

Characteristics of Child and Juvenile Crime and Prevention Options

Ákos Gellért CZUKOR*, University of Pécs, Faculty of Law, Doctoral School (Hungary)
czukor.akos2000@gmail.com



<https://orcid.org/0009-0006-0374-5560>

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study is to present the crime prevention system of Hungary, with a particular focus on how effective alternative prevention tools can be used in reducing the number of crimes committed by juveniles. The paper deals with the definition and conceptual elements of crime prevention in detail. In addition to explaining the goals and principles of prevention, the levels of crime prevention often interpreted by legal scholars from a different perspective are also discussed. The research results based on the analysis of the valid Hungarian legal sources and the literature on the topic show that juvenile delinquency is a current problem in Hungary, the effective and long-term treatment of which is not ensured only by narrowly interpreted legal methods. It is also necessary to develop and put into practice alternative preventive tools that have a positive effect on the internal values of the juvenile. The causes and characteristic features of juvenile delinquency, the prevention options are also featured, with particular emphasis on the valid Hungarian national strategies and the institution of aftercare.

Keywords: Crime Prevention; Alternative Methods; Juvenile Delinquency; Preventive Tools; Aftercare.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's social life, we are increasingly surrounded by crime and an endless chain of violations of legal and moral norms. Reading the radio, television, and print media, we are confronted daily with serious crimes and their tragic consequences. Crime is taking more and more diverse forms, while the organization and the number of new criminal groups are rapidly and globally spreading. It is also seen that law and

* Corresponding author



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politics try to curb crime from many aspects. The focus of this investigation is on childhood and juvenile offenders. However, before detailing the crime characteristics and possible crime prevention solutions related to them, it is essential to present the basic characteristics of crime prevention, since without this, we would not be able to explain the prevention strategies for juvenile crime with sufficient precision and apply them in practice. The research method is the analysis of the valid Hungarian legal sources and the literature on the topic.

2. The basics of crime prevention

2.1 Basic goals of crime prevention

The founder of the concept is the famous Italian jurist Cesare Beccaria, who believes that it is better to prevent crime than to punish it (Beccaria 1998, 91). We can say that crime prevention is the totality of state and non-state interventions against crime and the fear of crime. However, the definition is still not completely precise, as tools capable of influencing the social and individual causes and conditions of crime are also included (Németh 2020a, 15). Crime prevention - otherwise known as criminal prophylaxis - is one of the main branches of criminology. Starting from the middle of the 20th century, the tendency seems to be to strengthen that instead of strictly punishing the perpetrators of crimes, it is necessary to focus on prevention, this can lead to stopping and reducing crime (Vigh & Földvári 1982, 195). The school of social protection and representatives of the mediation school clearly explained the social consequences of criminality, and many proposals were made for treatment outside the criminal justice system. The main idea of crime prevention is to map preventive elements and factors and to put them into practice in order to achieve visible and effective results in the field of crime prevention within the framework of a social level cooperation. These are general measures aimed at curbing crime. We can talk about strategies that reduce the scope and danger of criminality, the focus of which is the product itself, that is, tangible improvement (Korinek 2010, 459).

If we examine the history and development of criminal law, we can see that the idea of crime prevention is as old as law enforcement, punishment, crime and execution. The permanent existence of these definitions cannot be disputed, only their interpretation and meaning have changed as a result of different ages and social perceptions. In the past, the prevailing view was that the most effective reaction to crimes is the use of repressive methods, that is, the perpetrator must be held accountable for committing the criminal act in a radical and retaliatory manner (Rosta 2006, 13). However, during the Enlightenment era, this coercion-centered view gradually lost its significance, and instead of retaliation, prevention, that is, a position with prevention in mind, became dominant. Preventive measures and educational methods have been developed. We can mention several legal scholars who approached the concept, significance and goals of crime prevention in different ways (Rosta 2006, 14).



