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## ABSTRACT

This report offers the Congress, state legislators, and other state and local policymakers, professors and teachers, juvenile justice professionals, and concerned citizens solid answers to the most frequently asked questions about the nature of juvenile crime and victimization and about the justice system's response. Citing FBI and other data sources, this report demonstrates that the rate of juvenile violent crime arrests - after peaking in 1994 - has consistently decreased over the past several years. However, it has yet to return to the 1988 level, the year in which dramatic increases in juvenile crime arrests were first seen. This report also summarizes data on school violence and describes the recent downturn in the violent victimization of youth. New findings from the 1997 National Longitudinal Study of Youth, providing the most current data on self-reported delinquent and antisocial behavior, are included in this report. Data from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's new national Census of Juveniles in Residential Placements, summarizing key findings about the characteristics of juvenile offenders in custody are also presented. Each of the seven chapters includes several tables and figures as well as a list of references. An index is also provided. (MKA)

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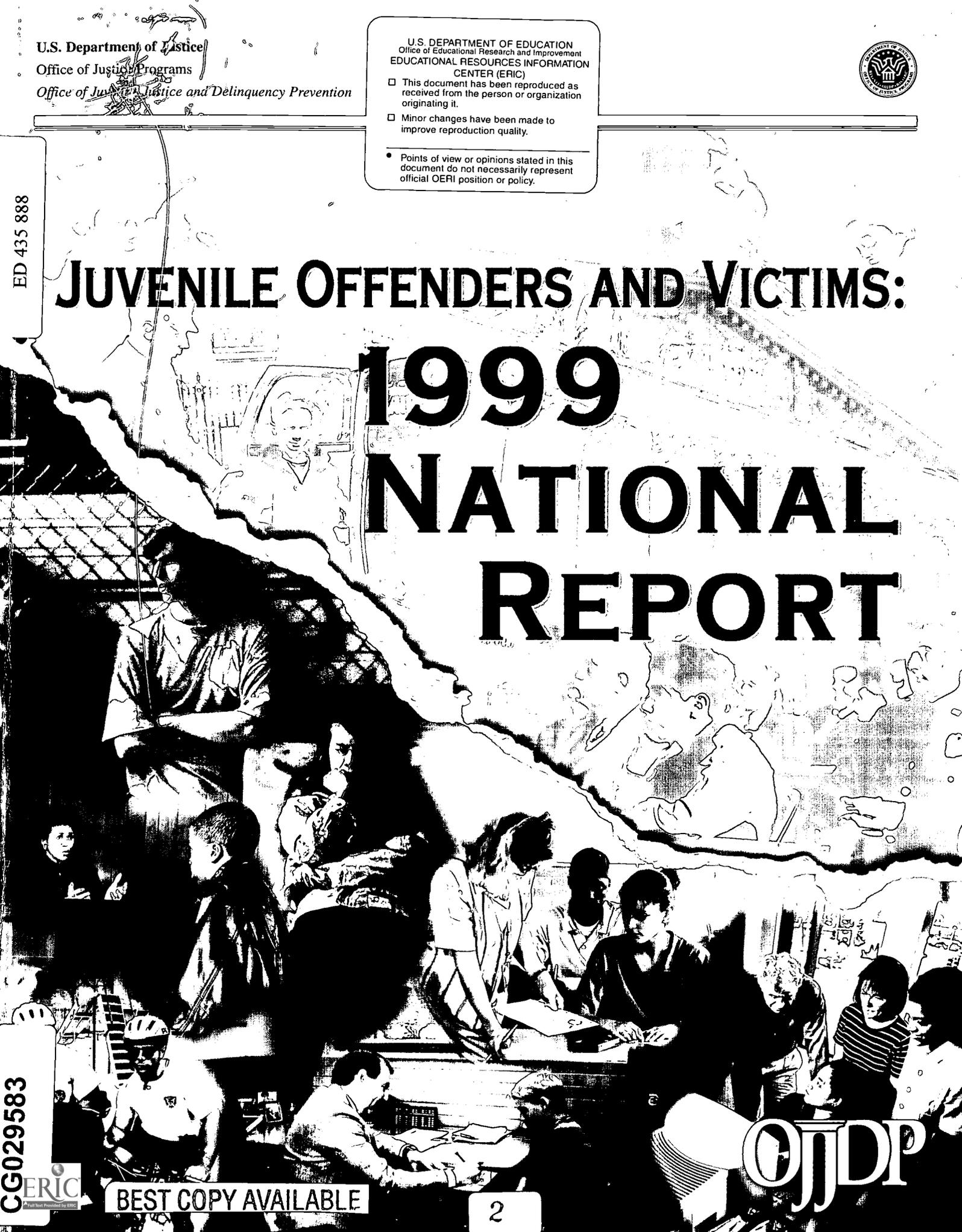
# JUVENILE OFFENDERS AND VICTIMS: 1999 NATIONAL REPORT

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## How to learn more about the information in this report

This Report consolidates the most requested information on juvenile offenders and victims. Statistical information is presented in a user-friendly format. For that reason, explanations of methods are limited and bibliographic references are brief.

Data of national scope were used whenever they were available. If national data were not available, multijurisdictional data were used. Single-site data were used only when no multijurisdictional data were available.

Specific questions about the report as well as requests for information on the specific data sources, methods used, and the data points for the graphics should be directed to the authors at:

National Center for Juvenile Justice  
710 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-3000  
412-227-6950

### Additional copies of this Report are available from:

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Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
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Much of the information in this Report is available through the Internet on the **OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book**. The Briefing Book can be accessed from the OJJDP home page at [www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org) through the JJ Facts & Figures prompt. Users of this Report are encouraged to review the contents of the **Statistical Briefing Book** periodically. As updated or new information becomes available, the **Statistical Briefing Book** will be revised so that users can be assured access to the most current information on juvenile crime, juvenile offending, and the juvenile justice system.

## How to find more information on juvenile offenders and victims

More information on the topics covered in this Report is available from a number of government sources.

### Juvenile justice information is available through:

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
810 Seventh Street NW  
Washington, DC 20531  
202-307-5929  
[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org)

National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS):  
P.O. Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
[www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org)

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse  
800-638-8736 or 301-519-5500

Justice Statistics Clearinghouse  
800-732-3277 or 301-519-5500

ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse  
800-666-3332 or 301-519-5500

### Reported crime and arrest data are available from:

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Criminal Justice Information Services Division  
Clarksburg, WV  
304-625-4995  
[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

### Juvenile court data and State juvenile code statutes analyses are available from:

National Center for Juvenile Justice  
710 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-3000  
412-227-6950  
[www.ncjj.org](http://www.ncjj.org)

### Child maltreatment information is available through:

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information  
330 C Street SW  
Washington, DC 20447  
800-394-3366 or 703-385-7565  
[www.calib.com/nccanch](http://www.calib.com/nccanch)

## Information on runaway and homeless youth can be obtained through:

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth  
P.O. Box 13505  
Silver Spring, MD 20911-3505  
301-608-8098  
[www.ncfy.com](http://www.ncfy.com)

### Education data can be obtained through:

National Center for Education Statistics  
555 New Jersey Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20208  
800-424-1616 or 202-219-1828  
[www.nces.ed.gov](http://www.nces.ed.gov)

### Population and related information is available from:

Bureau of the Census  
Customer Services  
Washington, DC 20233-8300  
301-457-4100  
[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

### Labor data are available from:

Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Postal Square Building, Room 2850  
2 Massachusetts Avenue NE  
Washington, DC 20212-0001  
202-606-5886  
[www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

### Mortality and teen pregnancy data are available from:

National Center for Health Statistics  
Division of Vital Statistics  
6525 Belcrest Road  
Hyattsville, MD 20782  
301-436-8500  
[www.cdc.gov/nchswww](http://www.cdc.gov/nchswww)

### Traffic safety information is distributed by:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
400 Seventh Street SW  
Washington, DC 20590  
800-934-8517  
[www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)

### Public use data files of many justice data sets are available through:

National Archive of Criminal Justice Data—ICPSR  
P.O. Box 1248  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106  
800-999-0960 or 313-763-5010  
[www.icpsr.umich.edu/nacjd](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/nacjd)

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# **Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report**

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**Howard N. Snyder**

**Melissa Sickmund**

**National Center for Juvenile Justice**

**September 1999**

**Shay Bilchik, Administrator  
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

This Report was prepared by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and was supported by cooperative agreement #95-JN-FX-K008 with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

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# Foreword

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As America moves into the 21st century, we need to forge enlightened policies for our juvenile justice system—policies based on facts, not fears. While the pictures on our television screens and the photos on our front pages raise genuine concerns that we must address, this Report, drawing on reliable data and relevant research, provides a comprehensive and insightful view of the nature of juvenile crime and violence across the Nation.

*Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report* offers the Congress, State legislators and other State and local policymakers, professors and teachers, juvenile justice professionals, and concerned citizens solid answers to the most frequently asked questions about the nature of

juvenile crime and victimization and about the justice system's response.

Citing FBI and other data sources, the Report demonstrates that the rate of juvenile violent crime arrests—after peaking in 1994—has consistently decreased over the past several years. However, it has yet to return to the 1988 level, the year in which dramatic increases in juvenile crime arrests were first seen. The Report also summarizes data on school violence and describes the recent downturn in the violent victimization of youth.

New findings from the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, providing the most current data on self-reported delinquent and antisocial behavior, are included in the Report,

which also presents data from OJJDP's new national Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, summarizing key findings about the characteristics of juvenile offenders in custody.

In sum, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1999 National Report*, like its predecessors—*Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A National Report* (1995), *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: Update on Violence* (1996 and 1997), and *Juvenile Arrests 1997* (1998)—offers an indispensable resource for informed policy decisions that will shape the juvenile justice system in the 21st century by providing a clear view of juvenile crime and the justice system's response at the end of the 20th century.

**Shay Bilchik**  
Administrator

Office of Juvenile Justice and  
Delinquency Prevention

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# Chapter 1

## Juvenile population characteristics

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Juveniles in the United States today live in a world much different from that of their parents or grandparents. Problems experienced by children at the turn of the century are the products of multiple and sometimes complex causes. Data presented in this chapter indicate that in many ways conditions have improved in recent years, but only marginally. For example, the proportion of juveniles living in poverty has declined recently, but juveniles are still far more likely to live in poverty today than 20 years ago. Similarly, teenage birth rates have declined in recent years but still remain high. Fewer children are being

raised in two-parent families as well. Although high school dropout rates have fallen for most juveniles, the rates are still too high, especially in an employment market where unskilled labor is needed less and less.

This chapter presents a brief overview of some of the more commonly requested demographic, economic, and sociological statistics on juveniles. The sections summarize demographic and poverty data developed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, educational data from the National Center for Education Statistics, and birth statistics from the National Center for Health Statistics.



## In 1998, 70.2 million Americans—more than 1 in 4—were under age 18

### The juvenile population is increasing by less than other segments of the U.S. population

In 1998, more than 70 million persons in the United States were below age 18, the age group commonly referred to as *juveniles*. This represents 26% of the total U.S. resident population. The juvenile population fell to its lowest level in nearly three decades in 1984, to below 63 million individuals. Since that year, the juvenile population has increased gradually and is projected to do so well into the next century.

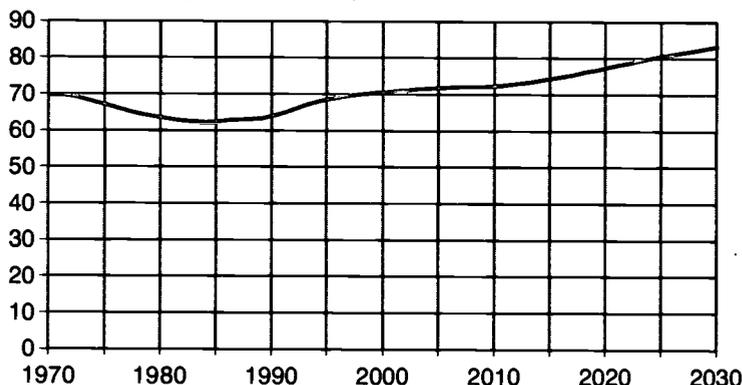
Media reports of future increases in juvenile crime are often tied to the anticipated growth in juvenile population. The U.S. Bureau of the Census has estimated that the juvenile population will grow 8% between 1995 and 2015. This increase appears relatively small compared to the increases in the other segments of the U.S. population during this period. Between 1995 and 2015, the number of persons ages 18 to 24 will increase 22%, persons ages 25 to 64 will increase 18%, and persons age 65 and older will increase 36%.

### Juvenile minority populations will show the greatest increases

Between 1995 and 2015, the number of black juveniles is expected to increase 19%, American Indian juveniles 17%, and Asian/Pacific Islander juveniles 74%, while white juveniles will increase 3%. Along with race, the Bureau of the Census also classifies persons by their ethnic origin. Hispanic juveniles (who can be of any race, but are primarily classified racially as white) will increase 59% between 1995 and 2015. Over this period, the number of white, non-Hispanic juveniles will decrease 3%.

### The juvenile population in the U.S. will increase gradually into the next century

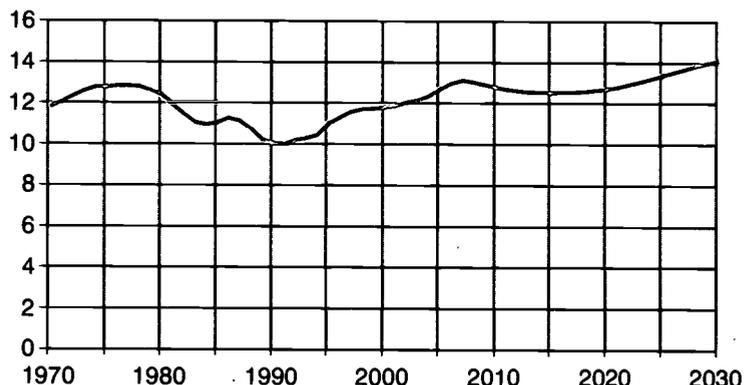
Persons under age 18 (in millions)



- Between 1995 and 2030, the population of persons under age 18 is expected to increase 21%.

### In 2007, the population of juveniles ages 15, 16, and 17—the age group responsible for two-thirds of all juvenile arrests—will reach a level similar to that of the mid-1970's

Persons ages 15–17 (in millions)



- Between 1995 and 2007, the population of persons ages 15–17 in the U.S. will increase 19%.
- Minority populations will experience greater increases in this population of older juveniles, with a black increase of 21%, an American Indian increase of 20%, an Asian/Pacific Islander increase of 65%, and an Hispanic increase of 60%. During this period, the number of white, non-Hispanic youth ages 15–17 in the U.S. population will increase 9%.

Source: Authors' analysis of Bureau of the Census' *Resident population estimates by age, sex, and race* for the years 1970–1996 [machine-readable data files] and *Population projections of the United States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1995–2050* [machine-readable data files].

**Between 1995 and 2015, California, Hawaii, the District of Columbia, Alaska, and New Mexico will experience the largest percent increases in their juvenile populations**

State	Projected population percent change 1995–2015					State	Projected population percent change 1995–2015				
	All ages	Ages 0–17	Ages 18–24	Ages 25–64	Age 65 & older		All ages	Ages 0–17	Ages 18–24	Ages 25–64	Age 65 & older
U.S. total	18%	8%	22%	18%	36%	Missouri	13%	0%	12%	15%	27%
Alabama	17	3	7	19	42	Montana	23	3	2	24	74
Alaska	31	27	40	23	123	Nebraska	13	1	9	15	33
Arizona	38	20	42	38	73	Nevada	42	15	46	43	99
Arkansas	18	-4	1	23	48	New Hampshire	20	3	25	21	43
California	31	34	57	25	29	New Jersey	12	4	22	13	17
Colorado	29	12	31	24	99	New Mexico	36	26	32	37	69
Connecticut	7	-2	21	7	13	New York	4	1	20	2	8
Delaware	16	3	21	17	36	North Carolina	23	4	17	24	61
District of Columbia	7	29	55	-5	-8	North Dakota	10	-2	8	9	35
Florida	31	9	33	35	45	Ohio	4	-6	2	5	21
Georgia	28	14	29	28	64	Oklahoma	16	0	9	17	48
Hawaii	31	32	36	27	41	Oregon	27	7	19	26	74
Idaho	39	18	16	44	98	Pennsylvania	3	-6	4	5	9
Illinois	8	2	15	8	17	Rhode Island	8	4	20	9	4
Indiana	10	0	6	11	31	South Carolina	19	3	8	20	58
Iowa	5	-7	-2	8	23	South Dakota	15	2	6	21	30
Kansas	15	4	15	17	28	Tennessee	21	6	16	22	51
Kentucky	10	-7	-4	13	41	Texas	30	21	37	27	61
Louisiana	11	-1	9	12	43	Utah	37	18	28	42	97
Maine	10	-7	-4	16	27	Vermont	13	-1	7	14	42
Maryland	16	7	31	15	33	Virginia	20	8	21	18	50
Massachusetts	8	2	27	7	12	Washington	30	13	29	29	72
Michigan	4	-5	2	5	20	West Virginia	1	-14	-19	4	29
Minnesota	15	-1	15	17	39	Wisconsin	11	-3	7	14	31
Mississippi	13	-3	-3	19	38	Wyoming	34	18	18	34	87

- One-third of the States are expected to experience a decline in their juvenile populations between 1995 and 2015. The States with the largest projected declines are West Virginia, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.
- Between 1995 and 2015, the number of persons ages 65 and older in the U.S. population will increase 36%. All States (excluding the District of Columbia) are expected to see increases in their senior citizen populations—most will experience large increases. Only in California will the increase in the juvenile population outpace the increase in senior citizens.

Source: Authors' analysis of Bureau of the Census' *Population projections of the United States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1995–2050* [machine-readable data files].

**After the District of Columbia, States with the smallest proportions of white juveniles in 1997 were Hawaii (29%), Mississippi (53%), Louisiana (58%), and South Carolina (62%)**

State	1997 juvenile population (ages 0-17)					State	1997 juvenile population (ages 0-17)				
	White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic origin		White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic origin
U.S. total	79%	16%	1%	4%	15%	Missouri	84%	14%	0%	1%	2%
Alabama	66	33	0	1	1	Montana	89	0	10	1	2
Alaska	68	4	23	5	4	Nebraska	92	5	1	2	6
Arizona	85	4	8	2	31	Nevada	84	9	2	5	21
Arkansas	77	22	1	1	3	New Hampshire	98	1	0	1	2
California	79	8	1	12	40	New Jersey	76	18	0	6	15
Colorado	91	5	1	3	20	New Mexico	83	3	13	2	48
Connecticut	85	12	0	3	12	New York	73	21	0	6	19
Delaware	73	24	0	2	5	North Carolina	69	27	2	2	3
Dist. of Columbia	19	78	0	3	9	North Dakota	90	1	8	1	2
Florida	75	22	0	2	16	Ohio	84	15	0	1	2
Georgia	63	35	0	2	4	Oklahoma	78	10	10	2	6
Hawaii	29	3	1	67	11	Oregon	92	2	2	4	9
Idaho	97	1	2	1	10	Pennsylvania	85	13	0	2	4
Illinois	77	19	0	3	14	Rhode Island	89	7	1	3	10
Indiana	88	10	0	1	3	South Carolina	62	37	0	1	2
Iowa	95	3	0	2	3	South Dakota	84	1	14	1	2
Kansas	90	7	1	2	7	Tennessee	77	22	0	1	1
Kentucky	90	9	0	1	1	Texas	83	13	0	3	37
Louisiana	58	40	1	1	3	Utah	95	1	2	3	8
Maine	98	1	1	1	1	Vermont	98	1	0	1	1
Maryland	64	32	0	4	4	Virginia	72	24	0	4	5
Massachusetts	86	9	0	5	10	Washington	87	4	2	6	9
Michigan	80	17	1	2	4	West Virginia	96	4	0	1	1
Minnesota	90	4	2	4	3	Wisconsin	88	8	1	3	4
Mississippi	53	45	0	1	1	Wyoming	95	1	3	1	8

- States with more than 95% white juvenile populations were Idaho, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and West Virginia.
- The largest proportions of black juveniles were in the District of Columbia (78%), Mississippi (45%), Louisiana (40%), South Carolina (37%), and Georgia (35%).
- States with the largest proportion of American Indians in their juvenile populations were Alaska (23%), South Dakota (14%), New Mexico (13%), Montana (10%), and Oklahoma (10%).
- States with the largest proportion of Hispanics in their juvenile populations were New Mexico (48%), California (40%), Texas (37%), and Arizona (31%).

Note: Race proportions include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race; however, most are white.

Source: Authors' analysis of Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

# In 1997, 14.1 million juveniles lived in poverty—42% more than in 1978, but 10% fewer than in 1993

## In 1997, one-fifth of all juveniles lived below the poverty level

In 1997, the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$16,400. Juveniles under age 18 were 26% of the U.S. population, but were 40% of all persons living below the poverty level in 1997.

The proportion of children living in poverty varied by race and ethnicity. In 1997, poverty rates for black juveniles and juveniles of Hispanic origin (37%) were far greater than the rates for white (16%) and Asian (20%) juveniles. Due to the proportion of white children in the U.S. population, however, the majority of children living in poverty were white. In 1997, 9 million white juveniles, 4 million black juveniles, and 0.6 million Asian/Pacific Islander juveniles were living in poverty—this included 4 million juveniles of Hispanic origin.

## In 1997, families with children were three times more likely to live in poverty than were others

The poverty rate among families with children was just over 16% in 1997, compared with 5% among families without children. Black and Hispanic families with children were more than twice as likely to live in poverty as were white families with children.

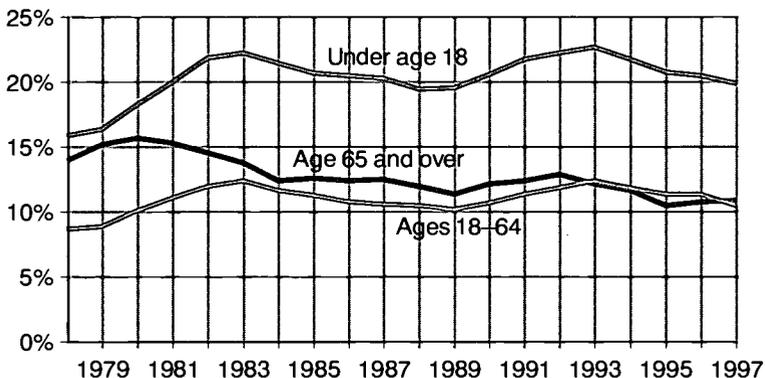
Percent of families with children in poverty

	1978	1997
All races	13%	16%
White	9	13
Black	34	30
Hispanic	24	30

Note: Race proportions include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race; however, most are white.

## Between 1978 and 1997, poverty rates increased for juveniles while declining for the elderly

Percent in poverty

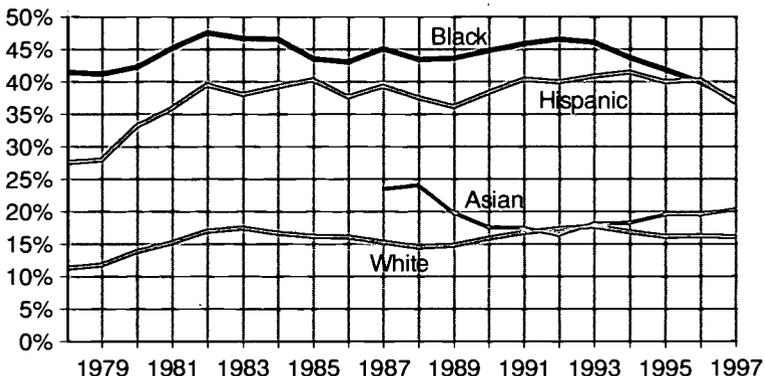


- In 1997, the child poverty rate—the proportion of those under age 18 who lived below the poverty level—was almost double the poverty rate for those 18 and over.

Source: Authors' analysis of Bureau of the Census' Poverty in the United States: 1997, Current Population Reports: Consumer Income.

## In 1997, the proportion of black juveniles living in poverty reached its lowest point in over two decades

Percent under age 18 in poverty



- For whites and Hispanics, the proportion of juveniles in poverty has been relatively stable since 1982.
- Poverty rates among black juveniles exceeded Hispanic rates between 1978 and 1995 and were similar thereafter.

Note: Race proportions include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race; however, most are white. American Indian data are not presented because of small sample size.

Source: Authors' analysis of Bureau of the Census' Poverty in the United States: 1997, Current Population Reports: Consumer Income.

**Growth in the number of juveniles in poverty varied by racial and ethnic background**

Between 1988 and 1997, the overall number of juveniles living in poverty grew 13%. The number of black juveniles in poverty decreased 2%, compared with a 21% increase for white juveniles and a 32% increase among Asian/Pacific Islanders. The increase in the number of white juveniles in poverty was influenced substantially by the 51% increase in the number of juveniles in poverty who were of Hispanic origin (who are predominately white).

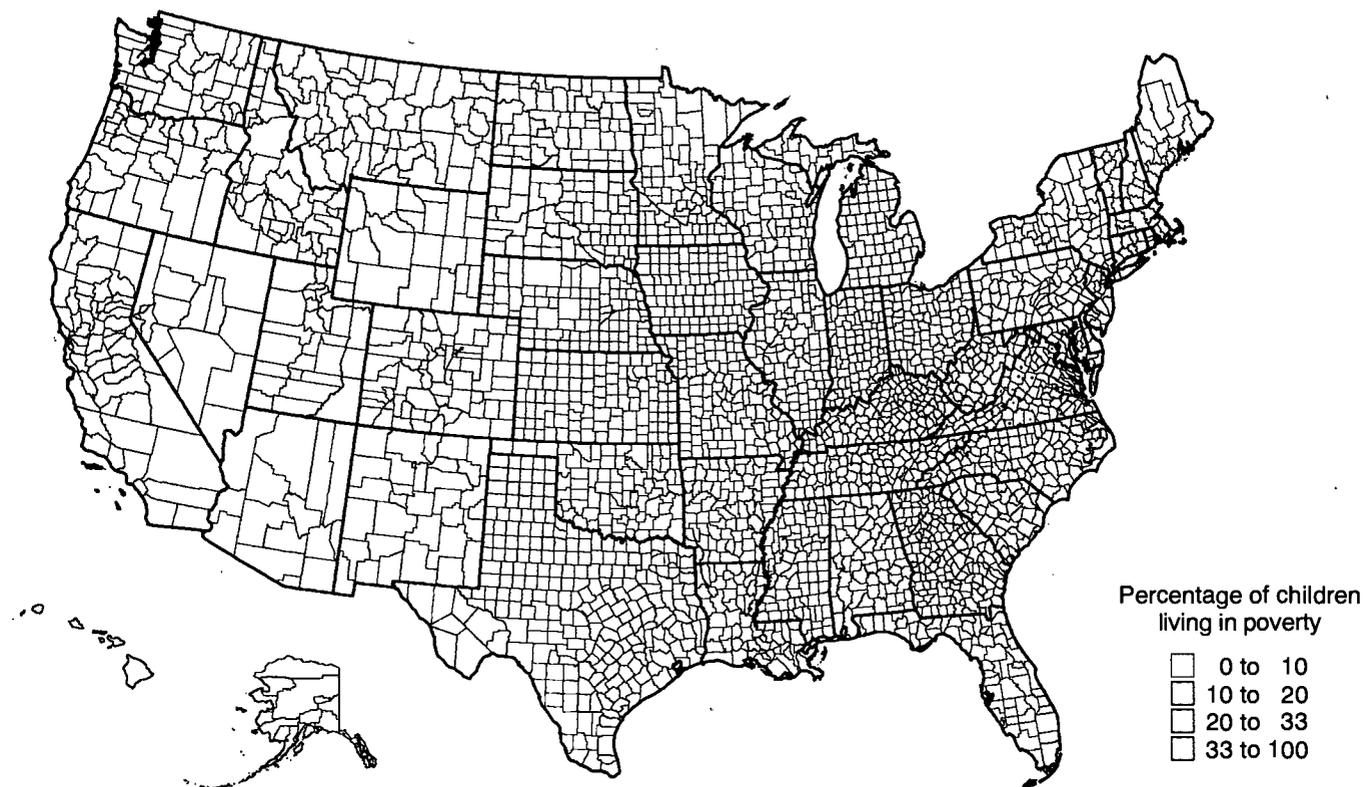
**Income disparities among children grew between 1980 and 1996**

According to a recent report by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, the gap between rich and poor children grew between 1980 and 1996. The difference between the proportion of children in high-income families and those in extreme poverty was 10 percentage points in 1980. That difference grew to 16 points in 1996.

