percent), detention home (13.7 percent), and other place (0.2 percent). There were 10 children where there was no specification as to whether they received detention care or shelter care overnight.

Of the 419 boys 102 or 24.3 percent received some kind of detention care overnight or longer compared to 41 or 33.3 percent of the 123 girls reported. (See Table V.)

Table V. Delinquent Children Classified by Place of Care Pending Court Disposition and by Sex
Calendar Year 1951

Place of Care	Sex					
	Total		Boys		Girls	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	542	100.0	419	100.0	123	100.0
No Detention or Shelter Care Overnight	389	71.8	308	73.5	81	65.9
Detention Overnight or Longer in:						
Jail or Police Station	68	12.5	59	14.1	9	7.3
Detention Home	74	13.7	42	10.0	32	26.0
Other Place	1	0.2	1	0.2	-	-
Not Specified	10	1.8	9	2.2	1	0.8

Type of Disposition

The most common disposition for the 542 children's cases reported by the four courts during 1951 was dismissal with or without warning or adjustment, which accounted for 34.1 percent of the cases. There were 28.4 percent of the cases held open without further action and 13.5 percent who were placed under the supervision of a probation officer. The classification "other disposition" represented 10.7 percent of the cases. Nine percent were sent to the state training school for delinquent children. Examples of dispositions which are included in the classification "other disposition" are: runaway returned; fine, costs or restitution; and commitment to a penal institution for adults. All other types of disposition accounted for 4.3 percent of the children's cases.

There was a large difference in the percentage distribution of the 435 children's cases classified by type of disposition in the previous year, compared to the percentage distribution in 1951. In 1950 the classification "other disposition" accounted for 56.3 percent of the children's cases. Dismissed with or without warning or adjustment represented 20.2 percent of the cases. Held open without further action amounted to 6.7 percent of the cases, and 9.0 percent were placed under the supervision of a probation officer. All other types of disposition accounted for 7.8 percent of the children's cases.

In comparing 1951 with 1950 by type of disposition, the greatest shift occurred for those children's cases included in the classification "other disposition". In 1951 about one out of every ten cases was classified "other disposition" compared to one out of every two cases in 1950. The reason for this great difference may be attributed to better reporting in 1951 than in the previous year.

Table VI. Delinquent Children Classified According to
Type of Disposition and by Sex
Calendar Year 1951

Type of Disposition	Sex					
	Total		Boys		Girls	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	542	100.0	419	100.0	123	100.0
Dismissed With or Without Warning or Adjustment	185	34.1	151	36.0	34	27.7
Held Open Without Further Action	154	28.4	114	27.2	40	32.5
Probation Officer to Supervise	73	13.5	57	13.6	16	13.0
Committed or Referred to:						
Public Institution for Delinquent Children	49	9.0	39	9.3	10	8.1
Other Public Institution	3	0.6	1	0.2	2	1.6
Other Court	3	0.6	3	0.7	-	-
Private Agency or Institution	10	1.8	2	0.5	8	6.5
Other Disposition	58	10.7	45	10.8	13	10.6
Not Specified	7	1.3	7	1.7	-	-

Method of Disposition

Of the 542 delinquency cases disposed of in 1951, 60 percent were handled officially and 40 percent unofficially. In the previous year of the 435 delinquency cases disposed of, 62.3 percent were handled officially and 37.7 percent unofficially.

During 1951 nearly 72 percent of the delinquency cases referred for automobile theft, burglary or unlawful entry, robbery, and other theft were handled officially compared to 28 percent handled unofficially. About 54 percent of the cases referred for truancy, running away, being ungovernable, act of carelessness or mischief, traffic violation and "other delinquent behavior" were handled officially, and 46 percent unofficially. Of the 325 delinquency cases handled officially 75.4 percent were boys, and 24.6 percent girls. This is not surprising since in this report there were over three times as many delinquent boys as girls. Of the 123 girls who were delinquent 65 percent were handled officially compared to 58.5 percent of the 419 delinquent boys.

See Table VII for breakdown of delinquent children by reason for referral and method of disposition.