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When defining this concept, it is worth focusing on the purpose of crime prevention. According to proponents of the relative punishment theory, "the purpose of punishment is usually in its usefulness and the prevention of new crimes. Thus, punishment is no longer an end in itself, but a means of prevention (*punitur, ne peccetur*). The meaning of punishment is only to prevent criminal acts in the future (Nagy & Tokaji 1998, 193)." Accordingly, we need to look for the concept of crime prevention in the more effective and earlier appearance of prevention than can be achieved by punishment. The fundamental purpose of crime prevention derives from the very concept of preventing members of society from committing crimes. Traditional criminology accordingly focuses on the criminal nature of offenders as a means of curbing crime. According to József Vigh, prevention should aim to change the circumstances from which crime feeds (Rosta 2006, 14). According to József Gödöny's view, crime prevention is based on effects that eliminate the causes of crime or limit their effectiveness, thereby making it impossible to commit crimes (Rosta 2006, 15). Situational crime prevention (SCP = Situational Crime Prevention) based on the latest scientific results aims to achieve these effects. As a multi-stage process, SCP seeks to understand where, when and how crimes occur. As in epidemiology, the aim here is to transform the environment in which criminal behaviour is absorbed, so that it is less susceptible to crime. The SCP approach (Lanier et al. 2014) identifies risk factors based on an analysis of the occurrence and distribution of a particular crime problem, formulates and implements appropriate solutions, and then evaluates the results. In this way, the individual "predisposition" of offenders, like individual diagnoses, becomes less important, at least as a means of prevention (Shariati & Guerette 2017, 261).

2.2 The basic principles of crime prevention

In order to understand the theoretical side of crime prevention, it is essential to say a few words about the basic principles. These are general principles and guiding principles that must be kept in mind when developing and implementing crime prevention strategies (Rosta 2006, 23). The most important principle of crime prevention is the rule of law and the requirement of constitutionality. This criterion includes respect for human rights, non-discrimination and the importance of the requirement of proportionality (Németh 2020a, 15). Crime prevention is first and foremost a state task or system of tasks, but individuals and communities must also be actively involved in the implementation of tasks (Németh 2020a, 15). As a third principle, Németh mentions that practical crime prevention is a local matter, typically a municipal responsibility (Németh 2020a, 15). Finally, it should be emphasized that crime is part of public life, so we cannot eliminate it completely, but we must strive to reduce it by various means and tactics (Németh 2020a, 15).



2.3 Levels of crime prevention

The general perception distinguishes three main levels of crime prevention:

1. The aim of primary prevention is to prevent the occurrence of forms of violent behavior. Primary prevention takes place before violence begins. It includes programs and strategies that aim to reduce the factors that threaten violence and encourage the factors that protect society from violence. This is aimed at the population as a whole, which activates the search for socio-political solutions. This includes all activities that contribute to curbing crime by increasing the population's sense of security and curbing deviant social phenomena. Here, the perpetrator and victim prevention strategies are not necessarily separated from each other. The aim is to intervene as early as possible, where all suspicious circumstances that suggest future crime must be eliminated (Juhász 2015, 6; Staggs & Schewe 2011, 237 – 257).

2. The concept of secondary prevention covers any effort to intervene among populations already at high risk to prevent violence from occurring. Prevention activities are no longer aimed at everyone in general, but only at those who permanently show a milder degree of deviance, show a tendency to commit crimes, and also at those who are endangered by these persons. Such measures include limiting the conditions conducive to violent behavior, for example through urban planning initiatives aimed at improving living standards; organizing leisure programs for violent adolescents or providing emergency services); development of society's competences by providing counseling services for handling conflicts within the family; and increasing social cohesion (Juhász 2015, 6; Kirk et al 2017). In the case of secondary crime prevention, we can say that the focus here is also on the period before the commission of the crime, but the scope of the target group narrows. In this case, the victim, the victim, is at the center of the measure (Cassel & Morris 2023, 5). Among the subjective reasons for becoming victimized, vulnerability, dependent relationship, lack of caution, carelessness, failure to protect the necessary property, irresponsibility, inattention, a prolonged conflict situation, inability to defend oneself deserve to be highlighted, while among the objective reasons, the indifference of the environment, neglect of the area, lack of illumination. All these reasons together helped the criminals to commit their crimes and contributed to the risk of becoming a victim. It is necessary to pay special attention to the prevention of the victimization of women, children and adolescents, the elderly, tourists, the disabled, as well as those in vulnerable positions, to the development of the protection mechanisms of the members of the group, and to the enhancement of their subjective sense of security. Members of this group are at increased risk due to their age, vulnerable position, weaker physical and psychological condition, and their role in society, and are therefore more likely to become targets of criminals or victims of crime (police.hu).