Income level	Percent of children		
	1980	1990	1996
Extreme poverty	6.6%	8.3%	8.4%
Poverty	11.3	11.6	11.4
Low income	24.0	21.8	22.7
Medium income	41.4	37.0	34.0
High income	16.8	21.3	23.5

Note: Estimates refer to children who are related to the householder and who are under age 18. Extreme poverty is less than 50% of the poverty threshold; poverty is below the poverty threshold, but above extreme poverty; low income is up to 200% above the poverty threshold; medium income is 200% to 400% above the threshold; and high income is over 400%.

**In 1993, many counties with a high percentage of juveniles living in poverty were located in Southern States**



Source: Authors' analysis of Bureau of the Census' *State and county income and poverty estimates—1993* [machine-readable data file].

**According to 1993 estimates, the proportion of juveniles in poverty was greater than the proportion of all persons in poverty, and the proportion of children under age 5 in poverty was even greater**

State	Percent in poverty			State	Percent in poverty		
	All ages	Ages 0-17	Under age 5		All ages	Ages 0-17	Under age 5
United States	15.1%	22.7%	26.5%	Missouri	15.1%	21.6%	26.0%
Alabama	18.8	26.2	30.2	Montana	15.2	19.8	25.8
Alaska	11.2	15.9	20.3	Nebraska	10.7	13.9	19.0
Arizona	18.5	28.0	33.0	Nevada	11.5	16.7	20.6
Arkansas	18.9	26.0	31.3	New Hampshire	8.6	11.5	14.4
California	17.4	26.4	29.2	New Jersey	10.0	15.7	17.1
Colorado	11.7	16.5	21.1	New Mexico	21.6	30.6	35.6
Connecticut	9.2	16.5	18.7	New York	16.3	26.7	29.4
Delaware	11.1	16.7	20.0	North Carolina	14.1	19.7	23.5
District of Columbia	20.4	33.3	35.6	North Dakota	12.5	16.2	20.0
Florida	16.0	24.7	28.3	Ohio	13.7	21.5	25.9
Georgia	16.8	25.2	29.2	Oklahoma	18.3	25.4	31.2
Hawaii	9.6	14.9	18.0	Oregon	13.2	18.3	24.9
Idaho	12.5	15.5	21.3	Pennsylvania	12.9	19.7	22.7
Illinois	13.4	20.4	23.5	Rhode Island	12.4	20.6	24.3
Indiana	11.9	17.3	21.5	South Carolina	16.6	23.7	27.3
Iowa	11.1	15.1	19.8	South Dakota	14.3	19.2	23.6
Kansas	12.2	16.7	20.6	Tennessee	17.8	26.0	30.4
Kentucky	19.7	28.1	32.5	Texas	19.6	28.6	32.9
Louisiana	23.9	33.3	37.3	Utah	11.2	13.6	18.7
Maine	13.7	19.4	23.6	Vermont	12.2	17.0	21.2
Maryland	10.2	15.1	17.5	Virginia	12.0	17.8	21.0
Massachusetts	11.1	18.7	21.3	Washington	12.0	17.3	21.6
Michigan	15.0	23.6	27.6	West Virginia	21.7	32.6	39.2
Minnesota	10.8	14.7	18.0	Wisconsin	10.9	15.9	19.4
Mississippi	24.6	33.9	38.6	Wyoming	11.9	14.9	20.6

Source: Authors' adaptation of Bureau of the Census' *State and county income and poverty estimates—1993* [machine-readable data file].

# Children were less likely to live with both parents in 1997 than in the past

## About 3 in 10 children lived in single-parent homes in 1997

The proportion of children living in two-parent homes declined from 85% to 68% between 1970 and 1997. This roughly paralleled an increase in the percentage of children living with only their mother.

Living arrangement	Percent of children			
	1970	1980	1990	1997
Both parents	85%	77%	73%	68%
Single-headed	12	20	25	28
Mother	11	18	22	24
Father	1	2	3	4
Other	3	4	3	4

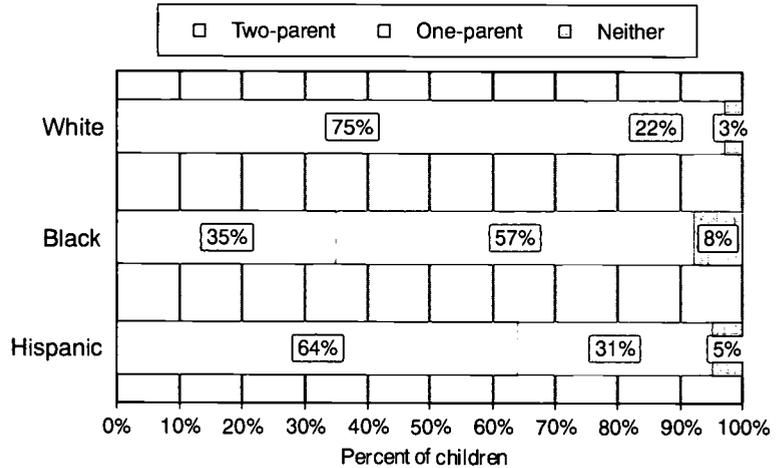
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

While most children (85%) in single-parent families lived with their mothers in 1997, an increasing proportion were living with their fathers. Between 1970 and 1997, the proportion of children in single-parent homes living with their fathers grew from 9% to 15%.

## In 1997, almost one-half of all children living with only their mothers lived in poverty

In 1997, similar patterns were seen in the proportion of children living with nonworking parents and the proportion living in poverty. The proportion of children living with a nonworking single parent was more than twice the proportion living with two nonworking parents (34% vs. 14%). Further, children were almost twice as likely to live with a nonworking mother as with a nonworking father (37% vs. 19%). Children were most likely to live in poverty when most likely to live in poverty with only their mother.

## Over half of all black children lived with only one parent in 1997



- In 1997, approximately one-third (35%) of black children lived with both parents. The majority of white children and children of Hispanic ethnicity lived in two-parent homes (75% and 64%, respectively).
- The proportion of children living in two-parent families declined between 1980 and 1997 for white children (83% to 75%), black children (42% to 35%), and children of Hispanic ethnicity (75% to 64%).

Note: Race proportions include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race; however, most are white.

Sources: Authors' adaptation of Bureau of the Census' Population characteristics: Marital status and living arrangements: March 1997, *Current Population Reports*.

Living arrangement	Percent of children		Percent of children	
	No working parent	Living in poverty	Never-married parent	Divorced parent
Both parents	14%	10%	1970	1997
Single-headed	34	43	1970	1997
Mother	37	47	7%	38%
Father	19	22	30%	36%
All children			3	27
White			39	46
Black			14	60
			15	18

## A never-married parent is becoming more common in one-parent homes

Between 1970 and 1997, there was a five-fold increase in the proportion of children living with a never-married parent. As a result, about the same number of children were living with a never-married parent as with a divorced parent in 1997.

In 1970, more white children lived with divorced parents than with parents who had never been married. During the same year, about the same number of black children lived with divorced and never-married parents. Between 1970 and 1997, the proportion of children living with never-married parents increased among both white and black children.

## After consistent increases between 1986 and 1991, teenage birth rates declined 13% from 1991 to 1996

### 5% of all babies born in 1996 were born to juvenile mothers

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, about 200,000 babies were born to mothers ages 10–17 in 1996. While older teens accounted for the majority of these births, 6% were to adolescents ages 10–14. Rates of birth per 1,000 females ages 15–17 were highest among Hispanics (69) and blacks (65), followed by American Indians (46), whites (28), and Asian/Pacific Islanders (15). Nonetheless, two-thirds of the women under age 18 who gave birth in 1996 were white.

### Teenage mothers are much less likely to be married now than a generation ago

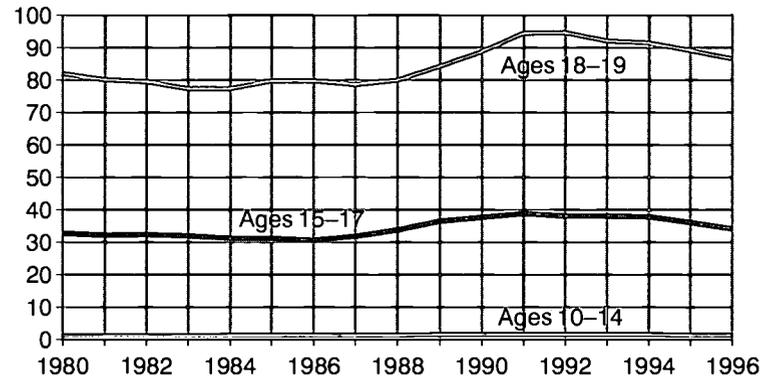
In 1996, 32% of all births were to unmarried women, compared with 11% in 1970. Births to unmarried women ages 15–17 totaled 157,000 in 1996. The proportion of births to unmarried mothers ages 15–17 nearly doubled between 1970 and 1996. Among older teenage mothers, the proportion more than tripled.

	Percent of births to unmarried women ages			
	15–17		18–19	
	1970	1996	1970	1996
All races	43%	84%	22%	71%
White	25	79	14	63
Black	76	98	52	94

Although the majority of teen mothers were white, black teens were more likely than others to be unmarried mothers. However, the proportion of births to unwed mothers increased more among white than black teens between 1970 and 1996.

### Despite recent declines in birth rates among teens of all ages, 1996 rates were still higher than rates during the early to mid-1980's

Births per 1,000 females in age group

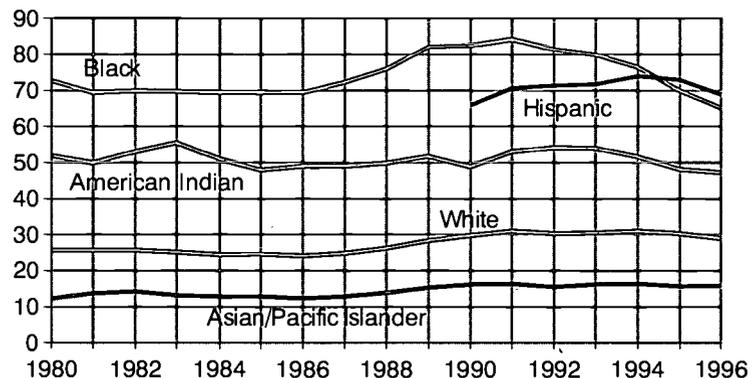


- In 1996, the birth rate for women ages 15–17 was 34 births for every 1,000 women, 13% below the 1991 rate but 11% above the 1986 rate.
- The 1996 birth rate for 15- to 17-year-olds was less than half the rate for 18- to 19-year-olds. The rate for older teenagers dropped 9% between 1991 and 1996.

Source: Authors' analysis of Ventura et al.'s Report on final natality statistics, 1996, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, 46(11) Supp.

### The decline in birth rates between 1991 and 1996 was three times greater among black teens ages 15–17 than among white teens

Births per 1,000 females ages 15–17



- Between 1991 and 1996, birth rates among 15- to 17-year-old black teens declined 23%, compared with 12% for American Indians, 7% for whites and Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 2% for Hispanics.

Note: Race rates include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race; however, most are white.

Source: Authors' analysis of Ventura et al.'s Report on final natality statistics, 1996, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, 46(11) Supp.

**Infants born to teens are at greater risk of low birth weight**

Teen childbearing creates disadvantages for both mother and infant. In 1996, mothers under age 18 were less likely than older women to receive prenatal care starting in the first trimester of pregnancy (60% vs. 81%). As a result of this and other factors, babies born to teen mothers are at greater risk of low birth weight. Overall, in 1996 low birth weights occurred in 10% of births to mothers younger than age 18. In contrast, 7% of births to those age 18 and older were low birth weight births. In 1996, black teen mothers were more likely than white teen mothers to have a low birth weight baby (14% vs. 9%).

Mother's age	Percent of low birth weight births in 1996		
	All races	White	Black
All Ages	7%	6%	13%
Under 18	10	9	14
Under 15	13	10	15
15	11	10	14
16	10	9	13
17	10	8	14
18	9	8	13
19	9	7	13
20-24	7	6	12
25-29	6	6	12
30-34	7	6	14
35-39	8	7	16
40-44	9	8	18

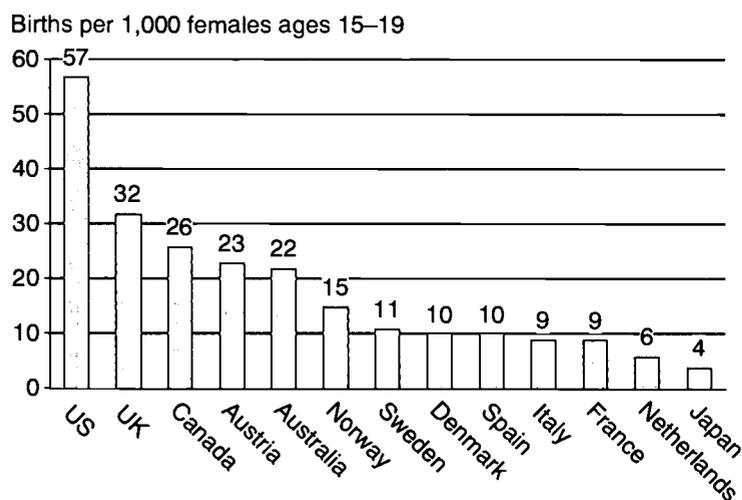
Note: Birth weights of less than 5 pounds 8 ounces are defined as low birth weights.

**Teenagers are having sex less and using contraception more**

In 1994, about one-half of young women and about 3 in 4 young men reported having had sex by age 18. Nonetheless, a 1995 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) indicates that the proportion of sexually experienced teenagers has declined following a two-decade trend of increases. Also, teenagers' use of contraceptives at first intercourse has reportedly increased. These trends may be contributing to the recent declines in teen birth rates.

A Child Trends study identified four key risk factors associated with having a baby before the age of 20: early school failure, early behavioral problems, family dysfunction, and poverty. The study indicated that educational success plays a role in averting subsequent teen births.

**The teen birth rate in the United States is far higher than in many other countries**

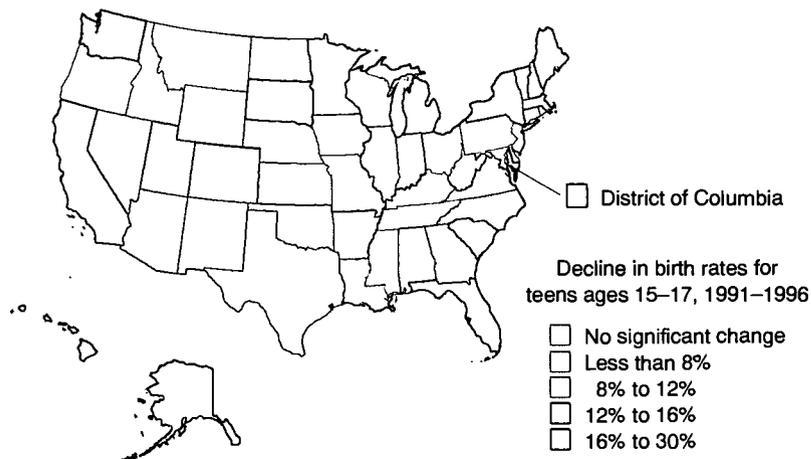


Note: Data years are inconsistent and range from 1990 to 1995.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Maynard's *Kids having kids: Economic costs and social consequences of teen pregnancy*.

**In 1996, birth rates across States for teens ages 15–17 ranged from 15.1 to 52.1, but for most States, rates were lower in 1996 than in 1991**

State	1996 births per 1,000 females in age group			State	1996 births per 1,000 females in age group		
	15–19	15–17	18–19		15–19	15–17	18–19
United States	54.4	33.8	86.0	Missouri	53.7	31.0	89.7
Alabama	69.2	45.3	104.1	Montana	38.6	21.2	65.8
Alaska	46.4	26.5	75.2	Nebraska	38.7	22.2	63.7
Arizona	73.9	48.9	110.7	Nevada	69.6	42.1	113.5
Arkansas	75.4	44.9	121.7	New Hampshire	28.6	15.1	50.9
California	62.6	39.2	99.1	New Jersey	35.4	22.9	55.3
Colorado	49.5	30.2	79.7	New Mexico	70.9	45.8	110.7
Connecticut	37.4	24.4	58.3	New York	41.8	25.6	66.4
Delaware	56.9	41.0	79.9	North Carolina	63.5	40.8	97.5
District of Columbia	102.1	79.0	132.5	North Dakota	32.3	16.1	58.1
Florida	58.9	36.7	94.1	Ohio	50.4	29.5	82.6
Georgia	68.2	45.4	103.3	Oklahoma	63.4	37.2	104.7
Hawaii	48.1	28.0	76.2	Oregon	50.8	29.4	84.7
Idaho	47.2	26.5	77.7	Pennsylvania	39.3	24.5	62.5
Illinois	57.1	36.1	90.9	Rhode Island	42.5	27.3	65.7
Indiana	56.1	32.9	91.4	South Carolina	62.9	41.3	94.2
Iowa	37.8	21.4	63.6	South Dakota	39.5	22.4	66.0
Kansas	49.6	27.8	84.2	Tennessee	66.1	40.2	105.8
Kentucky	61.5	36.9	97.9	Texas	73.5	48.8	111.3
Louisiana	66.7	42.9	102.3	Utah	42.8	24.3	68.6
Maine	31.4	16.8	54.5	Vermont	30.1	15.2	54.1
Maryland	46.1	29.6	72.3	Virginia	45.5	27.7	71.6
Massachusetts	32.2	19.9	50.6	Washington	45.0	26.1	74.5
Michigan	46.5	28.2	75.5	West Virginia	50.3	28.7	81.9
Minnesota	32.1	18.5	54.2	Wisconsin	36.8	21.7	60.7
Mississippi	75.5	52.1	110.5	Wyoming	44.0	24.9	74.9



Source: Authors' analysis of Ventura et al.'s Report on final natality statistics, 1996, *Monthly Vital Statistics Report*, 46(11) Supp.

## In 1996, 86% of young adults had completed high school

### High school completion rates have remained relatively stable over the last quarter century

In the 1950's, a high school education was an asset when entering the work force. In today's society, a high school diploma or its equivalent is often a minimal requirement for obtaining entry-level jobs or for continuing education or training.

Despite the increased importance of completing high school, the completion rate among persons ages 18–24 and not still in school has increased only slightly since 1972 when it was 83%. In 1996, completion rates were about the same for males and females ages 18–24. The rate was lower among Hispanics (62%) than among non-Hispanic whites (92%) or blacks (83%).

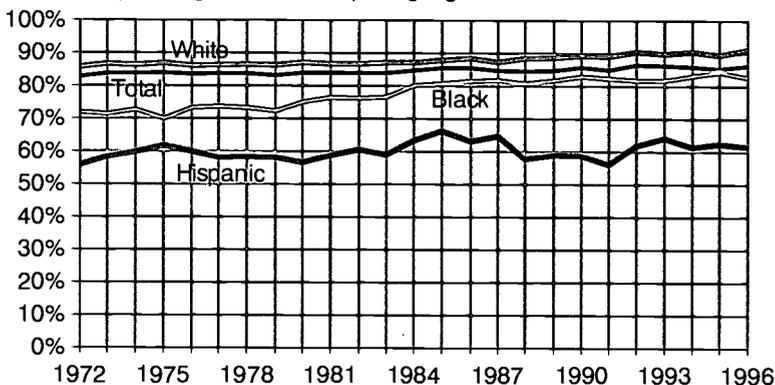
### High school completion levels vary by family income level

Many factors influence young people's life decisions. Family income, and the social factors related to income, may affect their ability to complete high school.

The majority of young adults who completed high school in 1996 lived in middle-income families. Young adults from high- and middle-income families were more likely to complete high school than were those from low-income families. The completion rate in 1996 was 97% in high-income families, 87% in middle-income families, and 75% in low-income families.

### High school completion rates among persons ages 18–24 were consistently lower for Hispanics than others between 1972 and 1996

Percent of youth ages 18–24 completing high school



- High school completion rates among young black adults grew from 72% in 1980 to 83% in 1996 and remained stable thereafter. Among white persons ages 18–24, high school completion rates increased from 86% in 1980 to 92% in 1996.
- High school completion rates were consistently lower among young Hispanic adults than among both whites and blacks between 1972 and 1996. During this time, completion rates for Hispanics fluctuated between a low of 56% and a high of 67%.

Notes: Because of relatively small sample sizes, American Indians and Asian/Pacific Islanders are included in the total but are not shown separately. White and black race groups do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Authors' adaptation of National Center for Education Statistics' *Dropout rates in the United States: 1996*.

### 1 in 10 young adults completes high school through alternative methods

High school completion may be achieved either by receiving a high school diploma or by passing a high school equivalency exam such as the General Educational Development (GED) test. In 1996, 10% of young adults ages 18–24 earned such an alternative credential, up from 5% in 1993. During that time period, high school graduation rates declined by the same amount.

### On-time graduation is an indicator of how well students are progressing in the educational system

A student's decision to withdraw from school is not necessarily a permanent one. Many who drop out of school early ultimately earn a high school diploma or obtain an alternative credential, thereby lessening the consequences of dropping out of school.

A study of the sophomore class of 1980 revealed that 83% completed high school on time. By 1986 (3 years past their on-time graduation date), the completion rate had increased to 92%. Similarly, another study of students scheduled for graduation in 1992 found that by spring 1992, 88% were working toward high school completion, had already completed high school, or had passed an equivalency test. Among the dropouts in this study, more than half reported plans to pursue a general education diploma or to complete regular high school.

#### Why do juveniles drop out of school?

A 1992 study reported that 4 in 10 dropouts said they left high school because they did not like school or because they were failing. As many males as females said they left school because they could not get along with their teachers. More males than females dropped out because of school suspension or expulsion.

While overall most dropouts reported school-related reasons for leaving school, most female dropouts reported family-related reasons. Among dropouts, 21% of females dropped out because they became parents (compared with 8% of males), and 27% of females said they left school because they became pregnant. Among female dropouts, 26% of whites reported pregnancy as a motive for dropping out, compared with 31% of Hispanics and 34% of blacks. Black dropouts were far less likely to report getting married as a reason for leaving school (2%) than were white (15%) or Hispanic (13%) dropouts.

More than a quarter of those dropping out of grades 10 through 12

#### State-specific high school completion rates in the South and West were lower than rates in the Northeast and Midwest

State	Percent completing high school (ages 18–24)		State	Percent completing high school (ages 18–24)	
	1991–93*	1994–96*		1991–93*	1994–96*
<b>United States</b>	<b>85.7%</b>	<b>85.8%</b>	Delaware	90.3	88.8
<b>Northeast</b>			Dist. of Columbia	87.2	87.8
Connecticut	90.9	96.1	Florida	84.5	80.1
Maine	93.4	91.8	Georgia	81.9	81.3
Massachusetts	90.5	92.0	Kentucky	82.6	82.2
New Hampshire	89.0	87.7	Louisiana	82.5	82.2
New Jersey	89.8	87.0	Maryland	91.0	93.4
New York	87.6	90.9	Mississippi	88.6	83.9
Pennsylvania	90.5	89.6	North Carolina	84.2	87.2
Rhode Island	90.4	87.5	Oklahoma	81.8	87.0
Vermont	89.6	87.0	South Carolina	85.5	88.4
			Tennessee	77.5	83.3
<b>Midwest</b>			Texas	81.2	79.3
Illinois	86.0	89.3	Virginia	89.8	86.6
Indiana	87.4	88.3	West Virginia	84.6	89.3
Iowa	94.0	91.6	<b>West</b>		
Kansas	91.4	91.6	Alaska	89.0	87.8
Michigan	88.3	89.1	Arizona	81.1	85.8
Minnesota	91.7	95.3	California	78.2	78.6
Missouri	88.3	88.0	Colorado	87.2	87.9
Nebraska	92.5	93.3	Hawaii	92.8	92.6
North Dakota	95.7	93.0	Idaho	89.0	85.2
Ohio	89.7	87.7	Montana	91.6	89.8
South Dakota	91.2	89.6	Nevada	83.3	81.4
Wisconsin	92.4	92.5	New Mexico	84.3	82.7
<b>South</b>			Oregon	85.5	81.1
Alabama	81.0%	86.8%	Utah	94.6	91.3
Arkansas	87.7	86.7	Washington	89.2	86.8
			Wyoming	92.1	89.4

\*Numbers reflect 3-year averages to improve the stability of State-level estimates.

Source: Authors' adaptation of National Center for Education Statistics' *Dropout rates in the United States: 1996*.

reported job-related reasons for withdrawing. Male dropouts were more likely than female dropouts to report finding a job as the motive for leaving school (36% vs. 22%).

In 1995, 80% of foreign-born Hispanic youth reported speaking English

“not well” or “not at all.” While 29% of all Hispanic youth ages 16–24 had dropped out of high school, 44% of foreign-born Hispanics this age had dropped out. In comparison, the dropout rates among white and black youth this age were 7% and 13%, respectively.

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# Chapter 2

## Juvenile victims

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In the past several years, shocking cases of homicides at schools have focused a great deal of attention on the safety of students. Americans are understandably concerned about their children becoming victims of crime while at school. Tragic incidents such as these, however, often belie the actual frequency and nature of school victimizations. In actuality, juveniles are safer at school than out of school. The fact that much juvenile victimization is hidden from public view—abusers are not identified, crimes are not reported, and offenders are not arrested—has created an inaccurate public perception of juvenile victimization.

This chapter presents what is known about the prevalence and incidence of juvenile victimizations. It answers important questions to assist policymakers, practitioners, researchers, and concerned citizens in developing policies and programs to ensure the safety and well-being of children. How often are juveniles the victims of crime? How many are murdered each year? How often are firearms involved? Who are their of-

fenders? How many youth commit suicide? How many children are victims of crime at school? What are the characteristics of school crime? When are juveniles most likely to become victims of crime? What is known about missing and runaway youth? How many children are abused and neglected annually? What are the trends in child maltreatment?

Data sources include the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Supplementary Homicide Reporting Program and its National Incident-Based Reporting System. School victimization data are drawn from both the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Child maltreatment is reported by the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Data from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children are presented, as well as suicide information from the National Center for Health Statistics.

## Between 1980 and 1997, nearly 38,000 juveniles were murdered in the U.S.

### The FBI maintains detailed records on murders in the U.S.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting Program asks local law enforcement agencies to provide detailed information on all homicides. These Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) capture information on victim and offender demographics, the victim-offender relationship, the weapon used, and the circumstances surrounding the crime. The FBI estimates that 91% of all homicides committed in the U.S. between 1980 and 1997 were reported to the FBI.

### The number of murders in 1997 was the lowest since 1971

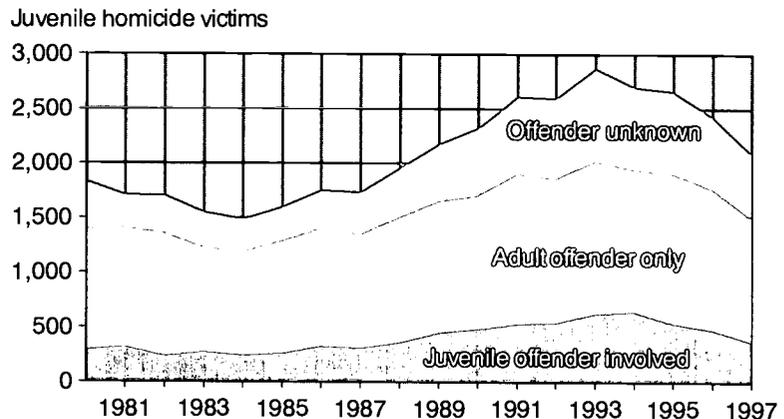
Estimates from the SHR data show that murders peaked in 1991 with 24,700 victims, or a rate of nearly 10 murders for every 100,000 persons living in the U.S. While the number of murders was high, rates similar to the 1991 rate were experienced in other years since 1970 (e.g., 1974, 1979, 1980, 1981).

