

# Behavior Management Systems: Measuring Progress and Assessing Risk among Youth in a Honduran Children's Home

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## Study Purpose

- Evaluate a behavior management system being implemented at a Honduran children's home.
- Explore the use of the point-and-level system as a tool for measuring children's progress and assessing their risk for unsafe behaviors.
- Provide the agency with information about children's behavioral patterns over a period of 18 months.
- Understand patterns around unsafe, high-risk behaviors.

## Study Site

- ❑ The data for this study was provided by a children's home located in Honduras, Central America.
- ❑ The children's home provides education, health care, and a family-style environment to up to 50 children and youth, 3-21 years old.

## Background



- Approximately 180,000 children live in orphanages in Honduras.
- Children who come into the care of orphanages often have complex mental health and emotional needs and may present behavioral problems that are challenging to address, especially given limited resources and shortage of clinical staff available.
- Conflicting conclusions exist around the benefits of point-and-level systems.
- No literature was found on the use of behavior management system data as a tool for assessing risk.
- While a variety of ethnic groups of children are represented in some studies, none focus on the adaptation or implementation of a behavior management system for use with children in Latin America or other international settings.

## Method

### DESIGN

Quantitative, descriptive, longitudinal (panel)

Children's points were examined over a period of 18 months

Data was separated into three 6-month periods in order to observe changes over time

### Measurement

- Secondary-data analysis
- Children's behavior on each item was rated on a scale of 1 (lowest) - 5 (highest)
- Average weekly point ratings on 20 different ratable goals were calculated, i.e., remaining supervised, honesty, respecting physical limits, and doing homework.
- A note was made in the weekly data indicating significant incidents of "high-risk" behavior.

Reliability was high,  $\alpha = .987$

## Sample

All children residing in the home who were evaluated, ages 7-18, were included in the study (N=33).

Table 1. Gender (N = 33)

Gender	N	Percent
Male	17	51.5%
Female	16	48.5%
Total	33	100%

Table 2. Age (N = 33)

Age	N	Percent
7-11 years	12	36.4%
12-14 years	10	30.3%
15-18 years	11	33.3%
Total	33	100%

