However we conceptualise the changes, it is clear there were fundamental shifts during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the relationship between young people and the law. There was a separate method of punishment for young people, including new penal institutions and greater surveillance at home and in the community through probation officers. Separate sentencing regimes were established, including the use of indeterminate sentencing. Separate children's courts were established, not only to determine criminal matters but also to assess neglect and welfare matters. Particular practices were also seen as appropriate in dealing with young people who came before the courts, particularly the use of social-background reports. Partly as a response to changes in legislation and developments in policing, and partly as a result of the existence of separate children's courts, there was an increase in the number of young people prosecuted and brought formally into the justice system. Finally, there were gendered approaches to the application of the new forms of controlling young people. Understanding the foundation and historical development of juvenile justice is particularly important at a time when much of the contemporary literature focuses on narrow empirical studies of crime causation and particular programs (Platt 2008:126).

The developments in juvenile justice can be further understood by the theoretical developments in criminology. We have referred on a number of occasions in this chapter to developments in classification, new disciplines, and changes in thinking about young people. In the following chapter, we explore the developments of criminological theory and various explanations for juvenile offending.