Between 1991 and 1997, the number of murders dropped 26%, to 18,200, or about 7 murders for every 100,000 persons living in the U.S. The number of murders had not been this low since 1971, and the murder rate had not been this low since 1968.

### Murders of juveniles remain high

In the U.S., one of the leading causes of death for juveniles is homicide. In 1997, the National Center for Health Statistics listed homicide as the fourth leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4, third for youth ages 5 to 14, and second for persons ages 15 to 24.

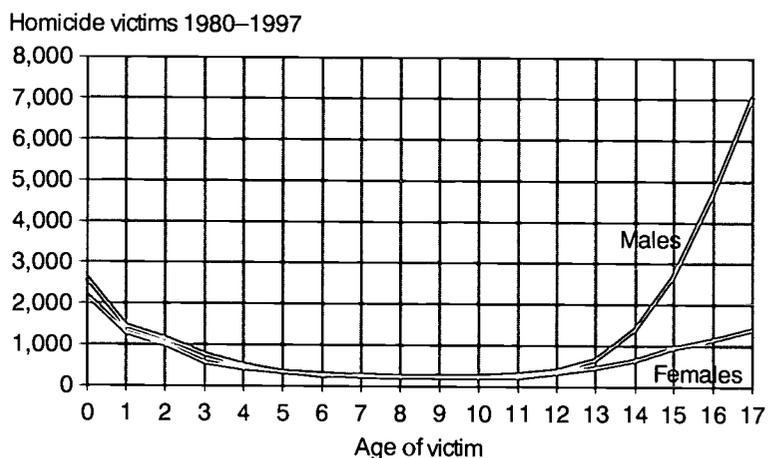
### Homicides of juveniles peaked in 1993 and by 1997 had fallen to their lowest level in the decade



- The FBI's data had no information on the offenders in 25% of juvenile homicides between 1980 and 1997, largely because police did not identify the offenders.
- From 1980 through 1997, juvenile offenders were involved in one of every four juvenile homicides where the offenders were identified.

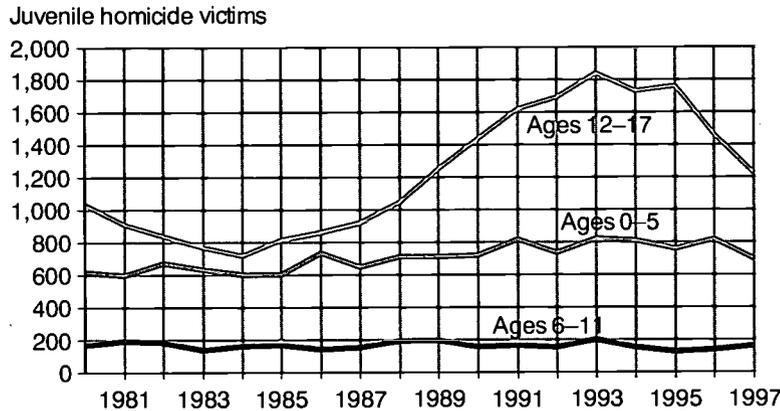
Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

### Until their teenage years, boys and girls are equally likely to be murdered



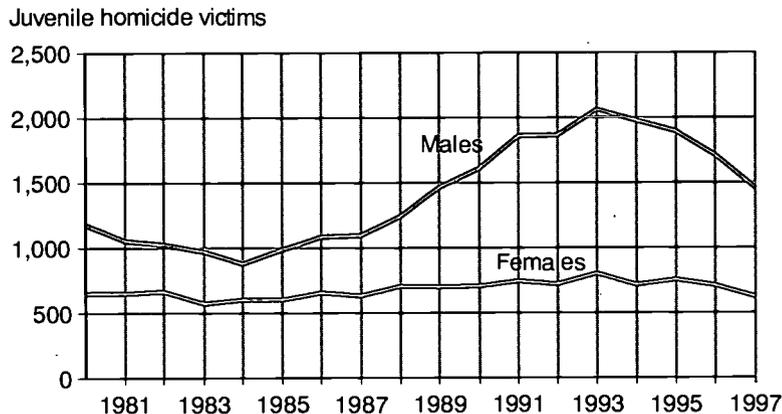
Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

**The large increase in overall juvenile homicides between 1986 and 1993 and subsequent decline were nearly all due to changes in the homicide of older juveniles**



Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980-1997 [machine-readable data files].

**In the 1980's, males accounted for 62% of juvenile homicide victims; in the 1990's, this proportion has averaged 71%.**



- Between 1980 and 1997, the annual number of juvenile females murdered has not differed substantially from the average of 700 per year.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980-1997 [machine-readable data files].

The number of juveniles murdered peaked in 1993 at 2,900, about 4 murders for every 100,000 persons under age 18 living in the U.S. By 1997, this figure had dropped to 2,100, or about 3 murders per 100,000 juveniles. Unlike the pattern of all murders, however, the number of juvenile murders in 1997 was still substantially above the levels of the mid-1980's, when about 1,600 juveniles were murdered annually.

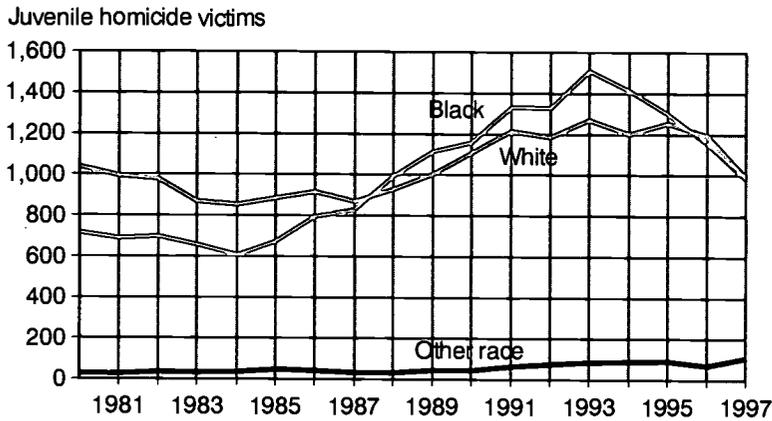
**In 1997, about six juveniles were murdered daily**

Of all persons murdered in 1997, 11% were under the age of 18. Of these 2,100 juvenile murder victims in 1997:

- 33% were under age 6 and 50% were ages 15 through 17.
- 30% were female.
- 47% were black.
- 56% were killed with a firearm.
- 40% (among those whose murderers were identified) were killed by family members, 45% by acquaintances, and 15% by strangers.

The murders of younger and older juveniles had different characteristics. Compared with youth under age 12, older juvenile victims in 1997 were more likely to be male (81% vs. 55%) and black (53% vs. 39%). Family members killed a greater proportion of younger than older juvenile victims (70% vs. 10%). Offenders with firearms killed a larger proportion of older than younger juveniles (83% vs. 16%).

**Though blacks accounted for only 15% of the juvenile population, more black juveniles than white juveniles were murdered between 1988 and 1995**



- In the early 1980's, the juvenile homicide rate for black youth was four times the white rate. In 1993, the black rate peaked at nearly seven times the white rate. With a greater decline in homicides of blacks than whites between 1993 and 1997, the disparity between the rates for blacks and whites declined to a ratio of 5 to 1.
- Between 1980 and 1997, where the race of the offender was known, 92% of juveniles were murdered by persons of their own race. The percentage of same-race killings was greater for blacks (94%) than whites (91%) and declined as the age of the victim increased: 0-5 (96%), 6-11 (93%), 12-14 (91%), and 15-17 (89%).

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980-1997 [machine-readable data files].

**Between 1980 and 1997, most murdered children younger than age 6 were killed by a family member, while most older juveniles were killed by an acquaintance or a stranger**

Offender relationship to victim	Age of victim				Victim ages 0-17	
	0-17	0-5	6-11	12-17	Males	Females
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Parent	22	54	31	3	18	32
Other family member	5	6	12	4	4	7
Acquaintance	36	25	25	44	38	32
Stranger	11	3	12	16	13	8
Unknown	25	13	20	34	27	21

- Female victims were nearly twice as likely as male victims to have been killed by a family member.

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980-1997 [machine-readable data files].

## The rise in murders of juveniles between 1984 and 1993 was all firearm related, as was the subsequent decline

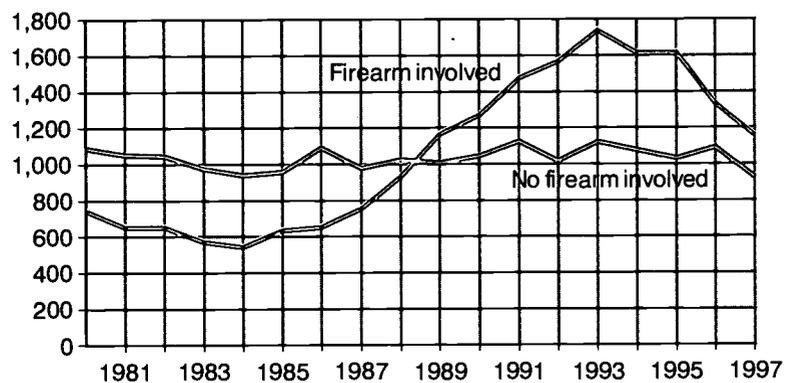
### The increase in juvenile homicides is tied to firearm use by nonfamily offenders

A study of the 65% increase in juvenile homicides in the 7-year period from 1987 to 1993 shows that increases did not occur proportionately in all types of homicides. Over this period, homicides by family members held constant, while homicides by acquaintances increased substantially. The increase was disproportionate for black victims, with the growth in the number of black victims twice that of white victims. Most significantly, nearly all of the growth in juvenile homicides was in the number of older juveniles killed with firearms.

The decline in juvenile homicides between 1993 and 1997 brought the number to a level just 20% above that of 1987 (the last year in which juvenile homicides were within their historic range). Both the decline from 1993 to 1997 and the growth from 1987 to 1993 involved substantial changes in the number of murders by acquaintances and in the number of murders of older youth and black youth. The proportion of homicides committed with a firearm, which had increased dramatically between 1987 and 1993, however, did not decline between 1993 and 1997. Therefore, the major legacy of the growth in juvenile homicides from 1987 through 1993 is that it increased the proportion of juveniles killed by firearms.

### The annual number of juveniles killed with a firearm increased substantially between 1987 and 1993, while other types of homicide remained constant

Juvenile homicide victims

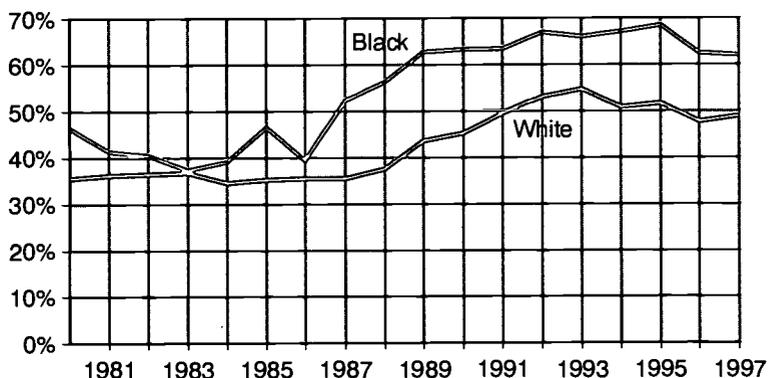


- In 1980, fewer than half (41%) of the juveniles murdered were killed with a firearm. The proportion of juvenile firearm homicides began to increase in 1987 and peaked (at 61%) in 1993. Since then, the proportion has declined somewhat, with 56% of juvenile homicides involving a firearm in 1997.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

### The use of firearms in juvenile homicides was common in the 1990's for both black victims and white victims

Firearm percent of juvenile homicide victims

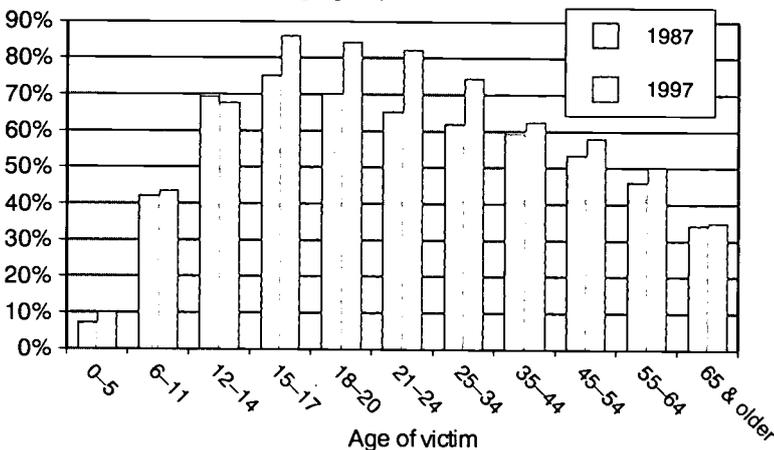


- In the early 1980's, proportions of juvenile homicides involving a firearm were roughly equal for white victims and black victims.
- The proportion of black juvenile homicides involving a firearm increased substantially during a 3-year period in the late 1980's.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

**Homicides of juveniles ages 15 to 17 were more likely to involve a firearm than were homicides of adults**

Percent killed by firearm in age group



■ Over the 10-year period from 1987 to 1997, the proportion of homicides committed with a firearm increased in most victim age groups.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980-1997 [machine-readable data files].

**Since 1980, 1 in 4 murders of juveniles involved a juvenile offender**

Nearly 38,000 juveniles were murdered between 1980 and 1997. A juvenile offender was involved in 26% of these crimes when an offender was identified. In murders of juveniles by juveniles, about 1 of every 6 also involved an adult offender. Between 1980 and 1997, the victim and the offender were the same race in 91% of murders of juveniles by juveniles.

The proportion of juvenile murders that involved a juvenile offender increased from 21% in 1980 to 33% in 1994—the peak year for all murders by juveniles. In 1980, an estimated 400 juveniles were killed by other juveniles, growing to nearly 900 in 1994; by 1997, this figure had fallen to about 500, or about 1 of every 4 juveniles murdered that year.

**Between 1980 and 1997, 3 out of 4 murdered juveniles age 12 or older were killed with a firearm**

Weapon	Age of victim				Victim ages 0-17	
	0-17	0-5	6-11	12-17	Males	Females
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Firearm	51	10	42	75	60	31
Knife/blunt object	14	11	19	15	13	17
Personal*	19	48	11	3	15	27
Other	16	30	28	7	12	25

- Nearly half (48%) of all murdered children below age 6 were killed by offenders using only their hands, fists, or feet.
- Male murder victims were nearly twice as likely as female victims to be killed with a firearm.

\* Personal includes hands, fists, or feet.

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980-1997 [machine-readable data files].

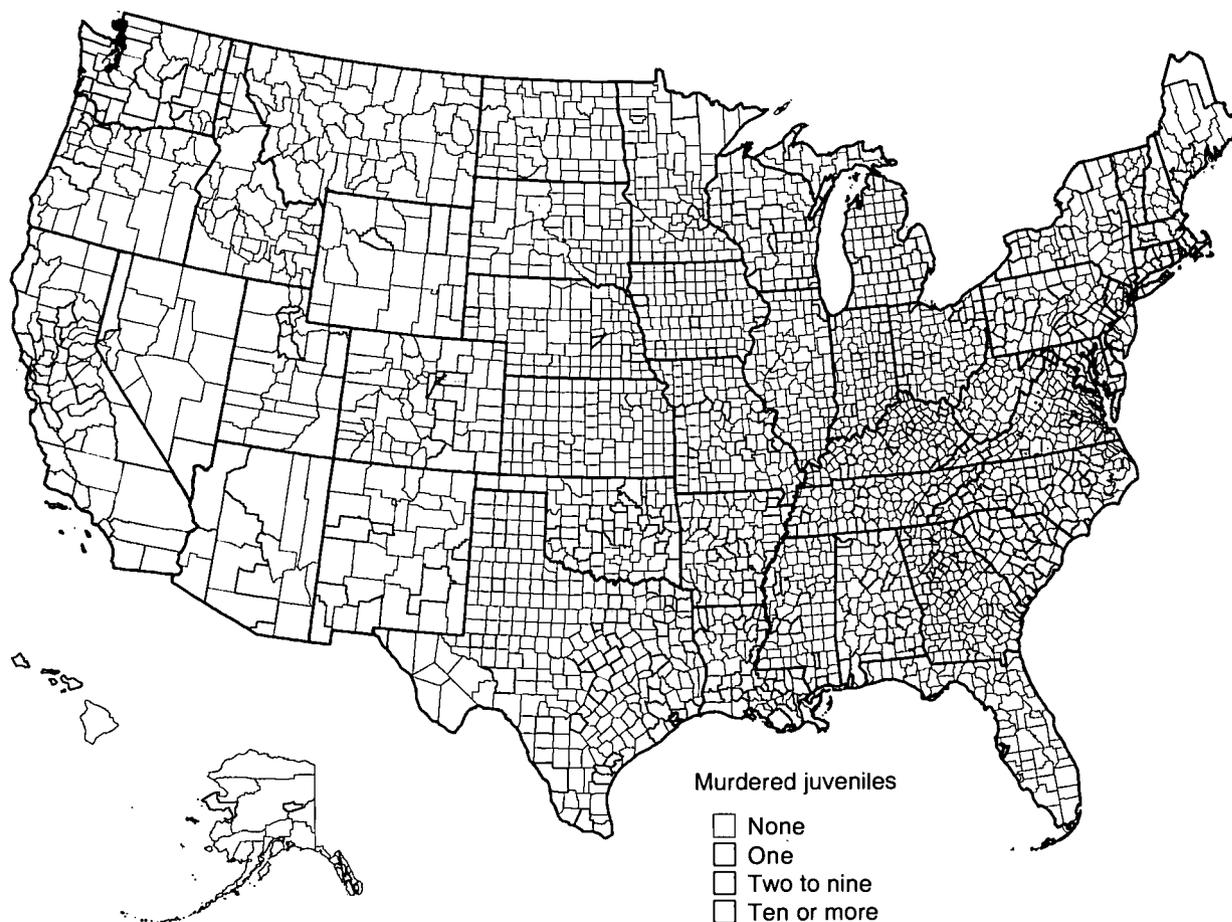
**When juveniles kill juveniles, the victims are generally acquaintances killed with a firearm**

Of juveniles killed by other juveniles between 1980 and 1997, 13% were under age 6. In nearly half of these murders (47%), the juvenile offender was the parent of the victim. In another 18%, the juvenile offender was another family member. Firearms were rarely used when the victim was under age 6 (10%).

Of juveniles killed by other juveniles, 63% were age 15 or older. Fewer than 5% of these older juvenile victims were killed by family members; 76% were killed by acquaintances and 19% were killed by strangers. Between 1980 and 1997, 77% of these older juveniles were killed with a firearm.

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## 1 in 4 reported murders of juveniles in 1997 occurred in just 5 of the Nation's more than 3,000 counties



Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1997 [machine-readable data files].

In 1997, the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reporting (SHR) Program collected detailed information on 87% of all murder victims known to law enforcement. The map above presents an analysis of these data. Note that no data were reported for the States of Florida, Kansas, and New Hampshire. Many of the individual counties in other States underreported. Overall, information on about 300 of the estimated 2,100 juvenile homicides that occurred in

1997 was not reported to the FBI. Consequently, many juvenile homicides are not represented on the map.

Based on reported SHR data, 85% of the 3,141 counties in the U.S. had no juvenile murders in 1997. Another 8% of the counties had one juvenile homicide. Therefore, just 7% of U.S. counties experienced two or more juvenile homicides in 1997. In fact, nearly 1 in 4 juvenile homicides in

1997 occurred in five counties. The major cities in these five counties (beginning with the city in the county with the most murdered juveniles) are Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Detroit. As these five counties contain less than 9% of the U.S. population, it is clear that juvenile homicide is concentrated in a small portion of the U.S. geographic area.

# The landscape of murder shows peaks for young adults killed by young adults and for infants killed by adults

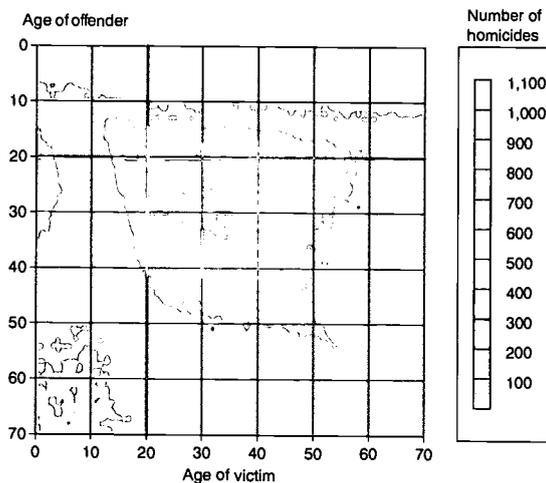
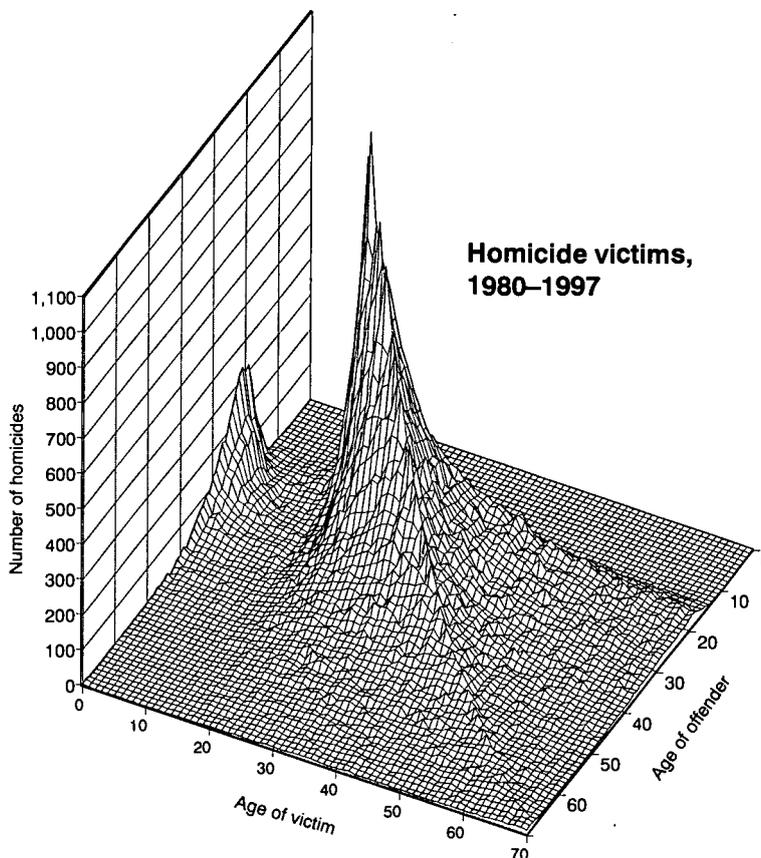
## A new view of murder

Some relationships can be summarized in two-dimensional graphs; other relationships require a more complex picture. To provide a more comprehensive representation of murders, Michael Maltz proposed using 3-dimensional plots to show the relationship between the ages of victims and offenders. Such a plot is presented in the surface graph to the right.

The contours of its surface reveal some attributes of murder in the U.S. The **large central peak** shows that most offenders are between ages 18 and 34, as are their victims. The **smaller peak off to the left** shows that many very young children are killed by persons in their twenties and thirties—mostly incidents of infants being killed by their parents. There is an area between the two peaks in which very few murders occur (victim ages 4 to 12). The **diagonal ridge running from the top of the central peak to the lower right-hand corner** shows that adult offenders tend to kill victims in their own age group. The **ridge running along the line of 20-year-old offenders** shows that older juveniles and young adults kill victims in a wide age range.

One difficulty with the 3-dimensional representation is reading the coordinates of various features, due to the distortion caused by representing three dimensions in a 2-dimensional space. Another representation of the same murder data is a 2-dimensional plot that uses color to represent the number of murders in each victim-offender age pair.

Representing complex data visually can help a reader grasp the complex interrelationships often lost in more traditional data presentations.

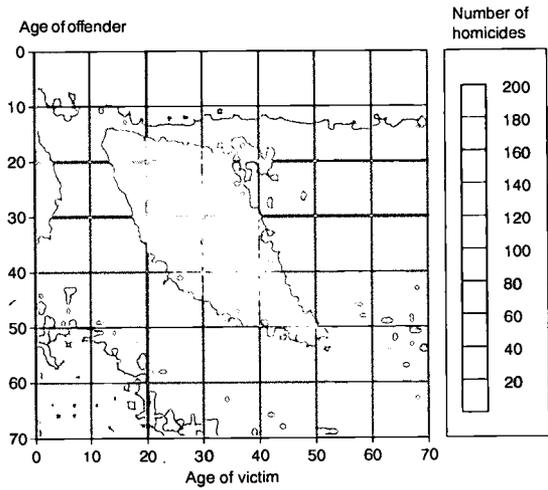
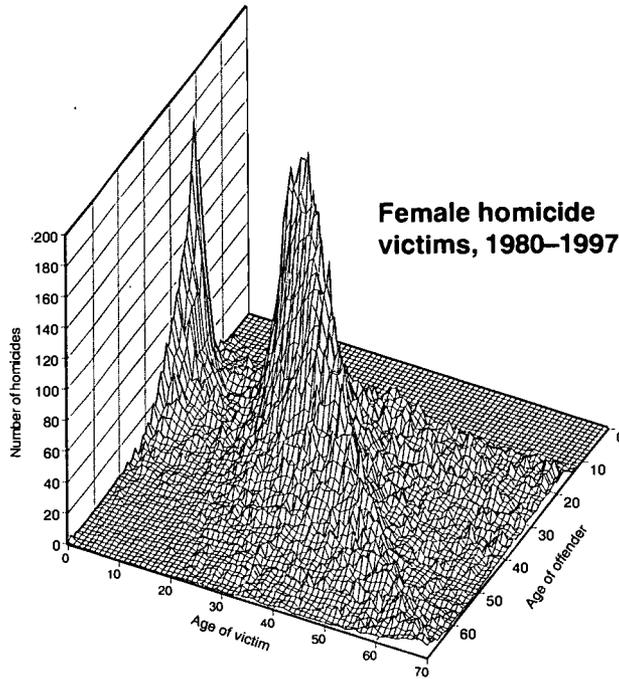


- At the point of greatest risk (the top of the highest peak), are 19- and 20-year-olds killing 19- and 20-year-olds.

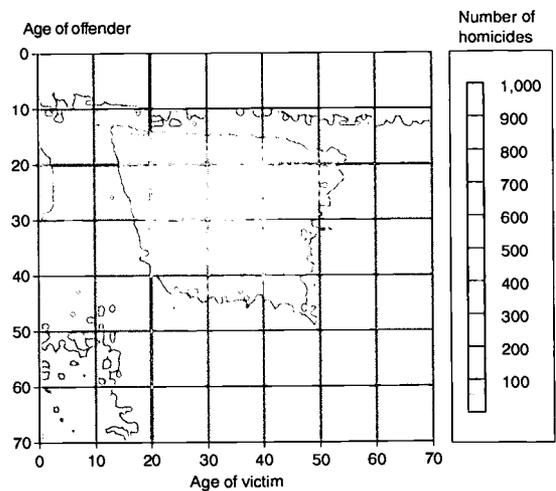
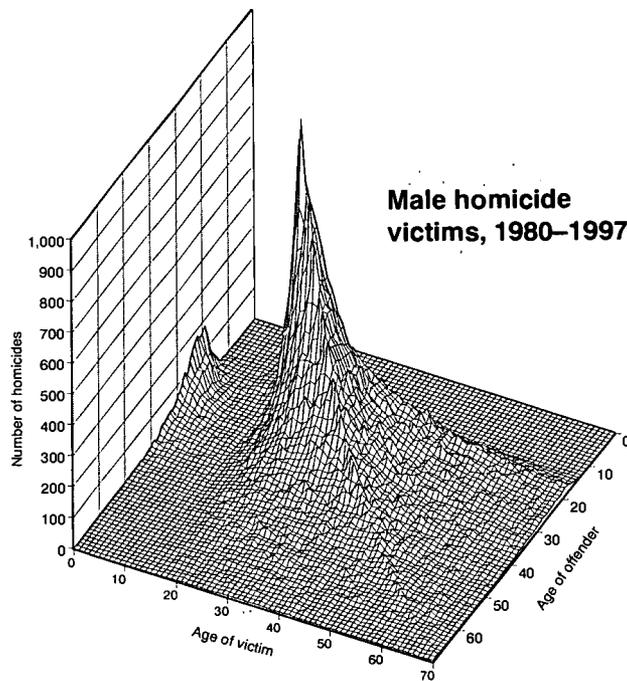
Note: The age of the oldest offender is used in multiple-offender homicides.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980-1997 [machine-readable data files].