## Findings

Chart 1. Progress Across Time Periods

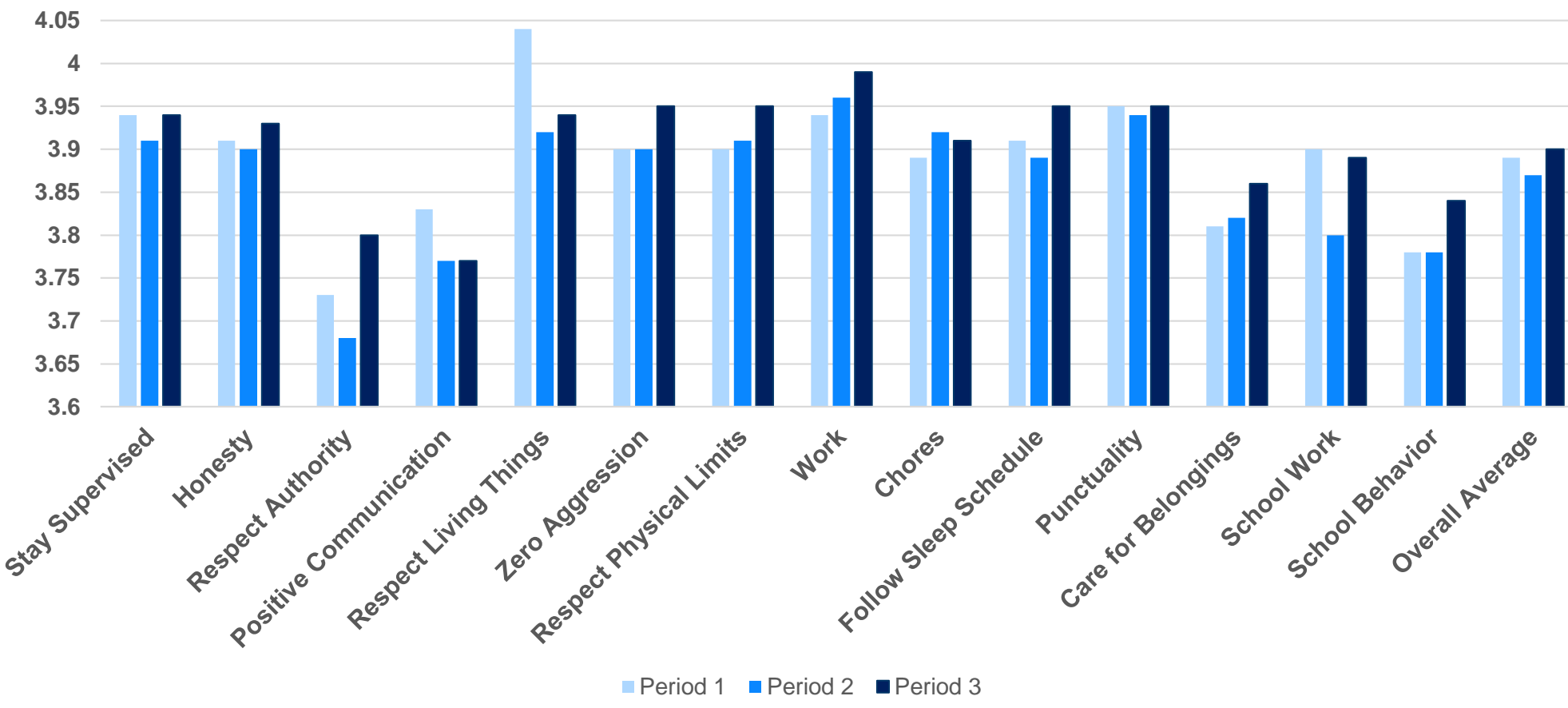


Chart 2. Number of High-Risk Behaviors