3. At the level of tertiary prevention, crime has already been realized, so the goal is to



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prevent recidivism (Németh 2020a, 17). Criminology here focuses on long-term care after acts of violence have occurred and efforts to prevent offenders from recidivism. These activities may include efforts to facilitate the rehabilitation of offenders and reduce recidivism, as well as efforts to support victims, such as the provision of traumatology counseling, and other health services. However, opinions differ on the effectiveness of different techniques, and the scientific debate on this is still ongoing (Kirk et al. 2017).

3. Characteristics of juvenile offenders, crime prevention options

3.1 Juvenile criminality as a special field of research

Juvenile criminality has been an integral part of domestic criminology from the beginning, just as it has been internationally. It became a separate, independent area for two main reasons. Primarily because of a radical change of attitude. In the 19th century, the idea that children form an independent social group became dominant. In short, they were no longer treated as "small adults". This separation was based on the recognition that juveniles have certain specific psychological and sociological traits unique to them (Rosta 2006, 103). Among other things, such a characteristic feature is the influencing power of the peer group, risk-seeking in certain life situations, and superficial human attachments. Such psychological and sociological factors may facilitate juvenile delinquency. In addition to the criminological aspect, this age group also has criminal law relevance, since the law regulates childhood as a reason for excluding criminality, and in the case of crimes committed by juveniles, the perpetrators are judged differently from adults. In other words, they are not exempted from their criminal liability. (Rosta 2006, 104). The new Criminal Code (Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code of Hungary) entered into force on 1 July 2013. According to Article 16 thereof, the legislator lowered the threshold of criminal liability for certain offences from the age of 14 to the age of 12. The question of the age of criminality has always been of widespread public interest and is still the subject of debate, since every decision in the field of criminal liability involves great responsibility and, above all, requires careful consideration (Halmosné Siket 2015, 116-225; Czédli – Deák 2015, 102 - 115). The reason for amending the law in the spirit of general prevention is to involve the widest possible segment of child offenders in the criminal justice system.

3.2 Characteristic features of child and juvenile crime

If we examine the different political, social and legal systems of the world, we can clearly see that child and juvenile crime is entangling the whole world and gaining more and more space for itself. However, in the case of crimes committed by children, we experience completely different characteristics than in the case of adults. The main characteristics here include the triviality and episodic nature of the crimes committed. In many cases, we can talk about group crimes committed by children in order to harm



their peers (Németh 2020b, 79). If we want to give a catchy, concise definition, child crime means criminal acts committed or suffered by children. Their crimes are characterized by low-value, low-importance, crimes committed against their parents and acquaintances (Németh 2020b, 80). Juvenile delinquency shows many differences compared to childhood delinquency. This age group primarily commits crimes against property, but drug abuse is also at the top of the ranking. The family circumstances of juveniles are often characterized by disintegration, and a large percentage of their crimes are carried out in groups (Németh 2020b, 82).

