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There are many predictors and risk factors that lead up to a child committing acts of delinquency. A risk factor is anything that increases the chances of a person suffering harm. A protective factor is something that decreases the potential harmful effect of a risk factor. Many of these factors are what separate a child that does not commit acts of delinquency from one that does. Many of the risk factors and protective factors are based upon the individual, the parents of the child, the school, community, and peer group. On an individual level, if a child suffers from psychological problems, aggression, or risk taking behaviors he/she is more likely to commit acts of delinquency. On the other hand, if an individual has a higher IQ, he/she has positive social orientation, and has an intolerant attitude towards deviance these are considered to be protective factors. Family background and behaviors are a big determinant of whether or not a child becomes a delinquent as well. The number of children in the family can be a risk factor. The more children in a family, the more likely a child is to commit a crime because he/she may have less supervision and the parents may lack discipline skills for all the children. The parents’ acts of delinquency could also be a factor. If a mother or father committed acts of delinquency as a child this could potentially pass from generation to generation. In addition, how much attention a child receives at home by his/her parents is a very crucial determinant on whether or not they participate in illegal behaviors. For example, if a child receives no attention at home and is often left alone, he/she is more likely to be a delinquent. In addition, if parents are not involved in the child’s life this could also play a part. Parents need to be involved in a child’s schoolwork, after school activities, and hobbies. If a child has a poor attitude about school and education this is also considered a risk factor. But, if a child actively engages in school and is committed to his/her education then this is considered to be a protective factor. In regards to friends and neighborhood ties, if a young individual secludes him/herself and has weak social ties this may be detrimental. If a child has strong ties with friends who engage in conventional behavior this is a protective factor.

In my opinion, these factors are very good at determining whether or not a child has the potential to commit acts of delinquency throughout childhood, but I do not think we should solely rely on them or stereotype in any way. Personally, I grew up very poor and came from a home where my mother raised three children by herself. My mother was not always home because she was working to try and provide for our family. But, in the time that she was home she raised my siblings and I to be good people and instilled in us what we should value in life. I think this is what sets apart me from a criminal. I am not in jail right now because I was taught right from wrong, and I truly believe you can be taught this even if not raised in ideal circumstances. I also believe that a huge protective factor is having a support system. Although my mother may not have always been home, I still knew how much she cared about me and wanted the best for me. In addition, I had many friends who had good families and I also had an extended family that stepped in to help out in many circumstances. Once children reach the age of knowing right from wrong, they are the determinant of their futures, not their risk factors or what they have been previously exposed to.