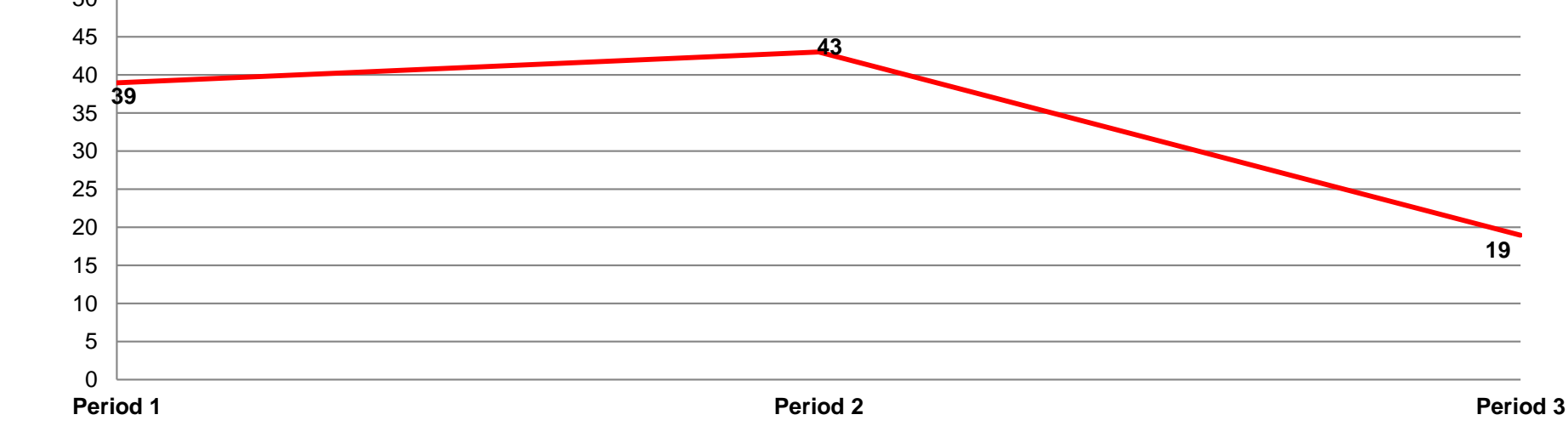


Chart 3. Types of High-Risk Behaviors

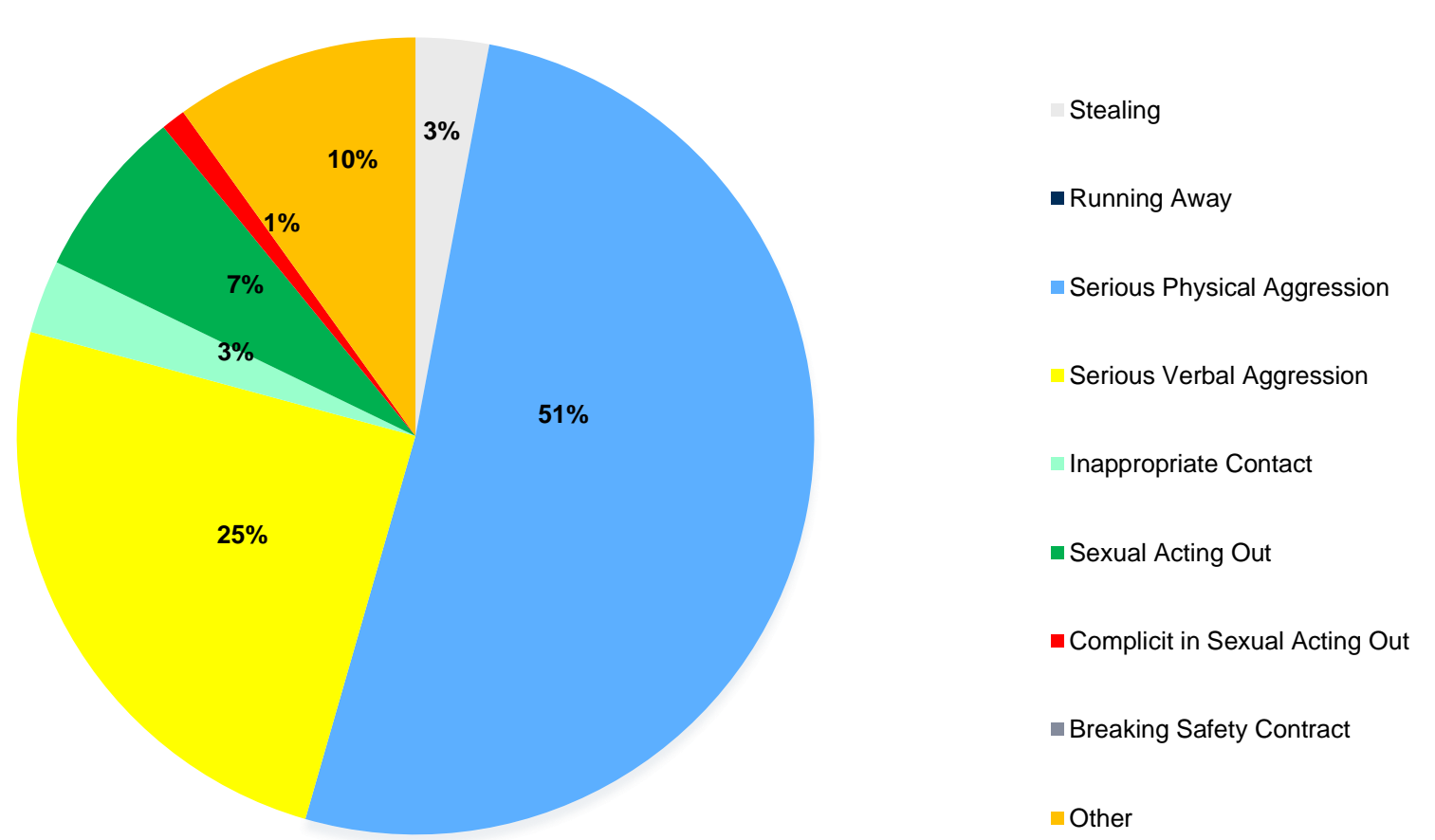
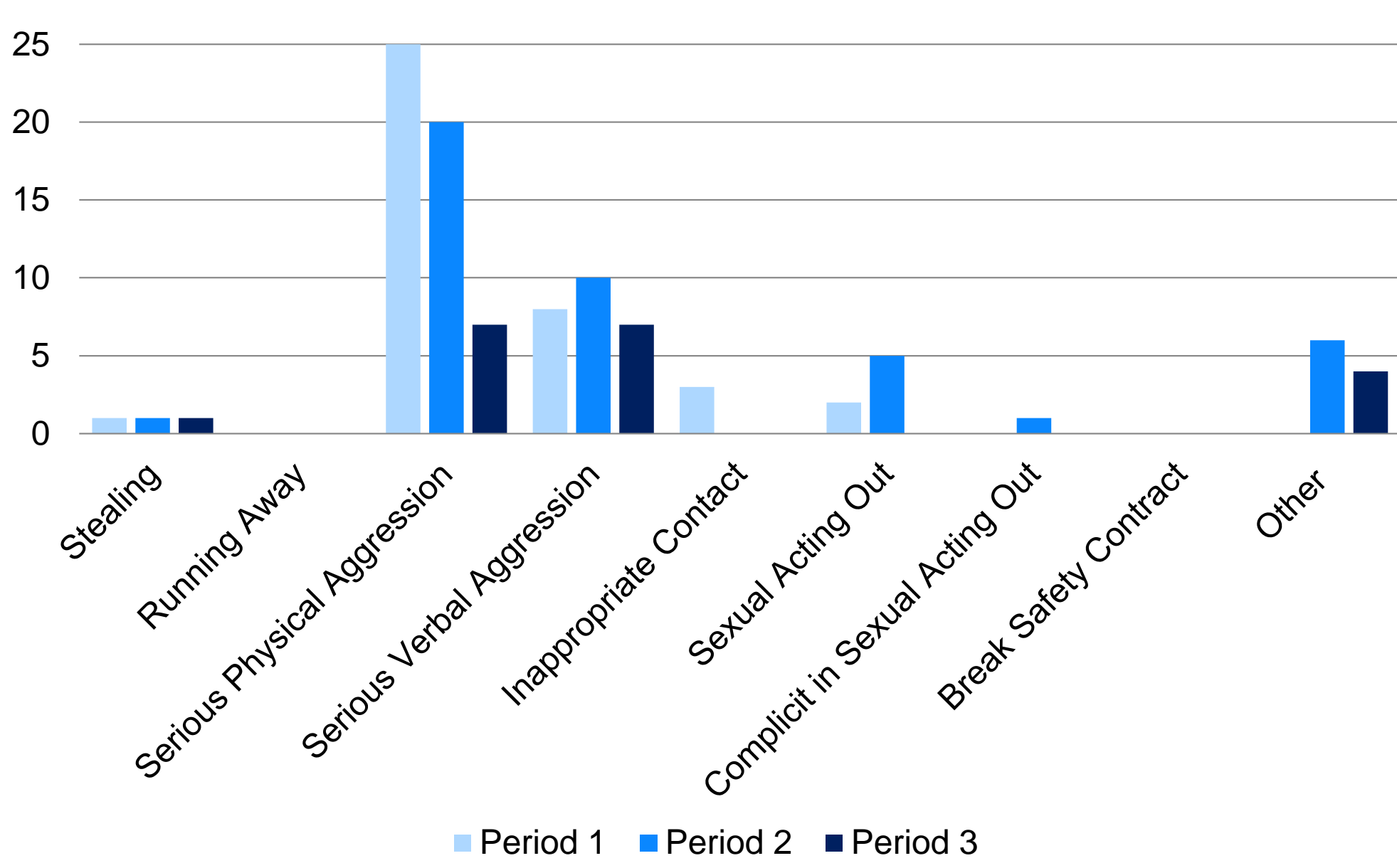