3.3. The main root causes

We can identify several root causes of child and juvenile crime. It is important to clarify this problem sufficiently, since we cannot deal with a given legal-social problem in an adequate way without revealing the underlying cause-and-effect relationships. For the first time, it is necessary to mention who we mean by criminally endangered young people. These are young people whose socialisation has been disrupted by certain micro- or macro-social circumstances and, as a result, they have to deal with integration problems. The causes of child and juvenile delinquency most often stem from the family environment. Estranged child-parent relationships, brutal treatment and early psychological trauma all act as psychosocial damaging factors for children and adolescents, who often become offenders as a result. (Németh 2020b, 85). Therefore, we can conclude that their criminality is primarily due to personality and the family environment, the role of external factors is only secondary. The literature and statistics clearly show that objective causes are an integral part of the development of child and juvenile crime. In most cases, it is the bad parenting strategy as well as the harmful friendly atmosphere that causes the youth to choose the sinful path. In recent years, however, objective factors have also come to the fore that were not previously included among the root causes of crimes committed by juveniles. Signs of change have also been seen in the intensity of juvenile delinquency, partly due to the disappearance of youth organisations that were a cohesive force and served educational purposes. Although smaller, mainly church, youth organizations and scout troops have appeared, they are not able to encompass the whole range of youth. The other new factor is unemployment, and with it insecurity (Szűcs, 2001, 374). Among the subjective causes of juvenile delinquency, the rejection of social norms, material gain, sexuality, revenge, and the individual's inherent criminal tendency, which in many cases are strengthened by a family or group of friends leading a criminal lifestyle, are of course in the lead (Szűcs, 2001, 375).



3.4. Crime prevention options against child and juvenile criminals

As it was already explained at the beginning of the study, the central idea of crime prevention can be understood not in strict retaliation, but in effective treatment and social reintegration. It is necessary to develop and apply legal and extralegal methods and tactics, which in the long term and effectively serve to ensure that the offender always chooses the legal path instead of the criminal path. It is therefore necessary to enforce such attitude-shaping alternatives that aim at the offender's personality development and improving his value system.

3.4.1. The role of education and upbringing in crime prevention

The most important place in the life of children and adolescents is school. In addition to teaching and training children, educational institutions are the venue for many personal relationships and experiences. Friendships for the first lifetime often happen at school. Instead of an excessively large amount of lexical material, more serious attention should be paid to solving human relationships and social problems (Csapó 2015, 4 – 17). The way of life of teachers and students burdened with high class numbers also does not contribute to the "problem youth" receiving attention and help (Fejes 2020, 227). From my point of view, it would be necessary to hold thematic days and programs in the classes on a monthly basis, where specialists conduct sensitizing trainings and group sessions. As a result, students would show more interest in real social values, and the causes of crime would be pushed into the background. In addition to education, education also plays an important role in crime prevention. Nowadays, the pedagogic approach has become stronger, according to which a person who is not capable of social integration must be enlightened about social norms and rules of coexistence. Countless alternatives are available, the application of which could lead to concrete results in crime prevention. The primary focus should be on empowering communities to be accepting and cooperative towards people who are unable to integrate (Németh 2020b, 89). Secondly, the target audience needs to be made aware of the nature of various deviant behaviors and actions and their direct consequences. For this to work effectively, it would also be essential in the training of teachers to teach knowledge about deviations to an increased extent (Németh 2020b, 90).

3.4.2 The role of child protection warning systems

Members of the child protection alert system play an important role in crime prevention. We can talk about a cooperation system that child protection services operate together with health and educational institutions. The legal norm that created the signaling system, „Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration (Sections 92 - 93)” clearly states that children have the right to be raised in a family, and they also have the right to avoid situations that threaten their proper



development (Németh 2020b, 90). This is also regulated by Paragraph 1(1): "The purpose of this Act is to lay down the basic rules according to which the state, local governments and natural and legal persons protecting children, as well as other organizations without legal personality, shall provide assistance with specific benefits and measures to enforce the rights and interests of children set out in the Act and to fulfil parental duties, and ensure the prevention and elimination of child vulnerability, the replacement of missing parental care and the social integration of young adults who have left child protection care." The child protection alert system is a cooperation system operated by child welfare services with health and educational institutions and various authorities. Its purpose is to promote the upbringing of the child in the family, to prevent and eliminate the risk of children being at risk. The operation of the child protection warning system is a state and local government task. The child protection alert system is a law-based cooperative and mutual information system, where the main mission is to recognize the problem as early as possible and manage the effects as effectively as possible. We can say that nowadays it would be necessary to enforce this system more effectively in many respects, since the signaling system could play a major role in committing crimes and mitigating damage. It could also have a serious impact on the development of a sense of responsibility, the establishment of trust in professionals and the sensitization of the family-friendly environment. In recent years, several ombudsman reports have dealt with the shortcomings of the signaling system in connection with child endangerment and abuse, drawing attention to the following problems. These are primarily the lack of cooperation of the members of the signaling system; lack of training and continuing education on child abuse; the small role played by family doctors and family pediatricians in the child protection signaling system; the lack of attitude of family doctors and family pediatricians regarding the prevention of child abuse; the non-sanction of refusing nursing care; the prolongation of the admission procedure for (transitional) education; the taboo nature of sexual abuse; failure to recognize sexual abuse, lack of skills; the lack of adequate staff and expertise required to perform the tasks of institutions providing protection; and dysfunctions attributable to deficiencies in material and personal conditions. (Constitutional Court Decision No. AJB-2227/2010; AJB 2031/2011; AJB-7903/2013; AJB-4239/2016).