**Females are at greatest risk of murder in their first year of life and in their young adult years**



**While the numbers of infant males and females murdered are similar, the risk of murder for males in young adulthood far surpasses that for young adult females**



Note: The age of the oldest offender is used in multiple-offender homicides.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980-1997 [machine-readable data files].

# For every two youth (ages 0–19) murdered in 1996, one youth committed suicide

## 7% of all suicides in 1996 involved youth age 19 or younger

FBI data indicate that about 3,900 youth age 19 or younger were murdered in the U.S. in 1996. The magnitude of this problem has captured the public's attention, but much less attention has been given to the fact that for every two youth murdered, one youth commits suicide.

The National Center for Health Statistics reported that 30,903 persons committed suicide in the U.S. in 1996. Of these, 7% (2,119) were youth age 19 or younger. Overall, suicides increased 9% between 1980 and 1996. For youth younger than age 15, the increase was 113%. Despite this large increase, these youngest suicide victims accounted for just 1% of all suicides in 1996.

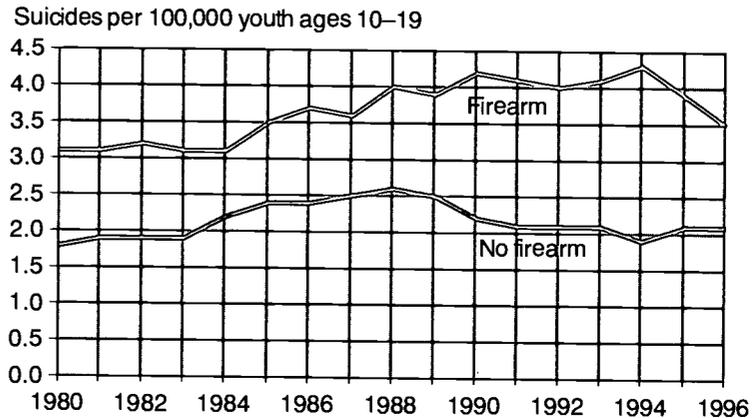
## Young suicide victims are disproportionately male and white

Males accounted for 8 in 10 youth suicides; white youth also accounted for 8 in 10 suicides.

	Number of suicides		Suicides per 100,000 youth	
	Ages 10–14	Ages 15–19	Ages 10–14	Ages 15–19
Total	298	1,817	1.6	9.7
Male	222	1,496	2.3	15.6
Female	76	321	0.8	3.5
White	244	1,522	1.6	10.3
Male	179	1,249	2.3	16.3
Female	65	273	0.9	3.8
Nonwhite	54	295	1.4	7.7
Male	43	247	2.2	12.7
Female	11	48	*	2.6

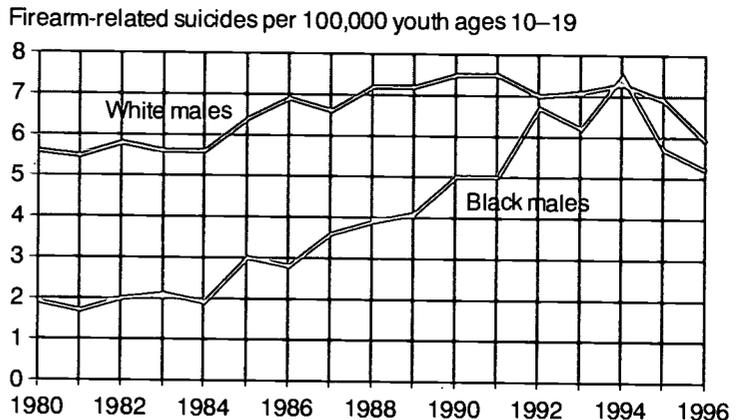
\* Too few cases to obtain a reliable rate.

## The rate of youth suicides involving a firearm increased 39% between 1980 and 1994, before declining 19% to the 1996 level



Source: Authors' analysis of the National Center for Health Statistics' 1979–1996 data from the compressed mortality file [unpublished data].

## The firearm-related suicide rate for young black males peaked in 1994 at a level higher than the rate for young white males, before declining to the 1996 level



- Between 1994 and 1996, firearm-related suicide rates decreased 19% for young white males and 31% for young black males.
- In 1996, firearm-related suicide rates for young white males declined to mid-1980's levels, while the rate for young black males was more than twice the 1980 rate.
- Changes in firearm-related suicide rates for young black males were similar to homicide patterns for young black males between 1980 and 1996.

Source: Authors' analysis of the National Center for Health Statistics' 1979–1996 data from the compressed mortality file [unpublished data].

## U.S. child homicide and suicide rates exceed rates for other industrialized countries

### Rates of firearm-related homicides and suicides are high in the U.S.

A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention compared the homicide and suicide rates for children under age 15 in the U.S. with the rates for several other industrialized countries. Each country reported data for 1 year between 1990 and 1995; U.S. data were reported for 1993. The number of homicides per 100,000 children under age 15 in the U.S. was five times the number in the other countries combined (2.57 vs. 0.51). The rate of child homicides involving a firearm, however, was 16 times greater in the U.S. than in the other countries combined (0.94 vs. 0.06).

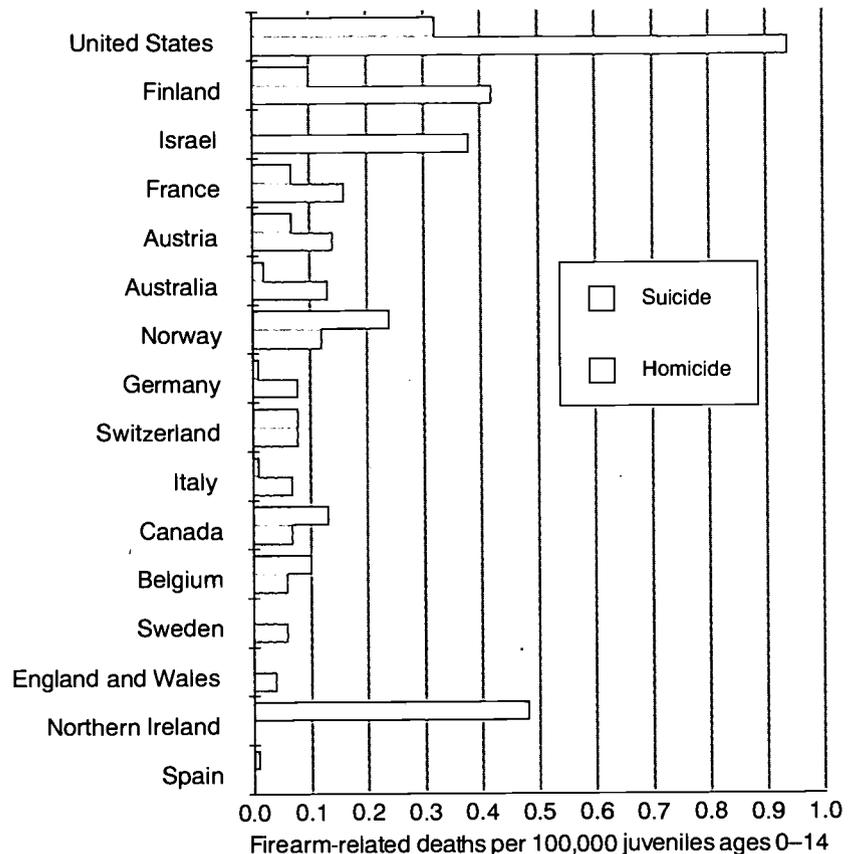
A similar pattern was seen in the suicide rates of children under age 15. Overall, the U.S. suicide rate was twice the rate for the other countries combined (0.55 vs. 0.27). For suicides involving firearms, however, the suicide rate in the U.S. was almost 11 times the rate for the other countries combined (0.32 vs. 0.03).

	Homicide rates*		Suicide rates*	
	U.S.	Foreign	U.S.	Foreign
Ages 0-4	4.10	0.95	0.00	0.00
Firearm	0.43	0.05	0.00	0.00
No firearm	3.67	0.05	0.00	0.00
Ages 5-14	1.75	0.30	0.84	0.40
Firearm	1.22	0.07	0.49	0.05
No firearm	0.53	0.24	0.35	0.35
Ages 0-14	2.57	0.51	0.55	0.27
Firearm	0.94	0.06	0.32	0.03
No firearm	1.63	0.45	0.23	0.24

\*Rates are the number of homicides or suicides per 100,000 children in the age group.

Note: Data were provided by Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Singapore, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, and Taiwan.

### The U.S. firearm-related homicide rate for children is more than twice that of Finland, the country with the next highest rate



Note: If both suicide and homicide rates for a country were 0, that country is not displayed on the graph. Data were provided by Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Singapore, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, and Taiwan.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Rates of homicide, suicide, and firearm-related death among children—26 industrialized countries.

Homicides involving a firearm were about 10% of all homicides among younger children (ages 0-4) in the U.S. in 1993. In contrast, about two-thirds of U.S. homicides among older children (5-14) involved a firearm. In other countries, firearm-related homicides were less than one-quarter of all homicides in either age group.

While nonfirearm-related suicide rates were the same among older children in the U.S. and other countries (0.35), firearm-related suicide rates in the U.S. were 10 times greater than those in other countries (0.49 vs. 0.05).

# Juveniles ages 12–17 are as likely to be victims of serious violence as are young adults ages 18–24

## Juveniles and young adults have the greatest risk of victimization

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) asks individuals whether they have been the victim of a crime, and from their responses generates victimization rates for various demographic groups. These rates reflect the number of victimizations reported per equivalent-size population units (e.g., aggravated assault victimizations per 1,000 persons ages 12–17).

In 1995 and 1996, victimization rates for serious violent crimes (i.e., rape, robbery, aggravated assault) varied substantially across age groups. Senior citizens had much lower victimization rates than young adults ages 18–24. In fact, within the adult population, these young adults had the highest victimization rates for rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

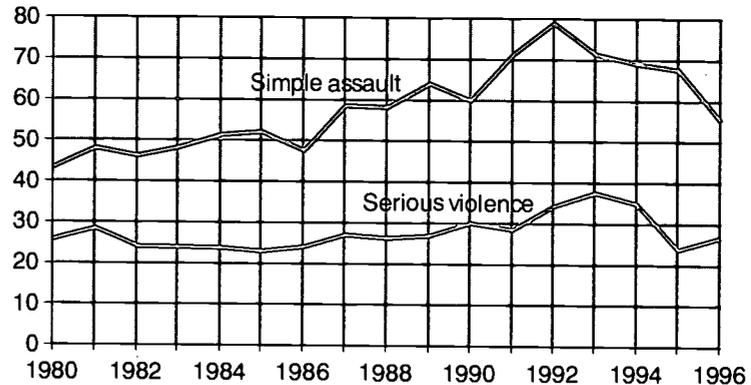
The serious violent crime victimization rates for juveniles were roughly equivalent to those for young adults, while the simple assault victimization rate for juveniles was triple that for young adults. Overall, juveniles were at greater risk of violent victimizations in 1995 and 1996 than even the most victimized age group of adults.

## Juvenile victims are likely to know their offender

In 1996, juveniles ages 12–17 who were the victims of a serious violent crime knew their offenders in 64% of these victimizations: 18% of victimizations involved an acquaintance, 34% a friend, and 11% a relative. In the other 36% of victimizations, the offender was a stranger. The offender was more likely to be known to the juvenile victim in simple and

## The serious violent victimization rate for juveniles ages 12–17 increased from 1985 to 1993 and then dropped substantially

Victimizations per 1,000 juveniles ages 12–17



- The peak year for the simple assault victimization rate was 1992; by 1996, the rate had declined to the lowest point in the decade.
- Victimization rates were consistently higher for male juveniles than female juveniles between 1980 and 1996. The average difference between male and female rates during this period was greater for serious violent crime than for simple assaults (139% vs. 74%).

Source: Authors' analysis of data for the years 1980–1996 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey* [machine readable data files].

## Juveniles were twice as likely as adults to be victims of serious violent crime and three times as likely to be victims of simple assault

Victimizations per 1,000 persons in age group, 1995 and 1996\*

Crime type	All ages	Juvenile ages			Adult ages			
		Total	12–14	15–17	Total	18–24	25–34	35 & older
Serious violent	14	26	24	29	13	29	18	7
Rape	1	2	1	3	1	2	1	<1
Robbery	5	9	9	9	4	9	7	3
Aggravated assault	8	16	14	18	7	17	10	4
Simple assault	26	65	73	56	22	50	32	13
Property	131	149	151	146	129	189	163	106

- Younger juveniles ages 12–14 were more likely than older juveniles to be victims of a simple assault (73 per 1,000 vs. 56 per 1,000).
- The property crime victimization rate for juveniles was greater than the adult victimization rate.

\* Two years of data were combined to increase the stability of rates.

Note: Detail may not add to total due to rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of data for the years 1995 and 1996 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey* [machine readable data files].

aggravated assaults (73% and 70%, respectively) than in robberies (45%).

Victim-offender relationship	Percent of victimizations		
	Robbery	Aggrav. assault	Simple assault
Total	100%	100%	100%
Stranger	55	30	27
Acquaintance	9	21	33
Friend	30	37	33
Relative	6	12	7

Most serious violent juvenile victimizations (60%) involved only a single offender. Multiple offenders were more likely in juvenile robberies (46%) and aggravated assaults (41%) than in simple assaults (22%). Juveniles were injured in 74% of serious violent victimizations. Juveniles were more likely to be injured as the result of a robbery (61%) or aggravated assault (80%) than a simple assault (45%).

### Most victimizations of juveniles are not reported to police

In 1996, about half (48%) of the serious violent victimizations of juve-

niles were not reported to police or any other authority (e.g., teachers, school principals). Victims reported 33% of serious violent victimizations directly to police; victims reported 19% to some other authority, and about one-third of these incidents were subsequently reported to law enforcement. Therefore, law enforcement eventually learned of about 4 of every 10 serious violent juvenile victimizations, including about 25% of simple assaults, 40% of aggravated assaults, and 44% of robberies. Juvenile victims in 36% of robberies, 50% of aggravated assaults, and 52% of simple assaults never reported the incident to either police or other officials.

Reporting status	Percent of victimizations		
	Robbery	Aggrav. Assault	Simple Assault
Total	100%	100%	100%
To police	44	40	25
By victim	36	34	20
By other authorities	7	6	5
To nonpolice authorities	20	10	23
To no one	36	50	52

### Much of what is known about the victimization of juveniles comes from NCVS

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) conducts the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). With funds from BJS, the Bureau of the Census contacts a large nationally representative sample of households and asks their occupants to describe the personal crimes they have experienced.

The personal crimes described in this Report include serious violent crime (i.e., rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and simple assault.

With all its strengths, NCVS has limitations in describing the extent of juvenile victimizations. NCVS does not capture information from, or about, victims below age 12. Designers of the survey believe that younger respondents are not able to provide the information requested. Therefore, juvenile victimizations reported by NCVS cover only those that involve older juveniles. In addition, as with any self-report survey, NCVS has limited ability to address the sensitive issues of intrafamily violence and child abuse.

Some official data sources (such as law enforcement and child protective service agencies) can provide a partial picture of crime against juveniles, but such data from such agencies are limited to those incidents made known to them.

### In 1995 and 1996, victims were ages 12–17 in 1 in 5 serious violent crime victimizations

Crime type	Proportion of victimizations in 1995 and 1996			
	Total	Juveniles		Adults
		Ages 12–14	Ages 15–17	
Serious violent	20%	9%	11%	80%
Rape	22	6	16	78
Robbery	19	10	9	81
Aggravated assault	21	9	12	79
Simple assault	26	15	11	74
Property	12	6	6	88

Note: Two years of data (1995 and 1996) were combined to increase the stability of rates.

Source: Authors' analysis of data for the years 1995 and 1996 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey* [machine readable data files].

**In 1996, about half (48%) of serious violent juvenile victimizations occurred between noon and 6 p.m.**

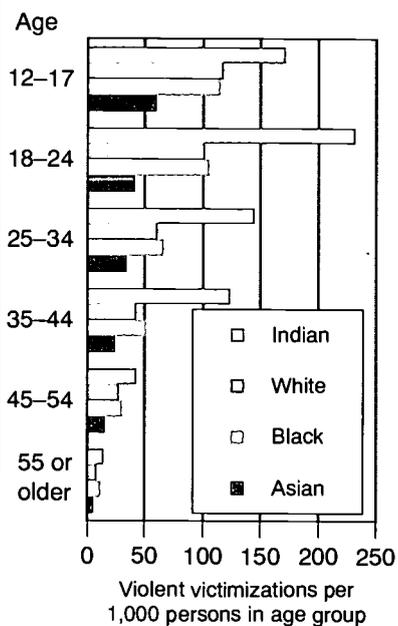
Victimization characteristics	Percent of juvenile victimizations			
	6 a.m.– Noon	Noon– 6 p.m.	6 p.m.– Midnight	Midnight 6 a.m.
<b>Serious violence</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>8%</b>
Rape	9	32	21	38
Robbery	14	51	32	4
Aggravated assault	7	49	37	6
Male	9	51	34	5
Female	10	42	34	13
White	9	50	34	7
Black	11	50	33	7
City	12	47	33	9
Suburban	5	55	34	6
Rural	17	34	39	9
<b>Simple assault</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Male	22	58	18	2
Female	18	60	19	2
White	21	61	16	2
Black	20	43	35	2
City	24	54	20	2
Suburban	19	64	15	2
Rural	21	50	25	3

- More than one-third (38%) of rapes occurred between midnight and 6 a.m., a proportion higher than any other violent crime for that time period. As a result, the time patterns for serious violent victimizations overall differed slightly for males and females.
- Time patterns for serious violent victimizations were similar for white juveniles and black juveniles, with half of all these victimizations occurring between noon and 6 p.m. In contrast, a greater proportion of simple assaults of black juveniles occurred during the evening hours.
- Compared with cities and rural areas, suburban areas had the greatest proportion of violent juvenile victimizations occurring in the hours between noon and 6 p.m.

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of data for 1996 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey* [machine readable data file].

**Violent victimizations were more likely among American Indian juveniles than other racial groups**



- Between 1992 and 1996, the average annual number of violent victimizations per 1,000 youth ages 12-17 was higher among American Indians (171) than whites (118), blacks (115), or Asians (60). In fact, within each age group, American Indians were more likely than were persons of other races to be the victims of violent crime.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *American Indians and crime*.

## In one-third of all sexual assaults reported to law enforcement, the victim was younger than age 12

### Incident-based data provide information on crimes against persons under age 12

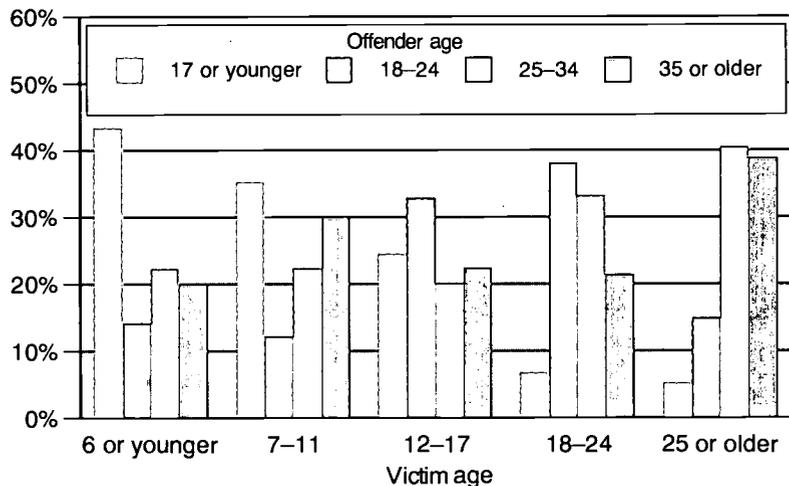
Because the National Crime Victimization Survey does not interview persons below the age of 12, little is known about crimes against these young juveniles. In recent years, however, a new information resource has developed that can shed light on this little-known portion of the crime problem. The FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) collects detailed data on crimes reported to law enforcement, including the demographic characteristics of victims and offenders, the relationships of victims to their offenders, and the location of the crimes. NIBRS data for 1991 through 1996 included data from 12 States: Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and Vermont. While relatively few law enforcement agencies report NIBRS data, the data reported for 1991 through 1996 contain information on more than 1.1 million incidents of violence.

### 1 in 18 victims of a violent crime known to police is under age 12

NIBRS data indicate that between 1991 and 1996, young juveniles (persons under the age of 12) were the victim in 5.5% of all violent crime incidents reported to a law enforcement agency. Young juvenile victims were more common in some types of crimes than others: kidnaping (21%), sexual assault (32%), robbery (2%), aggravated assault (4%), and simple assault (4%). More than one-third (37%) of these young victims were younger than age 7. About half (47%) of these young victims were female.

### Young juveniles are most likely to be sexually assaulted by persons under age 18—older juveniles by young adults

Percent of all sexual assault offenders



Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System* master files for the years 1991–1996 [machine-readable data files].

### Age and relationship characteristics of sexual assault offenders vary with the age of the juvenile victim

Relationship to victim	Age of offender				
	Under 12	12–17	18–24	25–34	35 & older

#### In a typical 1,000 sexual assaults of children age 6 or younger

Family member	40	126	71	136	125
Acquaintance	93	159	61	77	84
Stranger	3	8	5	7	6

#### In a typical 1,000 sexual assaults of young juveniles ages 7–11

Family member	16	117	42	109	157
Acquaintance	46	148	68	100	148
Stranger	4	11	7	10	15

#### In a typical 1,000 sexual assaults of juveniles ages 12–17

Family member	1	26	31	56	121
Acquaintance	5	196	270	122	101
Stranger	0	15	23	19	14

- Older juvenile acquaintances and family members age 25 and older were the most common offenders in sexual assaults against very young children.
- About half of offenders who sexually assaulted juveniles ages 7–11 were older juvenile acquaintances and family members/acquaintances age 35 and older.
- Nearly half of all offenders who sexually assaulted juveniles ages 12–17 were acquaintances between ages 12 and 24.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System* master files for the years 1991–1996 [machine-readable data files].

**1 in 3 victims of sexual assault is under age 12**

The NIBRS data are an important source of information on the sexual assaults of young children, a crime that is hard to assess through victim surveys. These data point to large differences between the younger and older victims of sexual assault. For example, while just 4% of adult sexual assault victims were male, as were 8% of victims ages 12 to 17, 26% of sexual assault victims under age 12 were male. Younger sexual assault victims were also far more likely to have juvenile offenders.

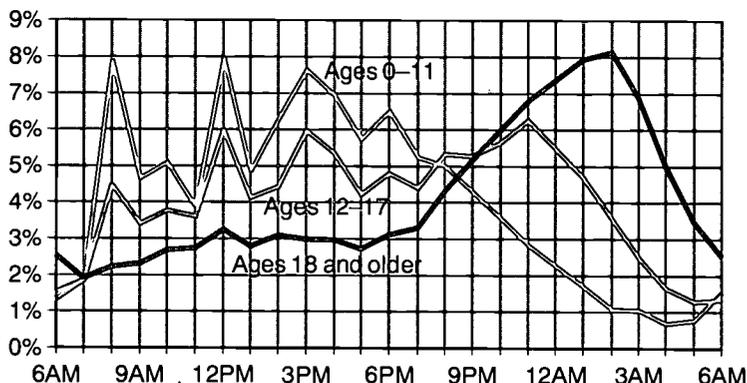
Victim age group	Percent of sexual assault victimizations with a juvenile offender
Age 6 and younger	43%
Ages 7-11	34
Ages 12-17	24
Ages 18-24	7
Age 25 and older	5

Crime locations also differed by victim age. For adult victims, 57% of sexual assaults occurred in a residence or home, compared with 71% of the sexual assaults against older juveniles and 84% of the sexual assaults of children under age 12.

The relationship of victim to offender also differed by victim age. In sexual assaults of adults, the offender was a stranger in 25% of incidents, a family member in 12%, and an acquaintance in 63%. In contrast, for victims under age 12, the offender was a family member in 47% of incidents, an acquaintance in 49%, and a stranger in just 4%.

**Sexual assaults of juveniles peak at 8 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m.; assaults of older juveniles also peak in the late evening hours**

Percent of all sexual assaults in victim age group



Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System master files for the years 1991-1996 [machine-readable data files].

**The location of a sexual assault of a juvenile is related to the type of offender involved**

Location	Offender's relationship to victim		
	Family member	Acquaintance	Stranger
<b>In a typical 1,000 sexual assaults of children age 6 or younger</b>			
Residence	458	398	19
Nonresidence	36	77	13
<b>In a typical 1,000 sexual assaults of young juveniles ages 7-11</b>			
Residence	405	402	22
Nonresidence	33	109	29
<b>In a typical 1,000 sexual assaults of juveniles ages 12-17</b>			
Residence	214	474	29
Nonresidence	19	214	49

- Strangers are least likely to be the offenders in sexual assaults of very young juveniles, regardless of where the crime occurs.
- For very young victims of sexual assault, when the crime occurs in a residence, the most likely offender is a family member.
- Family members are as likely as acquaintances to be the offender in sexual assaults of juveniles ages 7-11 when the assault occurs in a residence.
- Sexual assaults of juveniles ages 12-17, regardless of where they occur, are most likely to be committed by an acquaintance.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System master files for the years 1991-1996 [machine-readable data files].

# Students are safer at school than away from school, and school crime declined from 1993 through 1996

## School crime has not increased in recent years

A comparison of data from the School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) for 1989 and 1995 reveals almost no difference between the 2 years in the overall level of criminal victimization in schools.

Type of victimization	Percent of students reporting victimization	
	1989	1995
Any	15%	15%
Violent	3	4
Property	12	12

Note: Any victimization includes violent and property. Students reporting multiple victimizations are only counted once under "Any."

Violent victimization, however, rose somewhat. Much of this change was due to an increase in the percentage of female students reporting violent victimizations: from 2% in 1989 to 3.3% in 1995.

## School crime victims tend to be younger and male

Type of victimization	Victimizations per 1,000 students in 1996	
	Ages 12-14	Ages 15-18
Total	161	102
Violent	67	34
Serious	10	9
Theft	94	68
	Male	Female
Total	144	111
Violent	64	32
Serious	13	6
Theft	80	79

Note: Serious violent crimes include sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes includes serious violent crimes plus simple assault.

Responses to the 1996 NCVS show that younger students (ages 12-14)

were more often the victims of school crime than were older students (ages 15-18), and males more often than females. In both instances, the differences between the groups were much sharper when violent rather than nonviolent crime was involved. In fact, while males were the victims of thefts about as often as females, males were twice as likely as females to be victims of violence.

## The risk of serious violence is greater for urban students than for those in other areas

According to the 1996 NCVS, students living in urban areas were more vulnerable to serious violent crime than their suburban and rural counterparts. This was true both at school (including on the way to or from school) and away from school. For theft, however, student vulnerability in urban, suburban, and rural areas was similar.

Type of victimization	Victimizations per 1,000 students in 1996		
	Urban	Suburban	Rural
<b>At school</b>			
Total	131	138	101
Violent	55	54	29
Serious	16	9	4
Theft	77	84	72
<b>Away from school</b>			
Total	138	114	99
Violent	69	52	43
Serious	38	23	17
Theft	68	62	57

Note: Serious violent crimes include sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crimes include serious violent crimes plus simple assault.

The 1995 SCS survey found that the proportion of students who were victims of violence was greater in public schools (4.4%) than in private schools (2.3%).