Table VII. Delinquent Children Classified According to Reason for Referral by Method of Disposition, Calendar Year 1951

Reason for Referral	Method of Disposition					
	Total		Official		Unofficial	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	542	100.0	325	100.0	217	100.0
Automobile Theft	24	4.4	24	7.4	-	-
Burglary or Unlawful Entry	37	6.8	25	7.7	12	5.5
Robbery	9	1.7	6	1.9	3	1.4
Other Theft	103	19.0	69	21.2	34	15.7
Truancy	28	5.2	15	4.6	13	6.0
Running Away	25	4.6	14	4.3	11	5.1
Being Ungovernable	9	1.7	4	1.2	5	2.3
Sex Offense	4	0.7	1	0.3	3	1.4
Injury to Person	6	1.1	5	1.5	1	0.5
Act of Carelessness or Mischief	54	10.0	22	6.8	32	14.7
Traffic Violation	62	11.4	32	9.9	30	13.8
Other Delinquent Behavior	174	32.1	103	31.7	71	32.7
Conditions Injurious to Morals	2	0.4	2	0.6	-	-
Commitment of Mentally Defective Children	1	0.2	1	0.3	-	-
Other	4	0.7	2	0.6	2	0.9

DEPENDANCY AND NEGLECT CASES

Reason for Referral

There were 156 children referred to the courts on dependency and neglect charges during 1951. This represents a decrease of 57 cases or 26.8 percent from 1950. The significant reason for referral for both boys and girls was lack of adequate care or support, accounting for 85.9 percent of the children's cases. The remaining 14.1 percent of the cases were distributed among eight other reasons for referral.

Source of Referral

There were five sources of referral which occurred quite frequently for dependency and neglect cases in 1951. They were social agencies (21.8 percent), parents or relatives (20.5 percent), police (18.6 percent), school departments (11.6 percent), and "other source" (26.9 percent).

Place of Care Pending Court Disposition

Of the 156 dependency and neglect cases in 1951, 26.3 percent received detention or shelter care overnight. This represents a decrease from the previous year when 58.7 percent of the cases received detention or shelter care overnight. Most of this difference is accounted for by those dependency and neglect cases whose place of care pending hearing or disposition was in "other place". "Other place" includes cases in which the child was detained in the home of relatives, friends or neighbors, without provision for the payment of board, and cases in which the child was referred to a social agency for care pending hearing or disposition. In 1951 only 24 or 15.4 percent of the total dependancy and neglect cases were classified in "other place" compared to 111 or 52.1 percent of the cases in 1950. Boarding home (7.7 percent) was the only other place of care with more than two cases receiving detention or shelter care overnight during 1951. (See Table VIII.)

Table VIII. Dependency and Neglect Cases Classified by
Place of Care Pending Court Disposition
Calendar Years 1950 and 1951

Place of Care	Years			
	1951*		1950**	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	156	100.0	213	100.0
No Detention or Shelter Care Overnight	115	73.7	88	41.3
Detention Care Overnight or Longer in:				
Jail or Police Station	2	1.3	2	1.0
Detention Home	2	1.3	3	1.4
Boarding Home	12	7.7	9	4.2
Other Place	24	15.4	111	52.1
Not Specified	1	0.6	-	-

* As reported by Juvenile Commissioners at Fargo, Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Mandan.

** As reported by Juvenile Commissioners at Fargo, Grand Forks, and Mandan.

Type of Disposition

The most common types of disposition for dependency and neglect cases in 1951 were as follows: held open without further action (24.4 percent), dismissed with or without warning or adjustment (23.1 percent), disposed of by a private agency or institution (17.3 percent), and "other Disposition" (24.4 percent). "Other disposition" includes: runaway returned; fine, costs or restitution; and commitment to penal institution for adults. All other types of disposition listed in Table IX, total 10.8 percent of the cases.

In comparing the above figures with 1950 we find quite a change. In 1950, 16.9 percent of the cases were held open without further action, "other disposition" accounted for 34.7 percent of the cases. Only 1.9 percent of the cases were dismissed, warned or adjusted. Private agencies or institutions represented 37.1 percent of the cases. All other types of disposition represented only 9.4 percent of the cases.