3.4.3. The presence of the police in the world of crime prevention

As a third factor, the police should be singled out as an organization that takes an active role in crime prevention. In Hungary, crime prevention became one of the tasks of the police relatively late, only after the change of regime. Despite the fact that representatives of the sciences of sociology and criminology drew attention to its importance as early as the 1970s, it was not until 1989 that the Crime Prevention Departments were formed as a new organizational unit for this special activity (Medve 2014, 65). Unfortunately, however, in Hungary, the police place too much emphasis on law enforcement, so child protection aspects and factors are often incomplete. It



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would be necessary to develop or expand the police toolbox with child protection tools that directly aim to eliminate endangerment and increase public safety. These activities include street social work and a youth spiritual aid telephone line. The police could strengthen the prevention of child and juvenile crime from many aspects. It is necessary to create internal regulations that specify what needs to be done in a given child protection situation. Furthermore, during the professional qualification of the police, system-based discipline and qualification should be sought so that the person working in child protection develops the ability to cooperate and recognize danger (Molnár 2008, 74–93).

3.4.4. Crime prevention at the local level

Local governments and civil society also play an important role in crime prevention, stressing the importance of social cooperation. The involvement of the population in crime control is a phenomenon that can be experienced in almost all systems (Korinek 2010, 488). According to the National Strategy for Social Crime Prevention, an effective response to the trials of criminality can only be achieved through a crime prevention strategy formulated as a local public issue (Korinek 2010, 492). Local governments – as the central actors of local public administration – manage and coordinate local crime prevention. Its toolbox is very diverse: it functions as an advisory board, proposes methods, performs legislative and settlement organizing tasks, the aim of which is to improve public safety. The local governments prepared their own crime prevention concepts, in line with the social strategy. These concepts serve to suppress crime and strengthen public safety. In connection with the guidelines adopted by the Parliament, these local government strategies, in addition to increasing urban security, place great emphasis on helping victims and reducing youth crime (Korinek 2010, 493).

3.4.5. Measures of the Probation Service in the crime prevention system

Finally, in relation to the treatment of child and juvenile delinquents, the activities of the Probation Service should be mentioned. The legal status of the institution is governed by „8/2013. (VI. 29.) Ministry of Culture and Innovation decree on the activities of the Probation Service”. The main purpose of the organ is to prevent and reduce the risk of reoffending children and juveniles. In performing his duties, he strives to ensure that the imposed criminal law consequences are fully enforced and to increase the chances of social reintegration. In the new forms of the Probation Service, increasing the offender's sense of responsibility plays a major role. In many cases, with the consent of the offender, the court can require participation in professional training, continuation of school studies, and medical treatment (Gönczöl 1994, 188). During their work, probation officers always strive to prioritize the best interests of children and juveniles. In addition to the protection of the community and restorative justice, they also take extra care to meet the needs of the victims and take responsibility (Protection