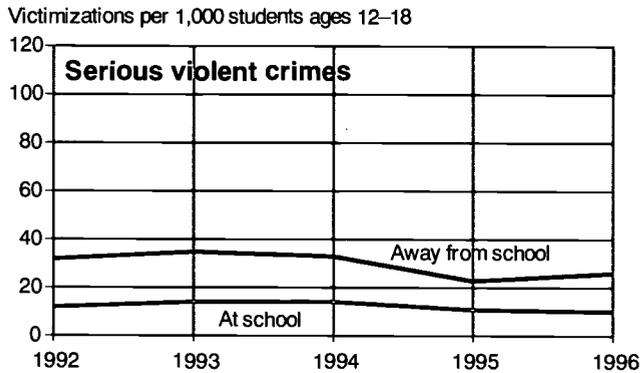
## In-school violent death is extraordinarily rare

Although in recent years a great deal of attention has understandably been focused on several horrific cases of multiple homicides in schools—including some five separate incidents during the 1997-98 school year—it is still fair to say that school-associated violent death almost never happens. Making statistical generalizations about such extraordinarily rare occurrences can be difficult. So, for example, in a nationwide survey of the administrators of 1,234 public elementary, middle, and high schools regarding in-school crime during the 1996-97 academic year, *no incidents* of in-school murder were reported. That does not mean that none occurred in that year—only that the sample size, while perfectly adequate for most other purposes, was too small to yield reliable estimates regarding such rare events.

A 1996 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* collected information about in-school homicides during the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years from newspaper clipping services, media database searches, interviews with local officials, and other such methods, and concluded that a total of 63 students were murdered in school during that period. In addition, there were 13 in-school suicides involving students and 29 other violent deaths involving nonstudents.

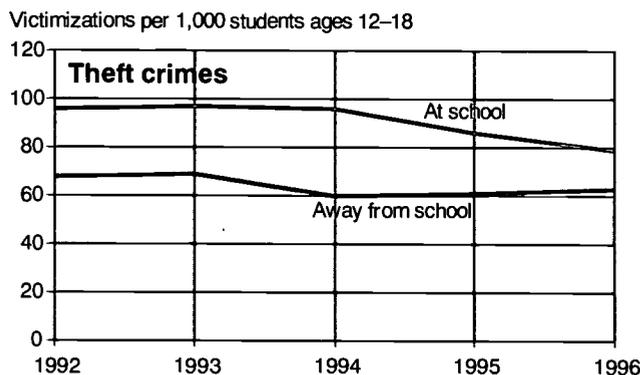
By way of rough comparison, during the 1992 and 1993 calendar years, 7,294 young people ages 5 through 19 were murdered *away from school*.

**Students are more apt to suffer serious violence away from school than at or on the way to school**



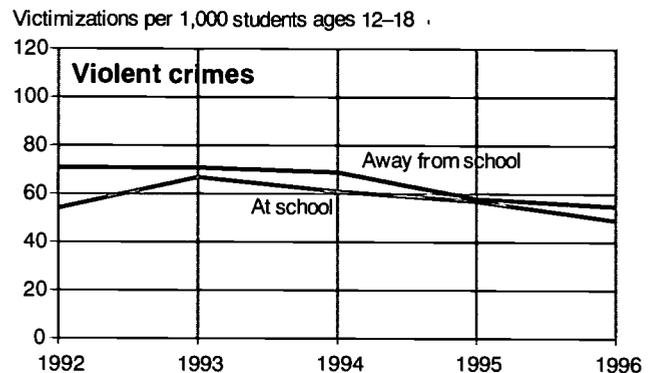
- In 1996, students ages 12–18 were victims of an estimated 255,000 nonfatal serious violent crime incidents (such as sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) at school.
- Away from school that same year, students were victims of an estimated 671,000 such incidents.

**Theft is by far the most common school crime**



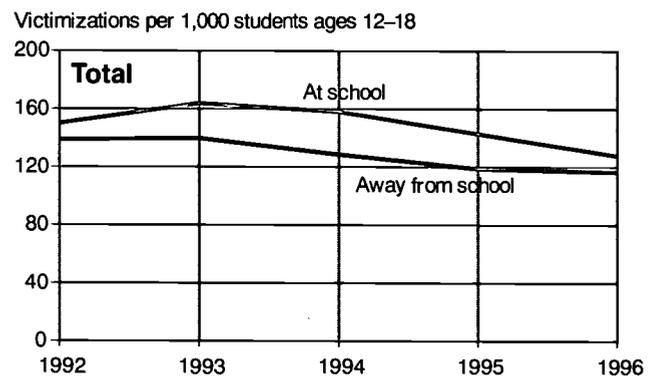
- Students ages 12–18 were victims of an estimated 2.1 million in-school thefts in 1996—62% of all crimes at school.
- Students ages 12–18 were victims of an estimated 1.6 million thefts away from school in 1996—53% of all crimes against students away from school.

**Violent victimization rates were similar for students at school and away from school**



- In 1996, students ages 12–18 were victims of an estimated 1.3 million nonfatal violent crimes (serious violent crime plus simple assault) at school.
- Away from school that same year, students ages 12–18 were victims of an estimated 1.4 million violent crimes.
- When simple assaults are included in the analysis, the difference between victimization rates at and away from school decreases.

**The rate of victimization of students at school declined more than the away-from-school rate**



- The overall rate at which students were victimized at school dropped 21% from 1993 through 1996, compared with a 16% drop for the rate at which they were victimized away from school.
- Overall in 1996, students were victims of 3.3 million crimes at school and 3.1 million away from school.

Source: Authors' adaptation of National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics' *Indicators of school crime and safety, 1998*.

### **The most serious in-school crimes are concentrated in a small number of schools**

Serious violent crime appears to be prevalent in only a minority of the Nation's public schools. According to the survey of public elementary, middle, and high school administrators regarding in-school crime during the 1996–97 school year, most middle and high schools (55% and 51%, respectively) reported at least one incident of unarmed assault or fighting to the police during the year. Reports of theft (55% and 44%) and vandalism (52% and 47%) were also quite common. Reports of more serious violent crimes were less common. Only 13% of high schools and 12% of middle schools contacted police about incidents of attacks or fighting involving weapons. School reports to police regarding robbery (8% and 5%) and rape or sexual battery (also 8% and 5%) were even more rare. Overall, 21% of the high schools and 19% of the middle schools reported at least one serious violent crime.

The percentage of schools (including elementary schools) reporting at least one serious violent crime to police was much higher in cities (17%) than in rural areas (8%) or small towns (5%). Likewise, a much higher percentage of large schools (those with at least 1,000 students) reported such crimes (33%) than medium-sized (9%) or small schools (4%),

Most public schools did not consider it necessary to take special security measures to prevent crime. Of the schools surveyed, 84% had no formal security measures in place during the 1996–97 school year, beyond simply controlling access to school grounds; an additional 3% did not even control access. In the remaining 13% of schools, some combination of law enforcement presence and/or metal detectors was in use.

### **Teachers are among the victims of school crime**

An analysis of NCVS responses gathered from public and private school teachers during the years 1992 through 1996 indicates that teachers were victims of an average of 123,800 violent in-school crimes during each of those years (or 30 for every 1,000 teachers). About 18,000 (or 4 for every 1,000 teachers) were victims of serious violent crimes, including robbery, aggravated assault, and rape or sexual assault. In addition, on average teachers were victims of 192,400 thefts per year (or 46 for every 1,000 teachers).

Teacher victimization in general was considerably more common in urban schools (an annual average of 96 incidents per 1,000 teachers) than in suburban schools (57 per 1,000) or rural schools (55 per 1,000). Middle school and junior high school teachers were much more likely to be victims of simple assault and other violent crimes than were their counterparts at the senior high school and elementary school levels. Senior high school teachers, on the other hand, were more often victims of theft.

## Juveniles are at the highest risk of being victims of violence at the end of the school day

### Victim reports and police incident data both show daytime juvenile victimization peaks

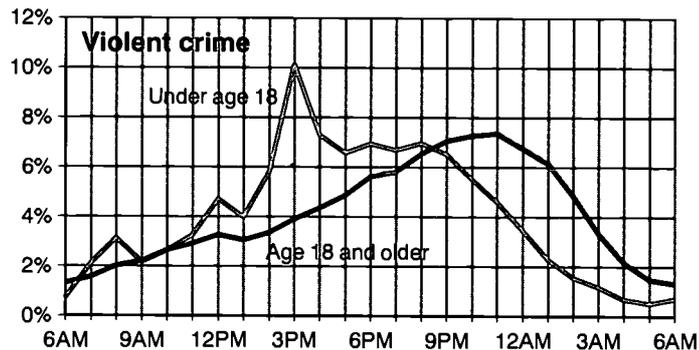
In recent years, analyses of the FBI National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data have highlighted the fact that juveniles are at highest risk of being the victim of a violent crime in the 4 hours following the end of the school day (roughly 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.). This pattern is based on reports of crimes to law enforcement. It is possible that the actual pattern of crime against juveniles differs from the police data, because much of juvenile crime is never reported to law enforcement.

To investigate this possibility, data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) were analyzed to determine the time periods in which a nationally representative sample of youth ages 12–17 said they had been victimized in 1996, regardless of whether the crime had been reported to law enforcement. NCVS asks the victims to indicate in which of a day's four 6-hour blocks their victimization occurred. For comparison, NIBRS data were then analyzed for victims of the same ages.

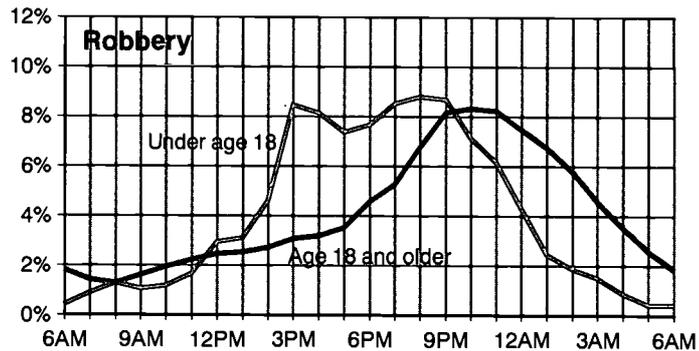
The results show that juvenile victims report even more crime occurring between noon and 6 p.m. (which includes the afterschool period) than indicated by NIBRS data. For example, NCVS victims indicate that half (51%) of all robberies occur between noon and 6 p.m., while the police data show that only 32% of juvenile robberies reported to them occurred during this period. Similarly, NCVS data show a greater proportion of aggravated assaults (49% vs. 34%) and simple assaults (59% vs. 38%) occurring between noon and 6 p.m.

### The violent victimization of juveniles is greatest between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m., while adult victimizations are most common between 9 p.m. and midnight

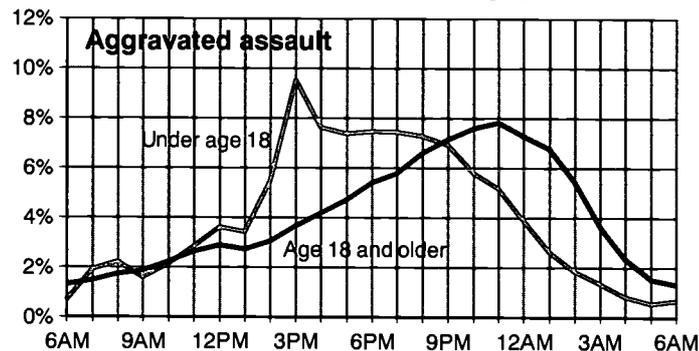
Percent of all violent victimizations in age group



Percent of all robbery victimizations in age group



Percent of all aggravated assault victimizations in age group

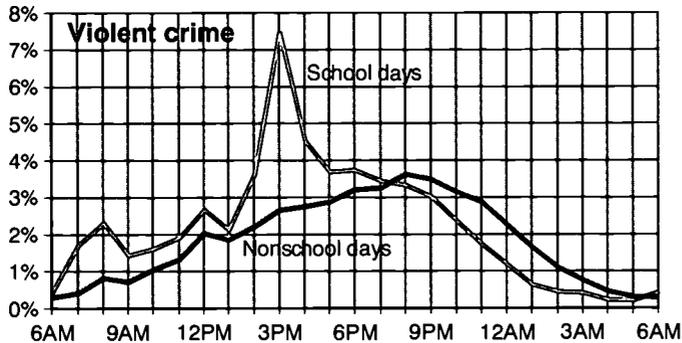


Note: Violent victimizations include the crimes of murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Data are from 12 States (Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia).

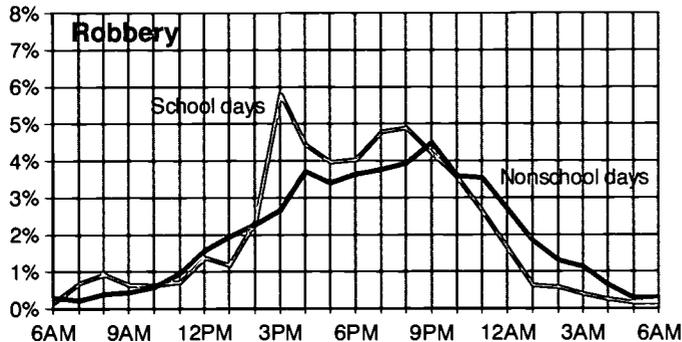
Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System* master files for the years 1991–1996 [machine readable data files].

**1 in 5 of all violent crimes with juvenile victims occurs between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on school days**

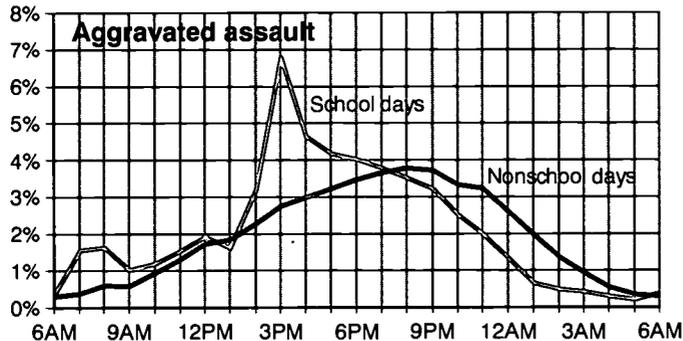
Percent of all juvenile violent victimizations



Percent of all juvenile robbery victimizations



Percent of all juvenile aggravated assault victimizations



Note: Violent victimizations include the crimes of murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Data are from 12 States (Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia).

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System* master files for the years 1991–1996 [machine readable data files].

Percent of all crimes against juveniles

Offense	Victim reports	Police records
<b>Robbery</b>		
6 a.m.–noon	14%	7%
Noon–6 p.m.	51	32
6 p.m.–midnight	32	49
Midnight–6 a.m.	4	13
<b>Aggravated assault</b>		
6 a.m.–noon	7	11
Noon–6 p.m.	49	34
6 p.m.–midnight	37	42
Midnight–6 a.m.	6	13
<b>Simple assault</b>		
6 a.m.–noon	21	14
Noon–6 p.m.	59	38
6 p.m.–midnight	18	39
Midnight–6 a.m.	2	9

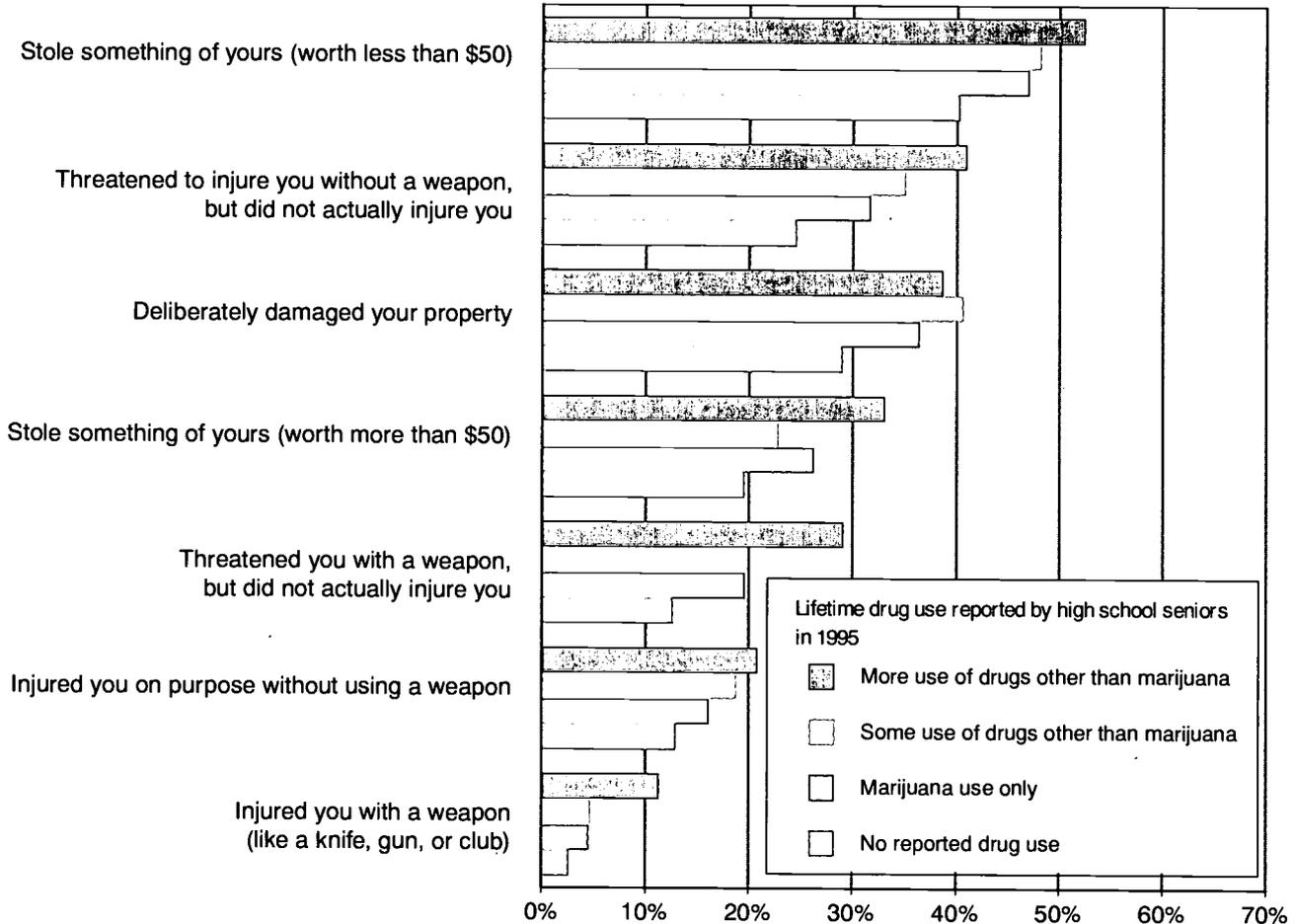
It is reasonable that victim reports indicate greater proportions of victimization occurring during hours that include the afterschool period than do the law enforcement data. As NCVS data indicate, juveniles did not tell adults about a substantial portion of their victimizations, and when they did tell an adult, they often reported to authorities other than law enforcement (e.g., school officials). These authorities may handle the matter themselves or refer the matter to law enforcement.

Because crimes in and around school are likely to be reported initially to school officials who may not report them to police, such crimes may be less likely to be reported to law enforcement than crimes occurring at other times of the day. Consequently, law enforcement data may actually underestimate the proportion of crime that occurs in the afterschool hours.

# High school seniors who used drugs were more likely than those who did not to be the victims of violence

## Substantial proportions of high school seniors reported being victimized—victimization was more common for those who used drugs

Victimizations reported by high school seniors in the past 12 months:



- In 1995, 50% of seniors reported no drug use, 21% reported using only marijuana (or hashish), 11% said they had used drugs other than marijuana (LSD/psychedelics, cocaine, amphetamines, tranquilizers, methaqualone, barbiturates) but had never used any one class of them more than twice and had never used heroin, 14% said they had used drugs other than marijuana three or more times and had never used heroin, and 2% said they had used heroin at least once.
- More than 10% of seniors who said they had never used illicit drugs reported that in the past year someone had threatened them with a weapon. Among those who had used marijuana only, the figure was 18%; for those in the "some use" category, the figure was 20%; for those in the "more use" category, it was nearly 30%.
- Of seniors who said they had used drugs other than marijuana three or more times, 11% reported that they had been injured with a weapon; the proportion for those in the "some use" and "marijuana only" categories was 5%; among those who were not drug users, the proportion was 3%.

Note: Detailed data for those reporting heroin use are not presented because there were too few cases.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley's *Monitoring the future, questionnaire responses from the Nation's high school seniors, 1995*.

## The likelihood of victims reporting crime to police varies by victim age and the nature of the incident

### Juveniles are less likely to report violent crimes than adults are

Finkelhor and Ormrod's analysis of the National Crime Victimization Survey for 1995 and 1996 studied the variations in the proportion of crime victims reporting to police or other authorities (e.g., guards, school principals). The study revealed that adults were more likely than juveniles to report both completed and attempted violent crime to some authority regardless of the:

- Location of the incident.
- Presence of a weapon.
- Degree of injury.
- Age of the perpetrator.
- Relationship between the victim and perpetrator.

Their analysis also revealed that adults and juveniles generally report completed theft offenses to some authority in equal proportions. Juveniles, however, were more likely than adults to report thefts that took place in school and thefts of less valuable items (i.e., items worth less than \$250).

### Juveniles are more likely to report some crimes than others

Certain factors increase the likelihood that juveniles will report a crime to some official:

- Violent crimes were more likely to be reported when the incident took place at school rather than away from school (49% vs. 41%), resulted in injury rather than did not result in injury (57% vs. 40%), or involved an adult rather than a juvenile perpetrator (51% vs. 42%).
- The relationship between the victim and perpetrator or the

presence of a weapon did not influence the probability of a violent incident being reported.

- Theft offenses were more likely to be reported by juveniles when the incident took place at school than away from school (51% vs. 22%) or involved a stranger rather than someone known to the victim (42% vs. 20%). In addition, thefts of items worth more than \$250 were more likely to be reported than thefts of items worth less than \$250 (49% vs. 38%).
- The proportion of theft offenses reported did not vary by the victim's sex or by whether the perpetrator was an adult or juvenile.

### The proportion of violent crimes reported by juveniles to the police increased with victim age

Overall, the proportion of violent crimes reported to any authority ranged between 42% and 48% for each age group between 12 and 17, but the authority to whom the incident was reported varied with the victim's age.

Victim's age	Percent of violent crime reported to	
	Police	Others
12	20%	28%
13	22	23
14	26	17
15	31	13
16	33	9
17	38	6

The youngest victims of violence (youth ages 12 and 13) were more likely to report to authorities other than the police. By age 14, a greater proportion of violent crimes were reported to the police (26%) than to other officials (17%). The increasing use of police and the corresponding reduction in use of other authorities continued through age 17.

### Regardless of age, juveniles are more likely to report thefts to authorities other than police

Reporting of theft offenses peaked at 44% for 14-year-old victims and declined to 31% for 17-year-old victims. While thefts are more likely to be reported to officials other than police, the proportion reported to the police increased with age, from 7% for 12-year-olds to 14% for youth age 17.

Victim's age	Percent of theft reported to	
	Police	Others
12	7%	36%
13	8	35
14	12	32
15	11	30
16	10	23
17	14	17

## Caretakers know the whereabouts of many "missing" children—the problem is recovering them

### Who are runaways, and what happens when they are away?

In a 1988 national incidence study, parents or guardians of runaways who were gone overnight provided information about the runaways and their experiences while gone.

Most runaways were teenage girls (58%); most were 16 or 17 years old (68%). Most came from families that were or had been broken; only 28% lived with both (natural or adoptive) parents.

Most runaways initially stayed with someone they knew (66%) or did so at some time during the episode (94%). Some had spent time in unfamiliar or dangerous situations: 29% spent at least part of the episode without a familiar and secure place to stay, and 11% spent at least one night without a place to sleep. Many runaways returned home within a day or two, but about half (52%) were gone for 3 days or more, and 25% were gone for a week or more. For about half of the runaways, the caretaker knew the child's whereabouts more than half of the time the child was away from home.

Many runaways had run away before, with 34% having run away at least once before in the past 12 months. Some traveled a long distance; approximately 16% went more than 50 miles from home during the episode, and about 10% went more than 100 miles.

### Who are throwaways, and what happens when they are away?

About half of throwaway children were runaways whose parents or guardians made no effort to recover them, and about half were directly

### Some categories of "missing" children are more numerous than others

The term "missing children" has been used for many years to describe children involved in very different kinds of events, making it difficult to estimate the magnitude of these phenomena or to formulate appropriate public responses. A 1988 national incidence study sought to measure the "missing child problem" by examining several distinct problems.

#### Broadly defined:

##### Parental/family abduction

*354,100 children per year*

A family member took a child or failed to return a child at the end of an agreed-upon visit in violation of a custody agreement/deedee, with the child away at least overnight.

##### Stranger/nonfamily abduction

*3,200–4,600 children per year*

Coerced and unauthorized *taking* of a child, or *detention*, or *luring* for purposes of committing another crime.

##### Runaway

*450,700 children per year*

A child who left home without permission and stayed away at least overnight or who was already away and refused to return home.

##### Throwaway

*127,100 children per year*

A child who was told to leave home, or whose caretaker refused to let come home when away, or whose caretaker made no effort to recover the child when the child ran away, or who was abandoned.

##### Otherwise missing

*438,200 children per year*

Children missing for varying periods depending on age, disability, and whether the absence was due to injury.

#### Defined as serious:

*163,200 children per year*

A family member took the child out of State or attempted to conceal/ prevent contact with the child, or abductor intended to keep child or permanently change custodial privileges.

*200–300 children per year*

A nonfamily abduction where the abductor was a stranger and the child was gone overnight, or taken 50 miles or more, or ransomed, or killed, or the perpetrator showed intent to keep the child permanently.

*133,500 children per year*

A runaway who during a runaway episode was without a secure and familiar place to stay.

*59,200 children per year*

A throwaway who during some part of the episode was without a secure and familiar place to stay.

*139,100 children per year*

An otherwise missing child case where police were called.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Finkelhor, Hotaling, and Sedlack's *Missing, abducted, runaway, and throwaway children in America. First report: Numbers and characteristics, national incidence studies.*

forced to leave home. Parents of throwaway children reported that most (84%) were 16 years old or older. The vast majority stayed with friends at least part of the time while they were away (88%), although 13% spent at least one night without a place to sleep. A majority (68%) returned home within 2 weeks. For about three-quarters of throwaway children, the caretaker knew the child's whereabouts more than half of the time the child was away from home.

#### **Who are abducted children, and what happens when they are taken?**

Parents of children abducted by a family member reported that most of these children were young: 33% were 2 to 5 years old, and 28% were 6 to 9 years old. Most were returned within a week: 62% were returned in 6 days or less, and 28% were returned in 24 hours or less. For just over half of children abducted by a family member, the caretaker knew

the child's whereabouts more than half of the time the child was away from home.

Many family abductions appeared to fall into the "serious" category, with the abducting parent:

- Preventing the child from contacting the caretaking parent (41%).
- Concealing the child (33%).
- Threatening or demanding something of the caretaking parent (17%).
- Taking the child out of State (9%).

Nonfamily abductions were studied in the records of a national sample of police departments. In these cases, three-quarters of the children were teenage girls, and half were 12 years old or older. Most of the victims were not missing for long: most were gone for less than 1 day; an estimated 12% to 21% were gone for less than 1 hour. Nearly all of the victims were forcibly moved during the episode: most were taken from

the street; 85% of the cases involved force (75% with a weapon). Researchers estimated that, of the 200–300 nonfamily abductions that fell into the "serious" category (stereotypical kidnappings), about 100 resulted in homicides.

#### **Who are other missing children, and what happens when they are missing?**

Most lost or otherwise missing children tended to fall into one of two age groups: 4 years old or younger (47%) or 16 to 17 years old (34%). Of those incidences where the reason was known, most (57%) were missing for "benign" reasons (such as the child's forgetting the time or misunderstandings between parents and children about when the latter would return or where they would be). The next largest group (28%) involved children who had been injured while they were away from home. Nearly all of these children had returned within 24 hours.

## The number of children abused, neglected, or endangered almost doubled from 1986 to 1993

### In 1993, nearly 3 million children were maltreated or endangered

The third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3) reported information on children harmed or believed to be harmed by maltreatment in 1993. Child maltreatment includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and physical, emotional, and educational neglect by a caretaker. Victims of maltreatment may die as the result of abuse or neglect or may experience serious or moderate harm. A child may also be in danger of harm as the result of maltreatment, or harm may be inferred when maltreatment is sufficiently severe.