Chart 4. Types of High-Risk Behaviors Across Time Periods



Pearson's Correlation (r):  
Number of High-Risk Behaviors by Ratable Goals

	Stay Supervised	Respect Authority	Zero Aggression	Physical Limits	Work	Punctuality	Care for Belongings	Overall Average
Total Number of High-Risk Behavior								
Pearson Correlation	-.724**	-.799**	-.791**	-.795**	-.847**	-.803**	-.706**	-.723**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
N	33	33	33	33	21	21	33	33

## Findings (cont.)

Table 3. Mean Number of High-Risk Behaviors by Gender (N = 33)

	Boys (n = 16)	Girls (n = 17)
Number of High-Risk Behaviors	M = 4.94, SD = 6.31	M = 1.29, SD = 2.31

$t = -2.177, df = 18.751, p < 0.001$

## Discussion

- Children's ratings improved over time
- The greatest improvements were in respecting authority and work ethic.
- Ratings generally worsened before they improved. Number of high-risk behaviors followed the same pattern.
- Majority of high-risk behaviors were physical and verbal aggression.
- There were no incidents of running away or breaking a safety contract.
- High-Risk behaviors were negatively correlated with ratings on all goals, particularly work, punctuality, respecting authority, and respecting physical limits.
- Boys were significantly more likely to have high-risk behaviors than girls.
- Pattern is consistent with the literature

## Implications

- Behavior Management System data can be used as a tool to evaluate progress and assess risk among children and youth.
- Findings on behavioral patterns can be shared with agencies and group-care settings.
- Information can be used to inform interventions and target prevalent high-risk behaviors.
- Behavior Management Systems can be adapted for use in a variety of settings across cultures.

## Acknowledgements

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