Supervisor Service). Probation officers write environmental studies and probation officers' opinions to obtain personal and specific information. They regularly monitor the behaviour and living conditions of the juvenile, thereby coming into direct contact with the juvenile and his environment. The main goal of probation activities is to enable minors to reintegrate into society as soon and efficiently as possible, by normalizing their community relations (Rosta 2014, 282). Preventive protection is a child protection measure based on the application of the expertise and tools of judicial probation officers and child protection specialists, which was introduced on January 1, 2015. Its aim is to enforce early intervention in the treatment of juvenile delinquency. The procedure for ordering preventive protection is initiated on the basis of an indication of the suspicion of a crime, a violation punishable by imprisonment, or the actual conduct of the person. The guardianship authority decides on the order of preventive protection in the procedure for admission to protection or review of admission to protection, which is mandatory if the probation officer assesses the child's vulnerability from a crime prevention point of view to a high degree in the environmental study supplemented with risk assessment. During the period of preventive patronage, the child and his/her legal representative are obliged to maintain contact with the preventive probation officer or the case manager of the family and child welfare centre, in addition to which the guardianship authority may impose additional obligations on the child and his/her family as a rule of conduct (Bear 2022, 61 – 62). The legal institution is regulated in detail by „Section 68/D of Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration (Sections 92 - 93)” "(1) The guardianship authority, in proceedings for protection initiated due to the commission of a crime or a violation punishable by imprisonment, or in addition to the already existing protection following the notification, he contacts the probation service for environmental studies and crime prevention of child endangerment for the purpose of obtaining a risk assessment (hereinafter: risk assessment)."

3.4.6. Other supporting bodies

Finally, we should mention the set of institutions and organizations that do not directly belong to the justice system, but are connected to criminals through their work, and thus play an active role in child and youth protection, as well as education. Here we need to mention the guardianship authorities and child protection services (Rosta 2014, 289 - 290). The Guardianship Authority decides on the removal of the child from the family, the placement with the other parent, and the review of temporary placement. If necessary, he appoints a guardian and monitors the contact between the child and the relative entitled to contact, and the payment of maintenance. „149/1997. (IX. 10.) Government Decree on Guardianship Authorities and Child Protection and Guardianship Procedure” regulates it thoroughly.

Examining the justice system, it can be clearly established that these prosecutors' offices, courts, and correctional institutions (§ 120 - 122 of the Civil Code) and



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penitentiaries (§ 124/A of the Civil Code) play an important role in curbing child and juvenile crime. too. Education in a correctional institution is ordered by the court if placement in an institution is necessary for the effective education of the juvenile. Correctional institution education cannot be ordered against a person who has reached the age of 20 at the time of the final decision (Act C of 2012 on the Criminal Code of Hungary 120. § (1)).

3.5 The role of the National Crime Prevention Strategy in curbing the criminal lifestyle

The 1291/2023 (VII. 19.) Government Decree on the National Crime Prevention Strategy (2024–2034) and the National Crime Prevention Strategy 2024–2025” clearly states the most important crime prevention measures under child and youth protection. He first mentions the maintenance of child and youth protection campaigns and prevention programs. The measures are based on the recognition that they are a specifically vulnerable age group, who, due to their age, are characterized by inexperience and the search for challenges. Pursuant to the decision, it is necessary to introduce new communication tools and pedagogical methods, as well as to hold campaigns and interactive presentations. In addition, the involvement of peer groups can also achieve great results in terms of crime prevention, since teenagers often ignore the advice they receive from adults. However, through an advanced peer support training, the young person can open up more easily, and there is a greater chance that his personality will develop in a positive direction. Strengthening the protection function of families is of particular importance. Families have a primary role in conveying values, so their proper protection is essential. However, this often requires external support through training and projects that provide appropriate external assistance from organizations that are aware of local issues. Finally, the decision emphasizes the operation of programs aimed at preventing the victimization of children and adolescents receiving basic child welfare and child protection services, as well as supporting the social integration of young people raised in disadvantaged situations. In the case of the latter, the essential objective is the development of the given young person's personality with pedagogical and psychological means, and their successful reintegration into society and the labor market (1291/2023. (VII. 19.) Government Decree on the National Crime Prevention Strategy (2024–2034) and the National Crime Prevention Strategy 2024–2025.).