NIS-3 included maltreatment reported to researchers not only by child protective service agencies, but by other investigatory agencies (e.g., police, courts, public health departments) and community institutions (e.g., hospitals, schools, daycare centers, and social service agencies). It did not include cases known only to family members or neighbors.

### Most maltreated children were neglected in 1993

NIS-3 counts each incident of abuse or neglect that occurs. A single child may experience many types of abuse or neglect. In 1993, 70% of maltreated children were victims of neglect, and 43% were victims of abuse. More specifically:

- 47% were physically neglected.
- Almost equal proportions of maltreated children were physically abused (22%), emotionally neglected (21%), and emotionally abused (19%).
- 11% were sexually abused; 14% were educationally neglected.

### More than half of all victims (55%) experienced serious or moderate harm as a result of maltreatment in 1993

Type of harm	Percent of victims
All	100.0%
Fatal	0.1
Serious	20.2
Moderate	35.0
Inferred	8.0
Endangered	36.7

### Types of maltreatment were related to the characteristics of the child

The incidence of maltreatment varied by sex and age but not by race or ethnicity:

- The incidence of sexual abuse was almost three times greater among females than males in 1993. In contrast, emotional neglect was more common among males than females.
- The incidence of maltreatment increased more among males than among females between 1986 and 1993 (102% vs. 68%).
- Between 1986 and 1993, the incidence of maltreatment grew among all children except those ages 15-17.
- Moderate injuries were more frequent among older than younger children. Age differences were not found for other levels of injury.
- The incidence of endangerment was greater for younger children (ages 0-11) than older children (ages 15-17) in 1993.
- Children ages 0-2 and 15-17 had the lowest incidence of maltreatment in 1993.

### There are several different types of child maltreatment

Child maltreatment occurs when a caretaker (a parent or parent substitute, such as a daycare provider) is responsible for, or permits, the abuse or neglect of a child. The maltreatment can result in actual physical or emotional harm, or it can place the child in danger of physical or emotional injury. The following types of maltreatment were included in NIS-3:

**Physical abuse** includes physical acts that caused or could have caused physical injury to the child.

**Sexual abuse** is involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator, including contacts for sexual purposes, prostitution, pornography, or other sexually exploitative activities.

**Emotional abuse** is defined as acts (including verbal or emotional assault) or omissions that caused or could have caused conduct, cognitive, affective, or other mental disorders.

**Physical neglect** includes abandonment, expulsion from the home, failure to seek remedial health care or delay in seeking care, inadequate supervision, disregard for hazards in the home, or inadequate food, clothing, or shelter.

**Emotional neglect** includes inadequate nurturance or affection, permitting maladaptive behavior, and other inattention to emotional/developmental needs.

**Educational neglect** includes permitting chronic truancy or other inattention to educational needs.

### More maltreatment was reported among lower-income families

Children from families with an annual income of less than \$15,000 had substantially more maltreatment of all types in 1993 than children from families in other income groups. The abuse rate in these lowest-income families was two times the rate in other families, and the neglect rate was more than three times higher. Children in lowest-income families had higher injury rates in every injury category except fatalities.

### Children of single parents were at higher risk of maltreatment

The overall risk of maltreatment in 1993 was twice as great for children living with single parents as for children living with both parents. Compared with children living with both parents, children living with single parents were twice as likely to be neglected and were marginally more likely to be abused. Children living with a single parent of either sex experienced a higher incidence of physical and educational neglect than those living with both parents and were marginally more likely to experience emotional neglect. Children from single-parent homes were at greater risk of injury and of being endangered by maltreatment than those living with both parents.

### Maltreatment was related to family size

- Children living in larger families (with four or more children) were physically neglected almost three times more often than those living in one-child families and more than twice as often as those living in families with two or three children.
- Serious injuries were equally likely in families of all sizes.
- Moderate injury was more frequently experienced by maltreated children in larger families than those in families with either two or three children. Children in these largest families also experienced higher rates of endangerment.

### The majority of maltreated children were victimized by their birth parents

Birth parents were responsible for the largest proportion of maltreatment victimizations in 1993 (78%), followed by other categories of parents (14%) and other perpetrators (9%). Children victimized by their birth parents were twice as likely to experience neglect as abuse. More specifically, among children victimized by their birth parents:

- The most common forms of maltreatment involved educational neglect (29%), physical neglect (27%), and physical abuse (23%).
- 16% were victims of emotional neglect, 14% were victims of emotional abuse, and 5% were victims of sexual abuse.

### Emotional abuse and neglect increased more than other forms of maltreatment between 1986 and 1993

Maltreatment type	Number of victims of maltreatment		
	1986	1993	Percent change
Total	1,424,400	2,815,600	98%
Abuse	590,800	1,221,800	107
Physical	311,500	614,100	97
Sexual	133,600	300,200	125
Emotional	188,100	532,200	183
Neglect	917,200	1,961,300	114
Physical	507,700	1,335,100	163
Emotional	203,000	584,100	188
Educational	284,800	397,300	40*

\*Indicates that increase did not reach statistical significance.

Note: Victims were counted more than once when more than one type of abuse or neglect had occurred.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect's *The third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3)*.

In contrast to children victimized by their birth parents, those maltreated by other categories of parents were almost twice as likely to be abused as to be neglected. For example:

- Physical abuse was the most common form of maltreatment (37%).
- One-quarter of these children were victims of sexual abuse.
- One-fifth were victims of educational neglect.
- The least common forms of maltreatment involved physical neglect (9%) and emotional abuse (13%).

**Fatal or serious injury was more likely for children maltreated by birth parents than by others**

	Severity of injury			
	Fatal or serious	Moderate	Inferred	Total
All	36%	53%	11%	100%
Birth parents	41	54	5	100
Other parents	20	61	19	100
Others	24	30	46	100

**Most maltreatment cases were identified by schools**

Because of the large volume of children attending schools, more maltreated children were identified by schools in 1993 than by all other community agencies and institutions combined:

Schools	54%
Police/sheriff	10
Hospitals	6
Social services	6
Daycare centers	5
Mental health	3
Juvenile probation	2
Public health	2
All others	12

**1 in 3 alleged maltreatment cases was investigated by child protective service agencies**

Child protective service agencies investigated 33% of the cases known to community agencies and institutions in 1993. The remaining cases either were not reported to child protective service agencies or were reported but not investigated. The highest investigation rates occurred among cases identified by police

and sheriff departments (52%), hospitals (46%), and mental health agencies (42%). In contrast, the lowest investigation rates occurred among cases identified by daycare centers (3%) and public health agencies (4%).

**Investigations were more likely in cases involving abuse than neglect**

Cases in which children were alleged to be physically or sexually abused were investigated by child protective services more frequently than other maltreated children.

Maltreatment type	Percent of reports investigated
Abuse	39%
Physical	45
Sexual	44
Emotional	28
Neglect	28
Physical	35
Emotional	22
Educational	7

## Most abuse and neglect cases enter the child welfare system through child protective service agencies

### What are child protective services?

The term "child protective services" generally refers to services provided by an agency authorized to act on behalf of a child when parents are unable or unwilling to do so. In all States, these agencies are mandated by law to conduct assessments or investigations of reports of child abuse and neglect and to offer rehabilitative services to families where maltreatment has occurred or is likely to occur.

While the primary responsibility for responding to reports of child maltreatment rests with State and local child protective service agencies, prevention and treatment of abuse and neglect can involve professionals from many disciplines and organizations. Although variations exist among jurisdictions, community response to child maltreatment typically includes the following sequence of events:

**Identification.** Individuals likely to identify abuse are often those in a position to observe families and children on an ongoing basis. This may include educators, law enforcement personnel, social service personnel, medical professionals, probation officers, daycare workers, mental health professionals, and the clergy, in addition to family members, friends, and neighbors.

**Reporting.** Some individuals, such as medical and mental health professionals, educators, child care providers, social service providers, law enforcement personnel, and clergy, are often required by law to report suspicions of abuse and neglect. Some States require reporting by any person having knowledge of abuse or neglect.

Child protective service or law enforcement agencies usually receive the initial report of alleged abuse or neglect, which may include the identity of the child, information about the nature and extent of maltreatment, and information about the parent or other person responsible for the child (caretaker). The initial report may also contain information identifying the individual causing the alleged maltreatment (perpetrator), the setting in which maltreatment occurred, and the person making the report.

**Intake and investigation.** Protective service staff are responsible for determining whether the report constitutes an allegation of abuse or neglect and how urgently a response is needed. The initial investigation involves gathering and analyzing information from and about the child and family. Protective service agencies may work with law enforcement and other agencies during this period. Caseworkers generally respond to reports of abuse and neglect within 2 to 3 days. A more immediate response may be required if it is determined that a child is at imminent risk of injury or impairment.

If the intake worker determines that the referral does not constitute an allegation of abuse or neglect, the case may be closed. If there is substantial risk of serious physical or emotional harm, severe neglect, or lack of supervision, a child may be removed from the home under provisions of State law. Most States require that a court hearing be held shortly after the removal to approve temporary custody by the child protective service agency. In some States, removal from the home requires a court order.

Following the initial investigation, the protective service agency generally concludes one of the following: (1) sufficient evidence exists to support or substantiate the allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment; (2) sufficient evidence does not exist to support maltreatment; or (3) maltreatment or the risk of maltreatment is indicated, although sufficient evidence to conclude or substantiate the allegation does not exist. Should sufficient evidence not exist to support an allegation of maltreatment, additional services may still be provided if it is believed there is risk of abuse or neglect in the future.

**Assessment.** Protective service staff attempt to identify the factors that contributed to the maltreatment and to address the most critical treatment needs.

**Case planning.** Case plans are developed by protective services, other treatment providers, and the family in an attempt to alter the conditions and/or behaviors resulting in child abuse or neglect.

**Treatment.** Protective service and other treatment providers implement a treatment plan for the family.

**Evaluation of family progress.** After the treatment plan has been implemented, protective services and other treatment providers evaluate and measure changes in family behavior and the conditions that led to child abuse or neglect, assess changes in the risk of maltreatment, and determine when services are no longer necessary. Case managers often coordinate the information from several service providers when assessing the case's progress.

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**Case Closure.** While some cases are closed because the family resists intervention efforts and the child is considered to be at low risk of harm, others are closed when it has been determined that the risk of abuse or neglect has been eliminated or sufficiently reduced to a point where the family can protect the child from maltreatment without further intervention.

If it is determined that the family will not be able to protect the child, the child may be removed from the home and placed in foster care. If the child cannot be returned home to a protective environment within a reasonable timeframe, parental rights may be terminated so that permanent alternatives for the child can be found.

**One option available to child protective services is referral to juvenile court**

Substantiated reports of abuse and neglect do not necessarily lead to court involvement if the family is willing to participate in the child protective agency's treatment plan.

The agency may, however, file a complaint in juvenile court if the child is to be removed from the home without parental consent or if the parents are otherwise uncooperative.

Adjudicatory hearings primarily focus on the validity of the allegations, while dispositional hearings address the case plan (e.g., placement, supervision, and services to be delivered). Typical dispositional options include treatment and services provided by protective service agencies, temporary custody granted to the State child protective agency, foster care, termination of parental rights, permanent custody granted to the State child protective agency, and legal custody given to a relative or other person. Both adjudicatory and dispositional hearings are held within a timeframe specified by State statute.

Although not all abuse and neglect cases become involved with the court, the juvenile court is playing an increasingly significant role in determining case outcomes. The Federal Adoption Assistance and Child

Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-272) required greater judicial oversight of the child protective service agency's performance. This legislation was passed in an attempt to keep children from being needlessly placed in foster care or left in foster care indefinitely. The goal of this legislation was to enable the child to have a permanent living arrangement (e.g., return to family, adoption, or placement with other relatives) as soon as possible.

Courts often review decisions to remove children from home during emergencies, oversee agency efforts to prevent placements and reunite families, approve agency case plans designed to rehabilitate families, periodically review cases, and decide whether to terminate parental rights in cases involving children unable to return home. Courts review case plans of all court-involved cases prior to implementation and maintain ongoing involvement until the child is either returned home or placed in a permanent, adoptive home.

## Child protective service agencies received reports on more than 3 million maltreated children in 1996

### A national data system monitors the caseloads of child protective services

The National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) annually collects child maltreatment data from child protective service agencies. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) employs both a summary and a case-level approach to data collection. Summary data provide national information on a number of key indicators of child abuse and neglect cases in 1996. Case-level data provide descriptive information on cases referred to child protective service agencies during the same year.

### About 1.6 million child abuse and neglect investigations were conducted in 1996

Child protective service agencies conducted investigations on 80% of the estimated 2 million reports of child abuse and neglect in 1996. In 35% of these investigations, the allegation was either substantiated (i.e., the allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment was supported or founded) or indicated (i.e., the allegation could not be substantiated, but there was reason to suspect the child was maltreated or was at risk of maltreatment). More than half (58%) of all investigations were not substantiated or indicated. The remaining 7% were closed without a finding or resulted in another disposition. Detailed data from 11 States indicated that reports from professionals were more likely than those from nonprofessionals to be substantiated or indicated (51% vs. 35%).

### Most perpetrators were related to the victim

The 1996 national summary data on substantiated or indicated maltreatment found the following:

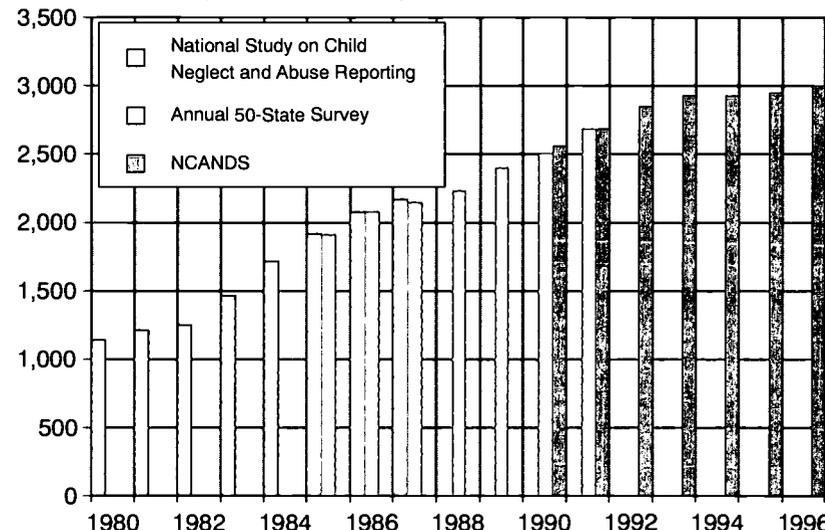
- 52% of victims were female.
- 55% of victims were white, 28% were black, 12% were Hispanic, and 5% were other races.
- 19% of victims were age 2 or younger, 52% were age 7 or

younger, and 7% were age 16 or older.

- 80% of perpetrators were parents of the victim.
- An estimated 1,077 children died as the result of maltreatment in 1996.
- About 16% of victims in substantiated or indicated cases were removed from their homes.

### Maltreatment reports may involve more than one child—in 1996 over 3 million children were the subjects in 2 million reports

Number of child reports (in thousands)



- Reports of alleged maltreatment increased 161% between 1980 and 1996. The increasing trend in child maltreatment reports is believed to be the result, at least in part, of a greater willingness to report suspected incidents. Greater public awareness both of child maltreatment as a social problem and of the resources available to respond to it are factors that contribute to increased reporting.

Note: Child reports are counts of children who are the subject of reports. Counts are duplicated when an individual child is the subject of more than one report during a year.

Sources: Authors' analyses of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Child maltreatment: Reports from the States to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System* for the years 1992–1996 and the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect's *National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System: Working paper 2, 1991 summary data component*.

**Professionals were the most common source of reports of abuse and neglect in 1996**

Source of referral	Percent of total
Professionals	52%
Educators	16
Social service	12
Law enforcement	13
Medical	11
Family and community	25%
Friends/neighbors	9
Relatives—not parents	10
Parents	6
Other sources	23%
Anonymous	12
Victims	1
Other*	10

\*Includes child care providers, perpetrators, and sources not otherwise identified.

Source: Authors' adaptation of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' *Child maltreatment 1996: Reports from the States to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System*.

**Case-level data from States provide a profile of victims**

Detailed information from States reporting case-level data on victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment in 1996 found the following:

- Neglect was the most common form of maltreatment found among all age groups (58%).
- Younger children (under age 8) were more likely than older children (age 8 and older) to have been neglected (65% vs. 49%).
- Older victims were more likely than younger victims to have been physically abused (29% vs. 19%) or sexually abused (15% vs. 7%).

**As the primary provider of child care, females were the perpetrators in most maltreatment**

	Percent of perpetrators			
	Male only	Female only	Mixed: male and female	All
<b>Victim age</b>				
0–17	22%	54%	24%	100%
Less than 1	5	70	25	100
1–5	16	58	25	100
6–11	25	52	24	100
12–17	35	42	23	100
<b>Maltreatment type</b>				
All	22%	54%	24%	100%
Physical abuse	33	41	26	100
Neglect	10	64	25	100
Medical neglect	5	70	25	100
Sexual abuse	62	9	29	100
Psychological abuse	26	37	37	100

- In 1996, over one-half (54%) of maltreatment cases involved only female perpetrators, and about one-quarter (24%) involved both male and female perpetrators. As a result, at least one female was identified as a perpetrator in more than 3 in 4 maltreatment cases (78%). In contrast, at least one male was identified as a perpetrator in about 1 in 2 cases (46%).
- Male perpetrators were more common in maltreatment cases involving older victims. For example, at least one male was identified as the perpetrator in 30% of cases involving victims under the age of 1, compared to 58% of cases involving victims ages 12–17.
- For most maltreatment types, females were more likely than males to be identified as a perpetrator. The one exception is sexual abuse. At least one male was identified in 91% of these reports. In contrast, at least one female was identified in 38% of cases involving sexual abuse.

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding. The male proportion includes cases with at least one male perpetrator and no females. The female proportion includes cases with at least one female perpetrator and no males. The mixed proportion includes cases with at least one male and one female perpetrator. It should be noted that cases identifying multiple perpetrators do not imply equal involvement of each perpetrator.

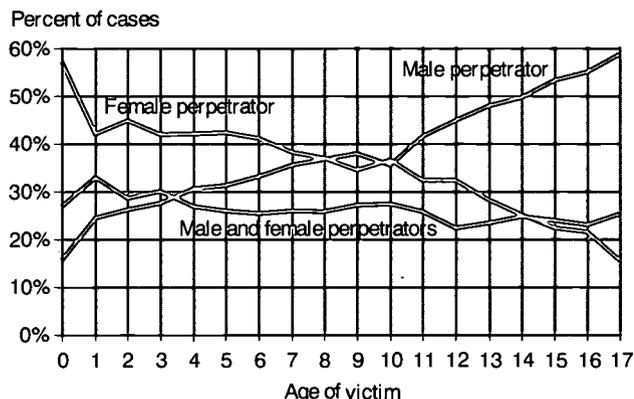
Source: Authors' analysis of unpublished data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, on the detailed case component of the *National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System*.

- Female victims were three times more likely than males to have experienced sexual abuse (16% vs. 5%) and less likely to have experienced neglect (54% vs. 62%).
- More than half (56%) of fatalities were male.
- White youth were more likely than black youth to be victims of sexual abuse (13% vs. 7%) and less likely to be victims of some form of neglect (58% vs. 70%).
- Death due to child abuse and neglect was found mostly among very young children. Three in four deaths (76%) involved children under age 4.

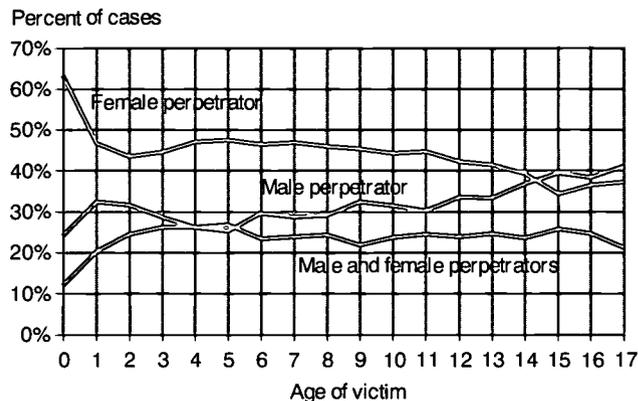
## Overall, the proportion of maltreatment involving a female perpetrator generally declined with victim age

**Females were reported as the perpetrator of physical abuse against younger victims more often than males—this pattern reverses in cases of older victims**

### Male victims of physical abuse



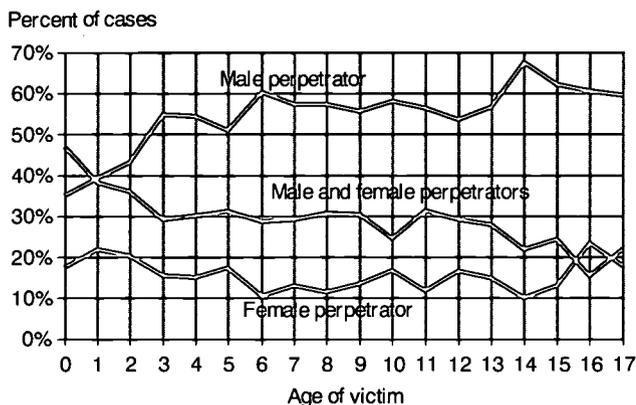
### Female victims of physical abuse



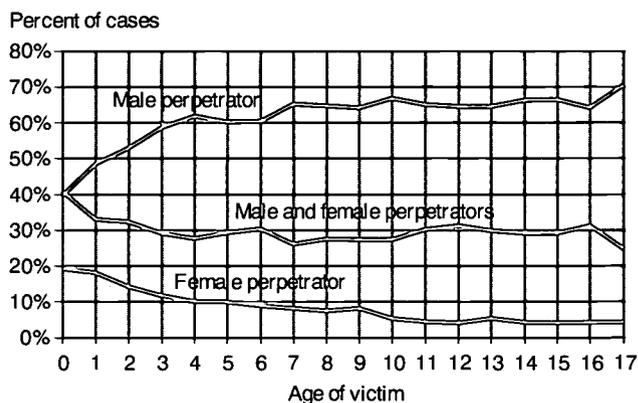
- Male-only perpetrators were over three times more common than female-only for cases involving 17-year-old male victims of physical abuse. In contrast, male-only perpetrators were only slightly more common than female-only perpetrators for 17-year-old female victims. The proportion of cases involving both male and female perpetrators was similar among male and female victims.

**The difference in the number of sexual abuse cases involving male perpetrators and the number involving female perpetrators grew with victim age**

### Male victims of sexual abuse



### Female victims of sexual abuse



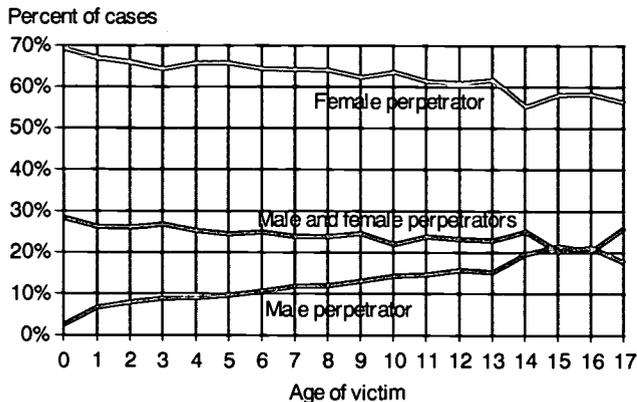
- In cases of sexual abuse, male-only perpetrators were more common than female-only perpetrators. The majority of sexual abuse cases involving female perpetrators also involved male perpetrators.

Note: Data are for 1996. The male proportion includes cases with at least one male perpetrator and no females. The female proportion includes cases with at least one female perpetrator and no males. The male and female perpetrators proportion includes cases with at least one male and one female perpetrator. It should be noted that cases identifying multiple perpetrators do not imply equal involvement of each perpetrator.

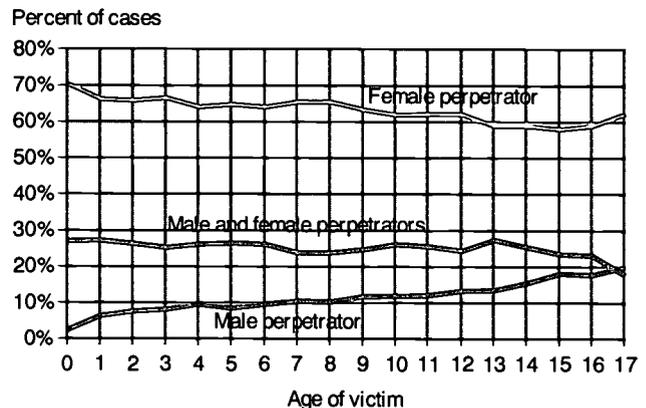
Source: Authors' analysis of unpublished data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, on the detailed case data component of the *National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System*.

**The disparity in male and female perpetrator proportions was greatest in neglect cases**

**Male victims of neglect**



**Female victims of neglect**



■ Overall, most neglect cases involving a male perpetrator also involved a female.

Note: Data are for 1996. The male proportion includes cases with at least one male perpetrator and no females. The female proportion includes cases with at least one female perpetrator and no males. The male and female perpetrators proportion includes cases with at least one male and one female perpetrator. It should be noted that cases identifying multiple perpetrators do not imply equal involvement of each perpetrator.

Source: Authors' analysis of unpublished data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, on the detailed case data component of the *National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System*.

**Between 1992 and 1995, child abuse and neglect rates increased among American Indians and Asians while declining among other racial/ethnic groups**

Racial/ethnic group	Number of abuse and neglect victims per 100,000 children age 14 or younger		Percent change 1992-1995
	1992	1995	
All children	1,866	1,724	-8%
American Indian	2,830	3,343	18
Asian	454	479	6
White	1,628	1,520	-7
Black	3,560	3,323	-7
Hispanic	1,486	1,254	-16

■ Between 1992 and 1995, growth in reported incidents of abuse and neglect was three times greater for American Indian children under age 15 than for Asian children in that age group.

■ In 1995, child victimization rates for American Indian children and black children were at least twice as high as rates for other racial and ethnic groups.

Note: Rates were calculated on the number of children age 14 or younger because this group accounts for at least 80% of the victims of child abuse and neglect.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *American Indians and crime*.

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# Chapter 3

## Juvenile offenders

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Public perceptions of juvenile offending have been influenced by attention focused on high-profile incidents. Do these incidents accurately reflect the majority of crimes by juveniles? How many children are involved in law-violating behavior? What proportion of all crime is committed by juveniles? What are the trends? Are there gender differences in the law-violating careers of juvenile offenders? How many murders are committed by juveniles annually, and whom do they murder? What proportion of students are involved in crime at school? Are youth carrying weapons to school? Are students fearful of crime at school? At what time of day are violent crimes by juveniles most likely to occur? What is known about juveniles and gangs? What is the prevalence and incidence of drug and alcohol use? How much does youth crime cost society?

Many offenders are not arrested; and many arrested are not referred to juvenile courts and, thus, are not captured in official law enforcement

or court data. This chapter presents what is known about the prevalence and incidence of juvenile offending. It relies on data developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey; the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System and its Uniform Crime Reports; the National Institute on Drug Abuse's Monitoring the Future Study, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) National Juvenile Court Data Archive. Also included are summaries of the first wave of self-report data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey. Information on gangs is drawn from the National Youth Gang Survey, supported by OJJDP, and other published and unpublished gang studies. In addition, the chapter includes information from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms' Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative.

## Self-reports and official records are the primary sources of information on juvenile offending

### Self-report studies ask victims or offenders to report on their experiences and behaviors

There has been an ongoing debate about the relative ability of self-report studies and official statistics to describe juvenile crime and victimization.

Self-report studies can capture information on behavior that never comes to the attention of juvenile justice agencies. Compared with official studies, self-report studies find a much higher proportion of the juvenile population involved in delinquent behavior.