Of the 156 dependency and neglect cases in 1951, 53.2 percent were handled officially and 46.8 percent were handled unofficially. This represents a marked difference in method of disposition as compared with 1950. In 1950, 81.2 percent of the 213 dependency and neglect cases were handled officially and 18.8 percent unofficially.

Table IX. Dependency and Neglect Cases Classified
by Type of Disposition and Method of Disposition
Calendar Year 1951

Type of Disposition	Method of Disposition					
	Total		Official		Unofficial	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	156	100.0	83	100.0	73	100.0
Dismissed With or Without Warning or Adjustment	36	23.1	-	-	36	49.3
Held Open Without Further Action	38	24.4	20	24.1	18	24.7
Probation Officer to Supervise	3	1.9	3	3.6	-	-
Committed or Referred to:						
Public Institution for Delinquent Children	1	0.6	1	1.2	-	-
Other Public Institution	5	3.2	5	6.0	-	-
Other Court	2	1.3	2	2.4	-	-
Public Department	6	3.8	5	6.0	1	1.4
Private Agency or Institution	27	17.3	25	30.2	2	2.7
Other Disposition	38	24.4	22	26.5	16	21.9

SPECIAL PROCEEDINGS

Reason for Referral

There were 128 special proceedings cases referred during 1951 from the four reporting courts compared to 25 cases reported in 1950 from three reporting courts. The two most common reasons for referral during 1951 were adoption proceedings and "other" representing 68 percent and 25.7 percent of the cases respectively. Of the total special proceedings cases 93.7 percent were handled officially and 6.3 percent unofficially. Because of the limited number of special proceeding cases reported in 1950, no comparison can be made between the two years.

Table X. Special Proceedings Cases Classified as to Reason for Referral and by Method of Disposition
Calendar Year 1951

Reason for Referral	Method of Disposition					
	Total		Official		Unofficial	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	128	100.0	120	100.0	8	100.0
Injury to Person	1	0.8	1	0.8	-	-
Lack of Adequate Care or Support	2	1.6	2	1.7	-	-
Physically Handicapped	2	1.6	2	1.7	-	-
Commitment of Mentally Defective Children	3	2.3	3	2.5	-	-
Adoption Proceedings	87	68.0	86	71.6	1	12.5
Other	33	25.7	26	21.7	7	87.5

Source of Referral

The most frequent source of referral was social agencies (78.1 percent) followed by "other source" (14.9 percent) by police (3.9 percent) and by parents or relatives (3.1 percent).

Type of Disposition

Slightly over 95 percent of the special proceeding cases were disposed of either by the child being committed or referred to a private agency or institution or were classified as "other disposition". Other dispositions include: runaway child returned; fine, costs or restitution; and adoption petition granted. Five types of disposition; held open without further action, probation officer to supervise, public institution for delinquent children, other public institution, and other court, accounted for only six cases.

Adoptive Children

During 1951 there were 88 adoptions reported by the three courts at Fargo, Devils Lake, and Grand Forks. Because we do not have any information regarding the characteristics of the 12 adoptive children reported by the court at Grand Forks, the characteristics which follow concern only the 75 children reported by the Fargo court and the one child reported by the Devils Lake court. With the exception of one child referred by "other source", all the adoptive children reported by the two courts at Fargo and Devils Lake were referred to the court by a social agency.

Of the 76 adoptive children reported by the courts at Fargo and Devils Lake 52.6 percent were male and 47.4 percent were female. The oldest child reported was a female five years old. Nearly nine out of every ten adoptive children reported (89.5 percent) were less than one year of age. (See Table XI.)

Table XI. Adoptive Children Classified by Age at Time of Referral and by Sex
Calendar Year 1951

Age at Time of Referral	Sex					
	Total		Male		Female	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	76	100.0	40	52.6	36	47.4
Less Than 1 Year	68	89.5	36	47.4	32	42.1
1 Year	3	4.0	2	2.6	1	1.4
2 Years	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 Years	2	2.6	-	-	2	2.6
4 Years	2	2.6	2	2.6	-	-
5 Years	1	1.3	-	-	1	1.3