Summarizing the above, we can say that both criminal and extralegal means play a major role in curbing and reducing crimes committed by children and juveniles. We can mention education as the main social tool. Family, workplace, and school education also greatly influence the personality development of offenders (Vigh – Földvári 1982, 199). These factors can be interpreted not only as a potential means of crime prevention, but also play a major role in causing child and juvenile crime. The most frequently



occurring objective causes include family problems – an alcoholic family environment, harsh parental treatment, incorrect upbringing and the wrong group of friends (Szűcs, 2001, 374). In addition to education, the idea that forming the right public opinion and raising awareness among the population is essential in order for the population to reject actions dangerous to society as widely as possible. Without this, it cannot be achieved in practice for the members of society to realize that the fight against crime is not only the mission of the criminal justice system and law enforcement agencies, but a task at the social level that requires civil cooperation. The mass media and the media play a major role in the formation and shaping of public opinion. When analyzing the content of the news programs, it can be observed that televisions do not pay enough attention to the news of the wider world. Unfortunately, this is also true for important events of public interest affecting larger strata (Garamvölgyi 2015, 264). Instead of the former, we encounter a lot of tabloid news on a daily basis, which we may think are interesting, they engage us, but at the same time they distract us from important events that serve a conscious worldview and also play a role in crime prevention. It would be necessary to broadcast such attention-grabbing thematic programs, newspaper articles, and online media content on a daily basis, which, broken down by age groups, effectively invite the population to take an active role in the field of crime prevention. In my opinion, conscious media consumption is the basic guarantee for the formation of a positive attitude in society, which inculcates the idea, both at the individual and community level, that the happiness of human existence cannot be found through the commission of illegal acts, but in honest social relationships, and useful in spending free time.

3.6. The institution of aftercare

The institution of aftercare should be mentioned as an outstanding state instrument for crime prevention. By aftercare we mean measures applied by state and social bodies, which are implemented in order to support the social reintegration of persons released from prison. In my view, in the case of child and juvenile offenders, this social instrument is highly emphasized, since it is often necessary, given their age group, to control the effectiveness with which they fit back into their communities following their release from custodial sentences. In the case of minors in foster care, extensive state support and the control and supervision of convicts are essential conditions for newly released minors to become useful members of society and law-abiding citizens. (Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children and Guardianship Administration (Sections 92 - 93); 15/1998. (IV. 30.) National Economy Ministry of Hungary Decree on the Professional Duties and Conditions of Operation of Child Welfare and Child Protection Institutions and Persons Providing Personal Care (Sections 92 - 93); 328/2011. (XII. 29.) Govt. decree on the reimbursement fee for basic child welfare benefits and child protection specialist benefits providing personal care and the evidence that can be used to claim them; 149/1997. (IX.10.) Government Decree on the Guardianship Authorities



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and the Child Protection and Guardianship Procedure (§ 121 - § 126); 331/2006. (XII.23.) Government Decree on the Performance of Child Protection and Guardianship Tasks and Powers, as well as the Organization and Competence of the Guardianship Authority). In the 21st century, the probation officer is at the center of the juvenile justice system. Acting in his complex duties, he assesses, identifies, classifies, coordinates, advises, encourages and coerces in order to reduce the risk of recidivism, to instill responsibility and increase the chances of young people (Dávid 2013, 54).

4- Conclusion

Briefly summarizing the above, it can be concluded that child and juvenile crime is a rapidly spreading global problem that crosses borders, the long-term and effective management of which requires the practical application of tactics and tools that focus on restoration and treatment instead of strict retaliation. In all cases, the criminological cause-and-effect relationships must be investigated, and the appropriate crime prevention method must always be implemented starting from the root of the problem. In order to deter juvenile offenders and judge them with better judgment, it is advisable to hold alternative, often non-criminal, trainings, programs and trainings whose language and style are close to the adolescent age group and are able to touch the young person in question. As a result, he develops a point of view that instead of committing crimes, he can always choose another option. Effective crime prevention projects and prevention events can achieve results that move the personality and values of child and juvenile offenders in the right direction and discourage them from committing behaviour that is in conflict with the criminal code. I conclude my investigation with the thought of Benjamin Franklin. In my opinion, this short quote adequately illustrates the importance of preventive thinking: "A drop of prevention is worth as much as a glass of antidote." (Robbins 2023, 468).

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