Self-report studies, however, have their own limitations. A youth's memory limits the information that can be captured. This, along with other problems associated with interviewing young children, is the reason that the National Crime Victimization Survey does not attempt to interview children below age 12. Some victims and offenders are also unwilling to disclose all law violations. Finally, it is often difficult for self-report studies to collect data from large enough samples to develop a sufficient understanding of relatively rare events, such as serious violent offending.

### Official statistics describe the cases handled by the justice system

Official records underrepresent juvenile delinquent behavior. Many crimes by juveniles are never reported to authorities. Many juveniles who commit offenses are never arrested. Or, if they are arrested, they are not arrested for all of their delinquencies. As a result, official records may systematically underestimate the scope of juvenile

crime. In addition, to the extent there is bias in the types of crimes or offenders that enter the justice system, official records distort the attributes of juvenile crime.

### Official statistics are open to multiple interpretations

Juvenile arrest rates for drug abuse violations in recent years are substantially above those of a decade ago. One interpretation of these official statistics could be that juveniles have been breaking the drug laws more often in recent years. National self-report studies (e.g., Monitoring the Future), however, find that illicit drug use is substantially below the levels of the mid-1980's. If drug use is actually down, the higher arrest rates for drug crimes may represent a change in society's tolerance for such behavior and a greater willingness to bring these youth into the justice system for treatment or punishment.

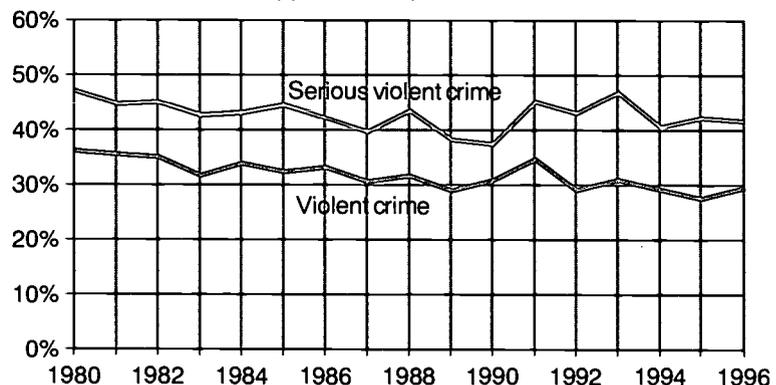
Although official records may be inadequate measures of the level of juvenile offending, they do monitor justice system activity. Analysis of variations in official statistics across time and jurisdictions provides an understanding of justice system caseloads.

### Carefully used, self-report and official statistics provide insight into crime and victimization

As Delbert Elliot has argued, to abandon either self-report or official statistics in favor of the other is "rather shortsighted; to systematically ignore the findings of either is dangerous, particularly when the two measures provide apparently contradictory findings." He argued that a full understanding of the etiology and development of delinquent behavior is enhanced by using and integrating both self-report and official record research.

### The proportion of violent crimes committed by juveniles that victims reported to law enforcement has changed little since 1980

Percent of victimizations by juveniles reported to law enforcement



Note: Serious violent crime includes incidents involving rape and other sexual assaults, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crime includes simple assault in addition to the serious violent crime offenses. Data are collected through personal interviews with persons age 12 and older; thus, murder is not included for obvious reasons. Data collected prior to 1992 were adjusted to be consistent with newer data collection procedures.

Source: Authors' analyses of data for the years 1980–1996 from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey* [machine-readable data files].

## In 1997, juvenile homicides were the lowest in the decade but still 21% above the average of the 1980's

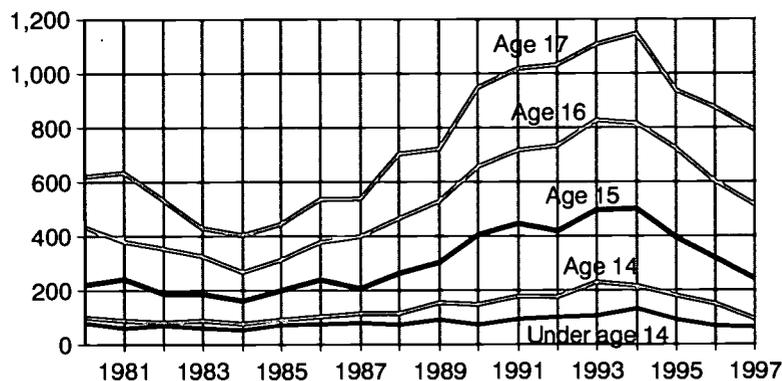
### It is difficult to assess the exact number of murders committed by juveniles

Based on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Supplemental Homicide Report (SHR) data, 18,200 persons were murdered in the U.S. in 1997—the lowest number in more than a generation. Of these murders, about 1,400 were determined by law enforcement to involve a juvenile offender; however, the actual number is greater than this. In 1997, the FBI had no information on the offender(s) for about 6,900 reported murders (38% of the total). These may have been homicides for which no one was arrested or the offender was otherwise not identified, or these may have been cases for which the local agency did not report complete information to the FBI. Regardless, the number of murders committed by juveniles in 1997 was undoubtedly greater than 1,400, but just how much greater is difficult to determine. If it were assumed that the murders without offender information were similar to those with offender information, then about 2,300 murders (or 12% of all murders) in 1997 had at least one offender who was under the age of 18 at the time of the crime.

The 1,400 murders known to involve a juvenile offender in 1997 involved about 1,700 juveniles and 900 adults. Of all murders involving a juvenile, 31% also involved an adult, and 13% involved another juvenile. In all, 44% of all murders involving a juvenile involved more than one person.

### The number of murder offenders in each age group between 14 and 17 increased substantially and proportionately from 1984 through 1993

Known juvenile offenders

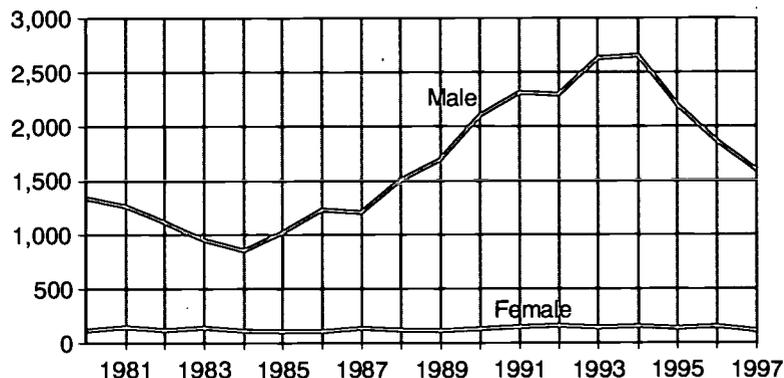


- The declines in the number of offenders were also large and roughly proportionate between 1994 and 1997 in all age groups: under age 14 (51%), age 14 (57%), age 15 (52%), age 16 (37%), and age 17 (31%).

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

### Between 1980 and 1997, the number of juvenile female offenders implicated in murders remained essentially constant

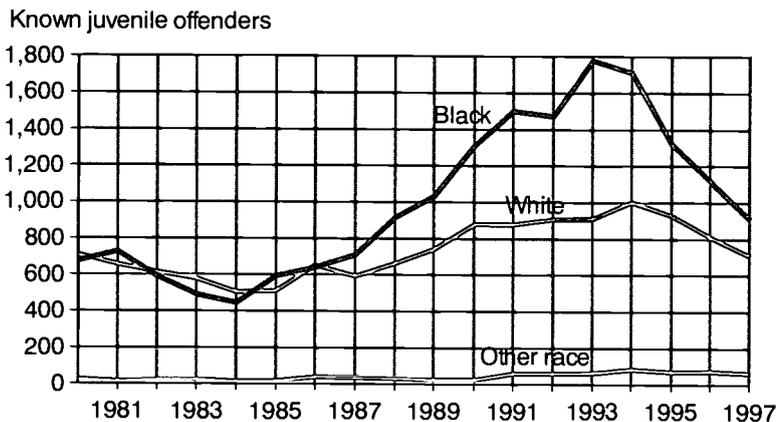
Known juvenile offenders



- Between 1980 and 1997, about 130 juvenile females were implicated in homicides in the U.S. each year.
- Males were responsible for all of the fluctuations in juvenile homicides between 1980 and 1997.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

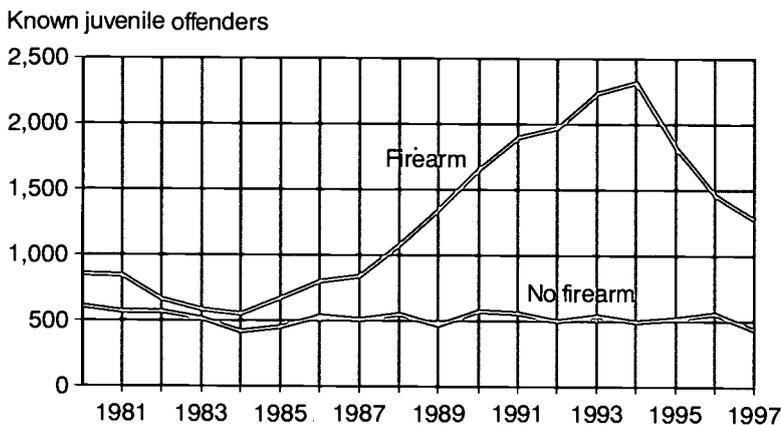
**Between 1980 and 1986, there were roughly equal numbers of white and black juvenile homicide offenders; but after 1986, blacks have outnumbered whites**



■ While youth of all races contributed to the growth in homicides by juveniles, black youth were responsible for the majority of the increase between 1986 and 1994—and the majority of the decline thereafter.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

**All of the increase in homicides by juveniles between the mid-1980's and mid-1990's was firearm related**



■ Between 1980 and 1987, firearms were used in just over half (54%) of all homicides involving a juvenile offender. Then firearm-related homicides began to increase, so that, by 1994, most homicides by juvenile offenders (82%) involved the use of a firearm.

■ The sharp decline in homicides by juveniles between 1994 and 1997 was attributable entirely to a decline in homicides by firearm.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

### Whom do juveniles kill?

Between 1980 and 1997, most victims in homicides involving juveniles were male (83%). Slightly more victims were white (50%) than black (47%). In 27% of homicides by juveniles, the victim was also a juvenile. Victims in 70% of homicides by juveniles were killed with a firearm. Of all victims killed by juveniles, 14% were family members, 55% were acquaintances, and 31% were strangers.

### Who are the juvenile murderers?

Between 1980 and 1997, the large majority (93%) of known juvenile homicide offenders were male. More than half (56%) were black. Of known juvenile homicide offenders, 42% were age 17, 29% were age 16, and 17% were age 15; 88% of juvenile homicide offenders were age 15 or older.

### Murders by the very young are rare

Annually between 1980 and 1997, fewer than 10 juveniles age 10 or younger were identified as participants in murders—a figure that has remained essentially constant over the time period. The majority of these young homicide offenders were male (88%), and more than half (54%) were black. In these cases, the victim was equally likely to be either a family member or an acquaintance (43%). A firearm was involved in 50% of the murders committed by these young offenders.

### Boys and girls tend to kill different types of victims

Between 1980 and 1997, 54% of male juvenile homicide offenders killed an acquaintance, 37% killed a

stranger, and 9% killed a family member. In comparison, the victims of females were more likely to be family members (39%) and far less likely to be strangers (15%).

Between 1980 and 1997, about 1% of male offenders killed persons under age 6, while 18% of the female offenders killed young children. Because there were so many more male offenders than female offenders, however, roughly equal numbers of male and female juvenile offenders were involved in the murder of young children. Annually between 1980 and 1997, about 25 male and 25 female juvenile offenders were tied to the death of a child under age 6.

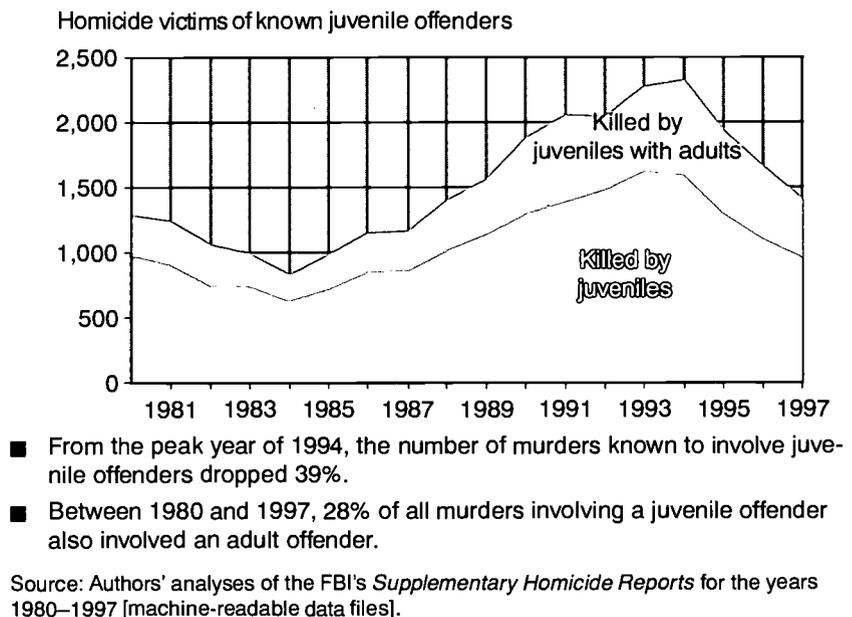
Males were far more likely than females to kill with a firearm. Between 1980 and 1997, 73% of male juvenile homicide offenders used a firearm, while 14% used a knife. In contrast, 41% of female juvenile homicide offenders used a firearm and 32% used a knife. While 27% of females used other means to kill (e.g., hands or feet, strangulation, drowning, or fire), only 13% of males killed by these means.

### Black juveniles were more likely to commit murders with firearms than were youth of other races

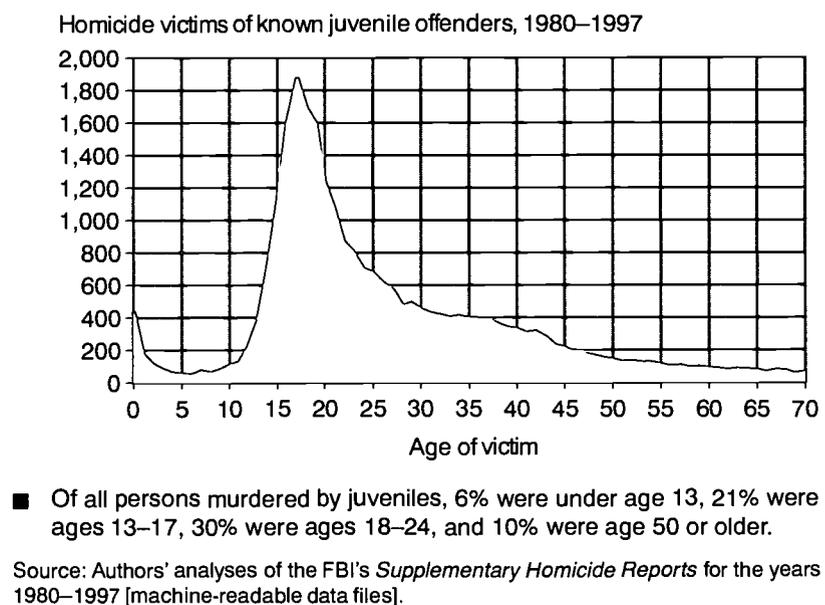
In the U.S. in 1997, about 1 of every 16,000 youth between the ages of 10 and 17 was identified as participating in a homicide. This is a rate of 56 known offenders for every 1 million youth in the U.S. population ages 10–17. This rate was greater for black youth than youth of other races: black (194), Asian/Pacific Islanders (44), American Indians (34), and whites (30).

Between 1980 and 1997, 72% of black juvenile homicide offenders

### In 1997, juvenile offenders were known to be involved in about 1,400 murders in the U.S.

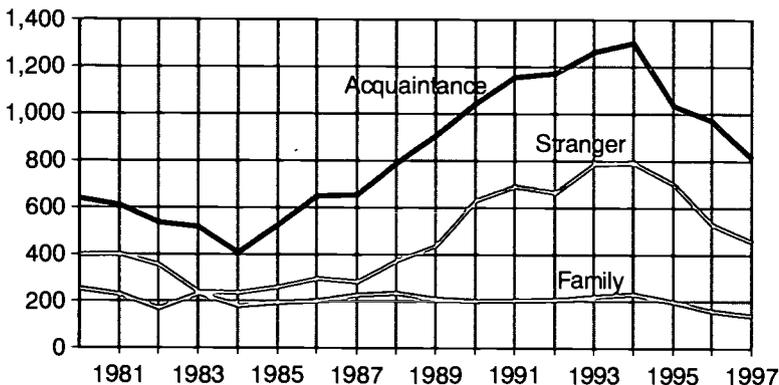


### Between 1980 and 1997, about half (51%) the victims of juvenile homicide offenders were ages 13 through 24



**During the period from 1987 to 1994, while the total annual number of murders by juveniles doubled, murders of family members held constant**

Homicide victims of known juvenile offenders

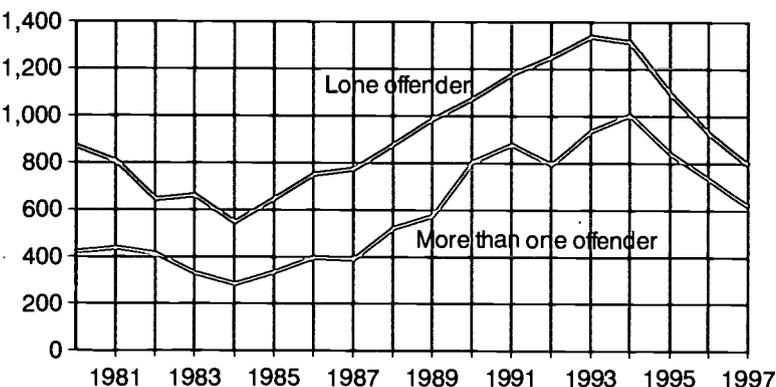


- Murder victims of juvenile offenders are more likely to be acquaintances than strangers. In 1997, 56% of juvenile murder victims were acquaintances and 34% were strangers.
- In 1997, the number of acquaintances and the number of strangers murdered by juveniles were the lowest since 1989.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

**Between 1980 and 1997, there were two or more offenders in 39% of all murders involving a juvenile**

Homicide victims of known juvenile offenders



- The proportion of multiple-offender murders involving a juvenile offender increased from the 1980's (35%) to the 1990's (42%).

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980–1997 [machine-readable data files].

used a firearm in their crimes. This proportion was higher than that for Asian/Pacific Islander (67%), white (59%), or American Indian (48%) youth.

Youth were most likely to kill persons of their own race. Between 1980 and 1997, 81% of juvenile offenders were involved in murders of persons of their own race. Same-race killing was most common for white youth (90%) and less common for blacks (76%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (58%), and American Indians (48%).

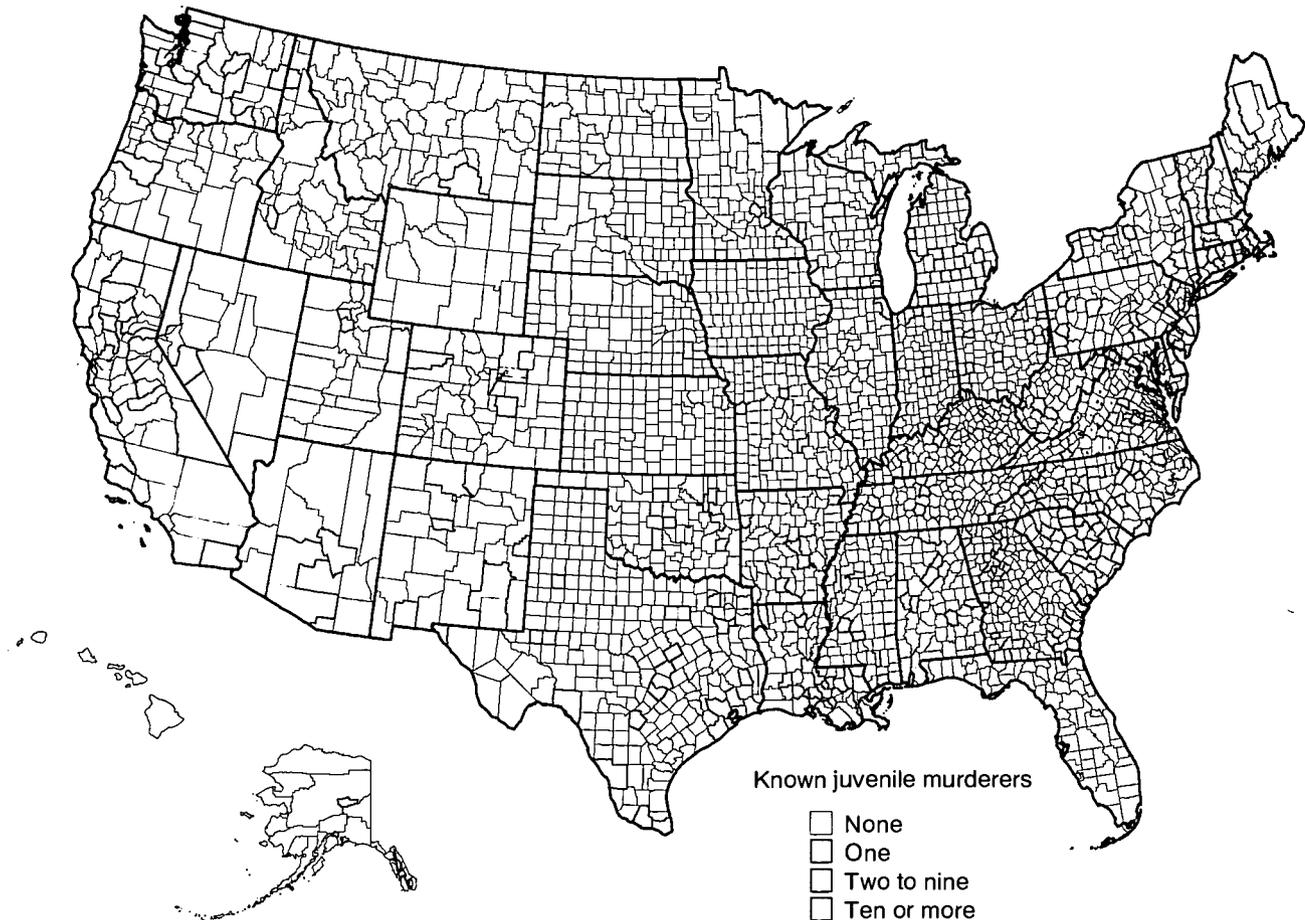
A greater proportion of white youth and American Indian youth killed family members than did youth of other races: American Indian (17%), white (16%), black (7%), and Asian/Pacific Islander (7%).

**Older juveniles are more likely than younger juveniles to commit murders with other juveniles and with adults**

Between 1980 and 1997, half of all juvenile homicide offenders acted alone, while half committed their acts with other juveniles or adults. Older offenders were more likely than younger offenders to commit their acts with adults.

Age of offender	Percent of juvenile homicide offenders		
	Acted alone	With juveniles	With adults
Total	50%	21%	29%
<10	86	11	3
10	72	13	15
11	75	16	9
12	68	20	12
13	58	25	17
14	50	28	22
15	49	25	27
16	49	22	29
17	50	16	34

## More than 1 in 4 identified juvenile murderers in 1997 were in 8 of the Nation's more than 3,000 counties



Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1997 [machine-readable data files].

In 1997, the FBI's Supplemental Homicide Reporting (SHR) Program collected detailed information on 87% of all murder victims known to law enforcement. The map above presents an analysis of these data. Note that no data were reported for the States of Florida, Kansas, and New Hampshire. Many individual counties in other States also under-reported. In addition, an offender was identified in just 62% of the re-

ported homicides. Consequently, many juvenile homicide offenders are not represented on the map.

Based on SHR data, 88% of the more than 3,000 counties in the U.S. reported no juvenile murderers in 1997. Another 6% of the counties had just one identified juvenile homicide offender in 1997. In fact, more than 1 in 4 juvenile homicide offenders (26%) in 1997 were in

eight counties. The major cities in these eight counties (beginning with the city in the county with the greatest number of identified juvenile homicide offenders) are Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, New York, Baltimore, Detroit, Philadelphia, and Dallas. As these eight counties contain just 12% of the U.S. population, it is clear that homicide by juveniles is concentrated in a small portion of the U.S. geographic area.

## A new self-report survey documents the deviant and delinquent behaviors of U.S. youth ages 12–16

### A new survey will follow a cohort of youth as they make the transition from school to work

The first wave of the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97) interviewed a nationally representative sample of 9,000 youth who were between the ages of 12 and 16 at year-end 1996. The survey asked youth to report whether they had engaged in a variety of de-

viant and delinquent behaviors. Plans are to interview members of this cohort every 2 years to track changes in delinquent and criminal activity over the life course.

### Youth who had ever used or sold drugs were more likely to engage in other problem behavior

One of the strengths of the survey is its ability to assess which delin-

quent behaviors cluster together. Members of the NLSY97 cohort were asked a variety of questions regarding drugs, guns, and gangs, including whether and how recently they had engaged in these activities. Analysis of these items demonstrates the connection between drug use or sale and other problem behaviors, such as carrying handguns, belonging to a gang, and consuming alcohol.

### The proportion of youth engaging in deviant and delinquent behaviors varied significantly by age, sex, and race/ethnicity

Behavior	Total	Ages 12–13	Ages 14–15	Age 16	Male	Female	White	Nonwhite	Rural	Urban
<b>Had sex</b>										
Ever	29%	—	23%	43%	30%	28%	26%	37%	29%	30%
Last 12 months	21	—	16	32	22	21	19	27	21	22
<b>Became pregnant</b>										
Ever	6	—	4	10	—	6	5	9	5	7
<b>Smoked cigarettes</b>										
Ever	42	27	48	58	42	42	45	34	43	41
Last 30 days	20	10	23	33	20	20	22	14	21	19
<b>Drank alcohol</b>										
Ever	39	26	52	68	46	44	48	26	45	45
Last 30 days	21	8	25	37	21	21	23	16	20	21
Before or during school or work in the last 30 days	5	2	6	9	6	4	5	5	5	5
<b>Used marijuana</b>										
Ever	21	8	25	38	22	20	22	19	19	22
Last 30 days	9	4	11	17	10	9	10	8	8	10
Before or during school or work in the last 30 days	4	1	5	7	4	3	4	3	4	4
<b>Ran away from home</b>										
Ever	11	6	12	17	10	11	10	11	10	12
<b>Carried a handgun</b>										
Ever	10	8	11	12	16	3	10	9	11	9
Last 12 months	6	4	6	7	9	2	6	5	6	5
Last 30 days	3	2	3	3	5	1	3	3	3	3
To school in last 30 days	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1	<1
<b>Belonged to a gang</b>										
Ever	5	3	6	6	6	3	4	7	5	5
Last 12 months	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	3	2	2
<b>Purposely destroyed property</b>										
Ever	28	25	31	30	37	20	30	25	29	28
Last 12 months	16	14	17	15	20	11	16	14	15	16
<b>Stole something worth over \$50*</b>										
Ever	8	4	10	11	10	5	7	9	7	9
Last 12 months	5	3	6	7	7	3	5	6	4	6

- Youth who had ever used marijuana were more likely to have sold marijuana (24% vs. <1%), carried a handgun (21% vs. 7%), or been in a gang (14% vs. 2%) at some point than youth who never used marijuana.
- Youth who had ever sold marijuana were more likely to have sold hard drugs (i.e., cocaine, LSD, or heroin) (40% vs. 1%), carried a handgun (35% vs. 8%), or been in a gang (24% vs. 4%) than youth who never sold marijuana.
- Active marijuana users (i.e., youth who used marijuana during the month prior to the survey) were more likely to have consumed alcohol (78% vs. 14%) or carried a handgun (12% vs. 2%) during that period than youth who did not use marijuana.
- Youth who had carried a handgun in the last 12 months were also more likely to have been in a gang than youth who did not carry a handgun during this period (15% vs. 1%).

Behavior	Total	Ages 12-13	Ages 14-15	Age 16	Male	Female	White	Nonwhite	Rural	Urban
<b>Stole a vehicle for use or sale</b>										
Ever	1%	< 0.5%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Sold any drugs</b>										
Ever	7	2	9	12	9	5	8	5	7	7
Last 12 months	5	2	7	9	7	4	6	4	5	6
<b>Sold hard drugs</b> (e.g., cocaine, LSD, or heroin)										
Ever	3	1	3	6	3	2	3	3	3	3
<b>Sold marijuana</b>										
Ever	5	2	7	10	7	4	6	4	5	6
<b>Committed assault</b>										
Ever	18	15	19	22	23	12	16	21	17	18
Last 12 months	12	10	13	13	16	8	11	14	12	12
<b>Was arrested</b>										
Ever	8	4	10	12	10	5	7	9	6	9
Number of times										
Once	5	2	6	7	6	3	4	5	4	5
2 or more	3	1	4	5	4	2	3	4	2	4

- Of all youth, 3% had carried a handgun in the month prior to the interview, and fewer than 1 in 200 had carried a handgun to school during that time.
- With a few exceptions, urban and rural youth reported participation in problem behaviors in equal proportions; however, urban youth were significantly more likely than rural youth to have run away from home (12% vs. 10%), ever used marijuana (22% vs. 19%), or ever been arrested (9% vs. 6%).
- Of all youth, 9% used marijuana in the last 30 days, and less than 4% used marijuana before or during school or work hours during this time. Similarly, 21% of all youth drank alcohol in the last 30 days, and 5% drank alcohol before or during school or work hours during this time.
- The proportion of youth who had ever used marijuana increased dramatically with age, from 8% of youth ages 12 and 13 to 25% of youth ages 14 and 15. The proportion of youth ages 14 and 15 who had ever used alcohol (52%) was double that of youth ages 12 and 13 (26%).

Note: Only youth 14 and older were asked about their sexual activity and pregnancy. Only females were asked about pregnancy.

\* Includes stealing a vehicle for use or sale.

Source: Authors' analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997* [machine-readable data file].

**Recent participation (i.e., within the last 12 months or 30 days prior to the interview) in delinquent and deviant acts varied by race and ethnicity for males and females**

Behavior	Males ages 12–16			Females ages 12–16		
	White	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic
<b>Smoked cigarettes</b>						
Last 30 days	22%	14%	19%	23%	9%	15%
<b>Drank alcohol</b>						
Last 30 days	23	13	22	23	13	20
Before or during school or work in last 30 days	6	4	6	4	3	6
<b>Used marijuana</b>						
Last 30 days	10	9	9	9	5	9
Before or during school or work in last 30 days	4	4	5	3	2	3
<b>Carried a handgun</b>						
Last 12 months	10	8	8	2	2	2
Last 30 days	5	5	4	1	1	1
To school in last 30 days	< 1	1	1	0	0	< 1
<b>Had sex</b>						
Last 12 months*	17	38	26	20	26	19
<b>Belonged to a gang</b>						
Last 12 months	2	6	5	1	2	2
<b>Destroyed property</b>						
Last 12 months	21	18	17	11	10	11
<b>Stole something worth over \$50</b>						
Last 12 months	7	7	8	3	4	4
<b>Committed assault</b>						
Last 12 months	15	21	13	7	12	10

- Black males and females were significantly less likely to drink or smoke cigarettes in the month preceding the interview than their white and Hispanic peers.
- Among youth age 14 and older, a greater proportion of black males and females had sex in the 12 months before the survey than either white or Hispanic males and females.
- In the year preceding the interview, white males were less likely to have been in a gang than black and Hispanic males but more likely to have carried a gun.
- The proportion of youth who used marijuana in the last 30 days was the same for white, black, and Hispanic males, while black females were less likely to have used marijuana in the last month than their white and Hispanic peers.

\*Only youth 14 and older were asked about their sexual activity.

Note: The white and black racial categories do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanic youth can be of any race.

Source: Authors' analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997* [machine-readable data file].

**Less than one-tenth (8%) of youth ages 12–16 said they had ever been arrested**

Of the 8% of youth who had ever been arrested, a substantial proportion (40%, or 3% of all youth) reported two or more arrests.

**The proportion of youth ever arrested varied significantly by race and ethnicity for males but not for females**

White males (9%) were less likely to have ever been arrested than black males (13%) or Hispanic males (12%). Further, a greater proportion of black males (7%) and Hispanic males (6%) than white males (4%) were arrested more than once.

Equal proportions of white (5%), black (6%), and Hispanic (7%) females had ever been arrested. In addition, white (2%), black (2%), and Hispanic (3%) females were equally likely to have been arrested more than once.

**One-fifth (21%) of 16-year-olds who had been arrested were first arrested by the of age 12**

One of the strengths of the NLSY is its ability to assess the age at which deviant and delinquent behaviors begin. Specifically, these data provide estimates of the proportion of youth who ever engaged in various deviant and delinquent behaviors at ages 12 and 16. Assuming that members of the cohort share common life experiences and that these experiences contribute to participation in specific acts of deviance and delinquency, then one can speculate about what proportion of 16-year-

olds who exhibited this behavior did so by the age of 12.

For example, nearly one-fourth (24%) of 12-year-olds and 30% of 16-year-olds had ever purposely destroyed property. Based on these data, it is estimated that more than three-fourths (79%) of 16-year-olds who had ever destroyed property did so for the first time by age 12.

Similar analyses show that some behaviors appear for the first time early in a youth's life, while others first appear later.

Behavior	Proportion of 16-year-olds engaging in behavior who did so by age 12
Purposely destroyed property	79%
Committed assault	63
Carried a handgun	60
Belonged to a gang	52
Smoked cigarettes	39
Ran away from home	34
Stole something worth over \$50	34
Drank alcohol	31
Was arrested	21
Used marijuana	15
Sold hard drugs (cocaine, LSD, or heroin)	11
Sold any drugs	10

More than half of all 16-year-olds who had ever committed assault, carried a handgun, or belonged to a gang had done so for the first time by age 12. In contrast, less than one-fifth of all 16-year-olds who had ever used marijuana, sold any drugs, or sold hard drugs (i.e., cocaine, LSD, or heroin) had done so for the first time by age 12.

### Employed and unemployed youth were equally likely to participate in most delinquent behaviors

Behavior	15-year-olds		16-year-olds	
	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed	Employed
<b>Smoked cigarettes</b>				
Last 30 days	24%	30%	32%	34%
<b>Drank alcohol</b>				
Last 30 days	28	34	35	40
Before or during school or work in last 30 days	7	7	9	9
<b>Used marijuana</b>				
Last 30 days	13	15	18	16
Before or during school or work in last 30 days	5	6	7	6
<b>Carried a handgun</b>				
Last 12 months	5	8	7	6
Last 30 days	3	4	4	3
<b>Had sex</b>				
Last 12 months	21	19	32	32
<b>Belonged to a gang</b>				
Last 12 months	2	2	4	2
<b>Destroyed property</b>				
Last 12 months	16	16	15	15
<b>Stole something worth over \$50</b>				
Last 12 months	7	9	8*	5
<b>Committed assault</b>				
Last 12 months	12	13	14	12

■ Regardless of age, employed youth were significantly more likely to have smoked cigarettes and consumed alcohol during the last month than unemployed youth.

■ Among 15-year-olds, employed youth were significantly more likely to have carried a gun in the last 12 months than unemployed youth.

Source: Authors' analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' *The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997* [machine-readable data file].

# Serious violence by juveniles dropped 33% between 1993 and 1997—violence by adults was down 25%

## Victims' survey captures information on violent crime

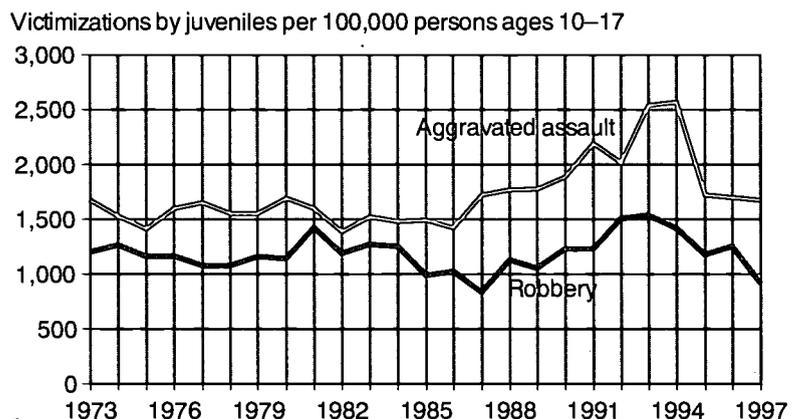
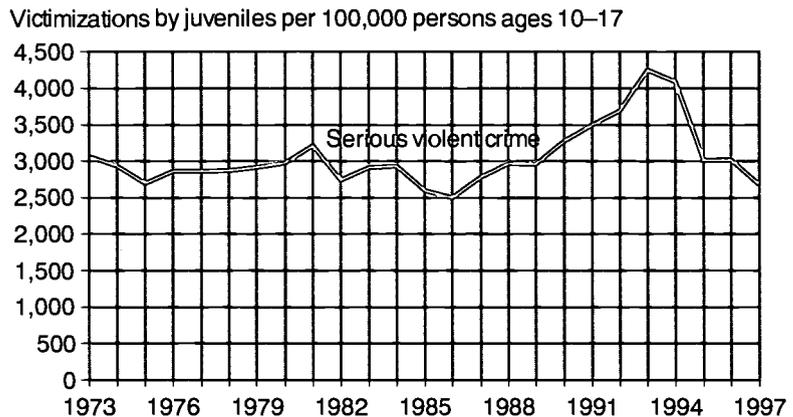
The Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) asks a nationally representative sample of persons ages 12 and older about violent crimes in which they were the victim. Since 1973, the NCVS has been a national barometer of crime trends. In 1997, NCVS reported that just over 3 million serious violent crimes (rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) occurred in the U.S., while the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program estimated that 1.6 million such crimes were reported to law enforcement. Therefore, the NCVS provides a more complete picture of violent crime trends than the UCR Program, even though it excludes murder and violence against children younger than age 12.

## The drop in serious violence was led by reductions in victimizations by juveniles

According to the NCVS, in 1997 juveniles under age 18 were involved in 27% of all serious violent victimizations, including 14% of sexual assaults, 30% of robberies, and 27% of aggravated assaults.

Serious violent victimizations in the U.S. peaked in 1993 at 4.2 million, the highest level since the NCVS began in 1973. Between 1993 and 1997, the number of these victimizations dropped by 27%—to 3 million, the lowest level since the NCVS began. Between 1993 and 1997, the number of serious violent victimizations with at least one juvenile offender dropped 33%, from 1,230,000 to 830,000. Between 1993 and 1997, the number of serious violent victimizations in which all offenders were

The rate at which juveniles committed serious violent crimes changed little between 1973 and 1989, peaked in 1993, then declined to the lowest level since 1986

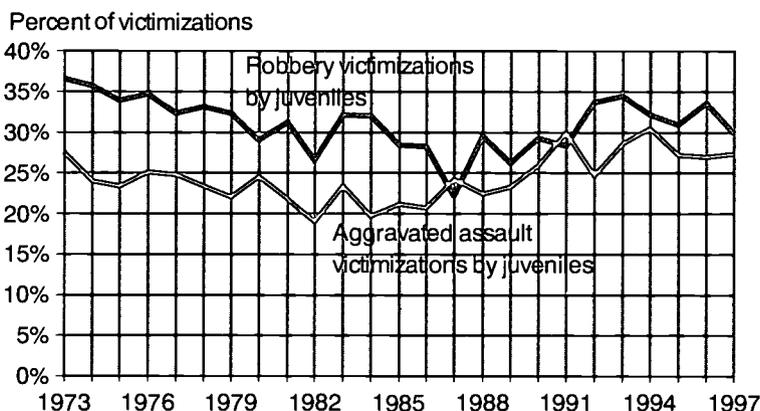
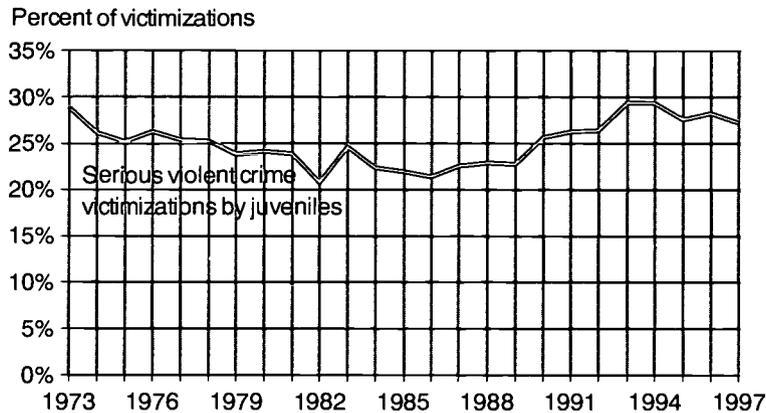


- The rate at which juveniles committed aggravated assaults declined 33% between 1994 and 1995 and remained relatively stable thereafter.
- The rate of robberies by juveniles rose in 1981 and 1993, but by 1997, had dropped below the rates seen in the 1970's.

Note: Serious violent crime includes incidents involving rape and other sexual assaults, robbery, and aggravated assault. Data are collected through personal interviews with persons ages 12 and older; thus, murder is not included for obvious reasons. Data collected prior to 1992 were adjusted to be consistent with newer data collection procedures.

Source: Authors' analyses of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 1973-1997 National Crime Victimization Survey data [Web site data files].

### On average, juveniles were involved in one-quarter of serious violent victimizations annually over the last 25 years



- Between 1973 and 1997, the juvenile proportion of robbery victimizations ranged from a low of 22% to a high of 37%.
- The juvenile proportion of aggravated assault victimizations peaked at 31% in 1994 before declining to 27% in 1997.

Note: Serious violent crime includes incidents involving rape and other sexual assaults, robbery, and aggravated assault. Data are collected through personal interviews with persons ages 12 and older; thus, murder is not included for obvious reasons. Data collected prior to 1992 were adjusted to be consistent with newer data collection procedures.

Source: Authors' analyses of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 1973–1997 National Crime Victimization Survey data [Web site data files].

adults dropped 25%, from 2,940,000 to 2,190,000.

Juvenile crime dropped more than adult crime between 1993 and 1997 in each of the three individual offense categories in NCVS's serious violence group: robberies (37% vs. 22%), aggravated assault (30% vs. 25%), and violent sexual assaults (45% vs. 37%).

### Juveniles were twice as likely as adults to commit serious violent crimes in groups

In 1997, multiple offenders were involved in 1 in 2 violent victimizations by youth under age 18. In contrast, just 1 in 5 violent crimes by adults involved multiple offenders.

Type of victimization	Percent of serious violence involving multiple offenders	
	Juvenile	Adult
Serious violence	52%	21%
Rape	23	4
Robbery	60	29
Aggravated assault	49	19

### Fewer than half of serious violent crimes by juveniles are reported to law enforcement

Many crimes are never reported to police and never become part of official crime statistics. The NCVS found that in 1997, 42% of the serious violent crimes committed by juveniles were ever reported to law enforcement. In 1997, law enforcement agencies learned about 51% of sexual assaults by juveniles, 40% of robberies by juveniles, and 42% of aggravated assaults by juveniles. These percentages have not changed appreciably in the last 20 years.

# Juvenile violence peaks in the afterschool hours on school days and in the evenings on nonschool days

## Juveniles commit crimes at different times than adults do

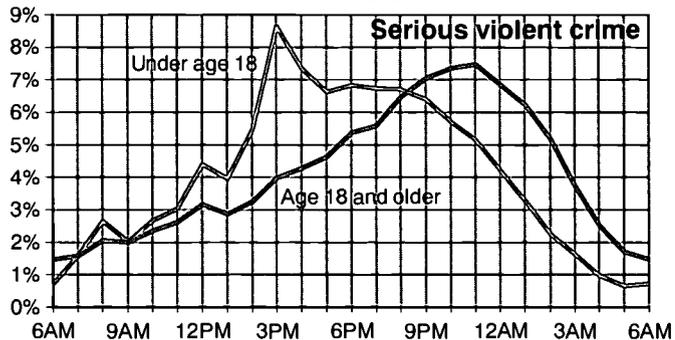
The FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) collects information on each crime reported to law enforcement agencies, including the date and time that the crime was committed. Analyses of these data document that the most likely time for committing a violent crime is different for juveniles and adults.

A new analysis of NIBRS data using the FBI's master files from 1991 through 1996 confirms earlier findings. In general, the number of violent crimes committed by adults increases hourly from 6 a.m. through the afternoon and evening hours, peaks at 11 p.m., and then drops hourly to a low point at 6 a.m. In stark contrast, violent crimes by juveniles peak in the afternoon between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m., the hour at the end of the school day.

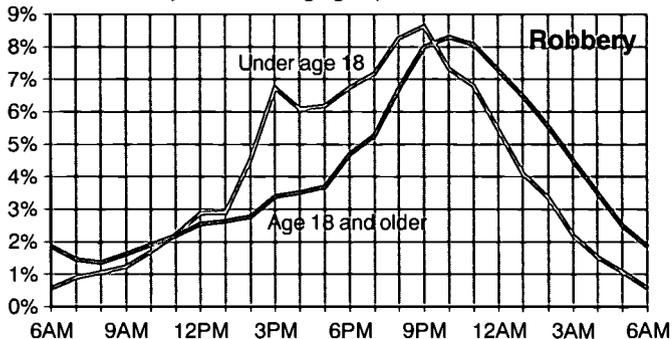
The importance of this afterschool period in understanding the patterns of juvenile violence is confirmed when the days of the year are divided into two groups: school days (i.e., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, in September through May) and nonschool days (all days in June through August, all weekends, and holidays). A comparison of the crime patterns for school and nonschool days finds that the 3 p.m. peak occurs only on school days. The time pattern of juvenile violent crimes on nonschool days is similar to that of adults, with a gradual increase during the afternoon and evening hours, a peak between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m., and a decline thereafter. Therefore, on both school and nonschool days, the level of juvenile violence is relatively low during the time period when juvenile curfew laws are in effect.

## While adult robberies and aggravated assaults present similar temporal patterns, the juvenile patterns differ

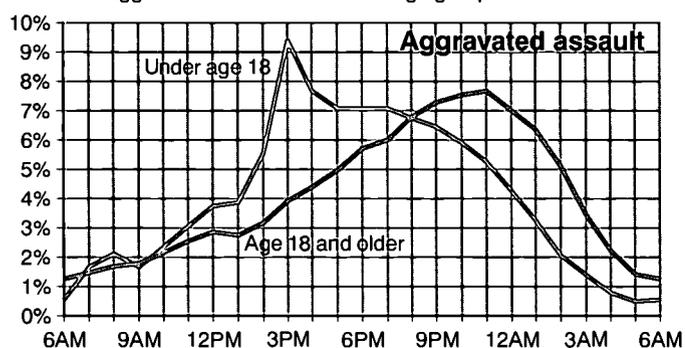
Percent of serious violent incidents in age group



Percent of robbery incidents in age group



Percent of aggravated assault incidents in age group

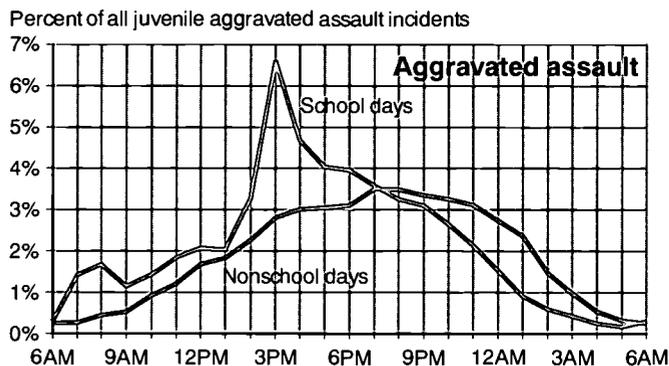
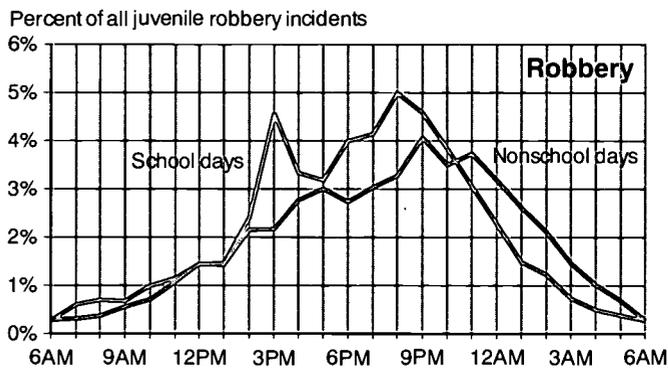
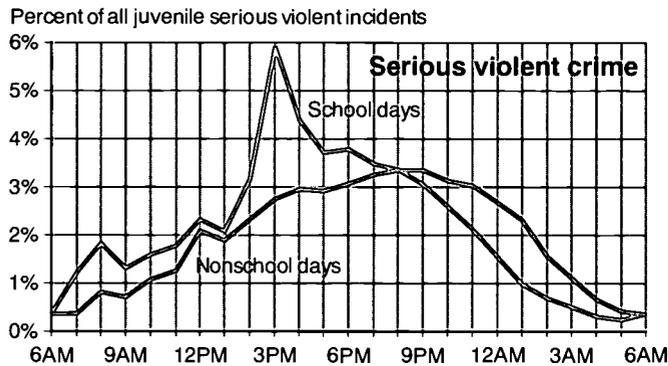


- Aggravated assaults by juveniles are most common around 3 p.m., while the number of juvenile robberies peaks around 9 p.m.
- About two-thirds of all serious violent crimes are aggravated assaults, so they control the overall temporal pattern of serious violent crime.

Note: Serious violent crimes include murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. Data are from 12 States (Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia).

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System master files for the years 1991–1996 [machine-readable data files].

### Serious juvenile crimes cluster in the hours immediately after the close of school



- On school days, robberies and aggravated assaults by juveniles both peak at 3 p.m.; unlike aggravated assaults, robberies also peak at night.
- The temporal pattern of juvenile violence on nonschool days is similar to the overall pattern for adults; juvenile violence peaks at night on nonschool days.

Note: Serious violent crimes include murder, violent sex assaults, robbery, and aggravated assault. Data are from 12 States (Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia).

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System master files* for the years 1991–1996 [machine-readable data files].

### Afterschool programs have more crime reduction potential than juvenile curfews

The number of school days in a year is essentially equal to the number of nonschool days in a year. Based on NIBRS data, 57% of all violent crimes by juveniles (i.e., murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault) occur on school days. In fact, 19% of all juvenile violent crimes occur in the 4 hours between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on school days. A similar proportion of juvenile violent crime (21%) occurs during the standard juvenile curfew hours of 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. However, the annual number of hours in the curfew period (i.e., 8 hours every day) is four times greater than the number of hours in the 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. period on school days (i.e., 4 hours on one-half of the days in the year). Therefore, the rate of juvenile violence in the afterschool period is four times the rate in the juvenile curfew period. This analysis suggests that the potential for reducing a community's juvenile violent crime rate is greater for efforts to reduce juvenile crime after school than for juvenile curfews.

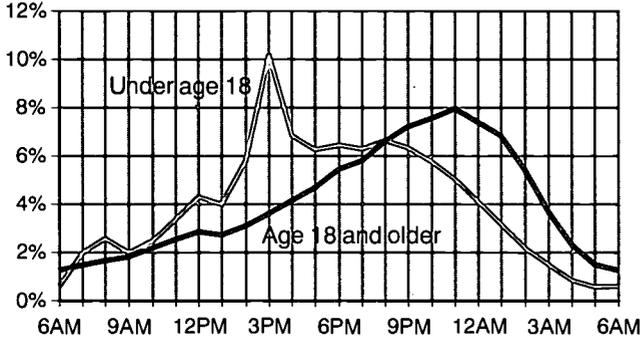
### Sexual assaults by juveniles peak in the hours after school

The most likely hour of a school day for a juvenile to commit a sexual assault is between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. In fact, more than 1 in 7 sexual assaults by juveniles occur in the 4 hours between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on school days. Unlike other violent crimes, sexual assaults by juveniles on nonschool days are most likely to occur between noon and 1 p.m.

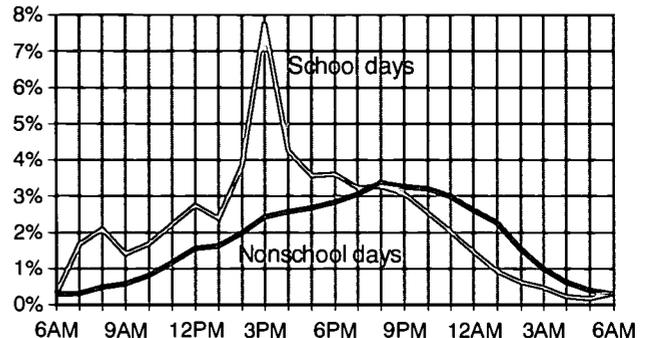
**Juveniles injure more victims in the hours around the close of school than at any other time**

**Violent crime with injury**

Percent of violent incidents with injury in age group



Percent of all juvenile violent incidents with injury

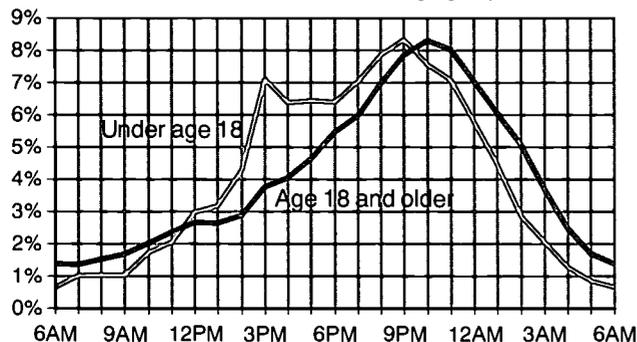


■ The number of persons injured by adult offenders increases through the afternoon and evening hours and peaks around 11 p.m.

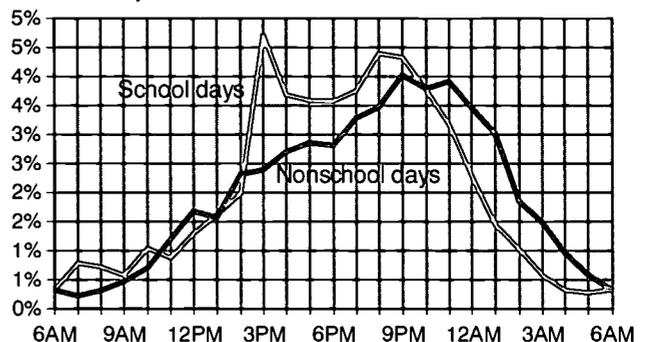
**In general, the temporal pattern of violent crimes committed by juveniles with firearms is similar to the adult pattern, except for the high proportion of juvenile firearm-involved crimes that occur immediately after school on school days**

**Violent crime committed with a firearm**

Percent of violent incidents with firearm in age group



Percent of all juvenile violent incidents with firearm



Note: Violent crime includes murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Data are from 12 States (Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, North Dakota, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia).

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident -Based Reporting System* master files for the years 1991–1996 [machine-readable data files].

## School crime was not uncommon, but fear kept few high schoolers home during a typical month in 1997

### Nearly 4 in 10 high school students were in a physical fight—4 in 100 were injured

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 37% of high school students said they had been in one or more physical fights during the past 12 months. Males were more likely than females to engage in fighting regardless of grade level or race/ethnicity. Males and females in grades 9 and 10 were significantly more likely to fight than those in grade 12.

Percent who were in a physical fight in the past 12 months

	Total	Male	Female
Total	37%	46%	26%
9th grade	45	56	32
10th grade	40	48	30
11th grade	34	44	23
12th grade	29	37	19
White	34	43	21
Black	43	49	38
Hispanic	41	50	30

Hispanics and non-Hispanic blacks were more likely than non-Hispanic whites to fight. This was especially true for females.

Although physical fighting was fairly common among high school students, the proportion of students injured and treated by a doctor or nurse was relatively small (4%).

Percent who were injured in a physical fight in the past 12 months

	Total	Male	Female
Total	4%	5%	2%
9th grade	5	7	3
10th grade	4	5	3
11th grade	3	4	2
12th grade	3	4	2
White	3	3	1
Black	6	7	4
Hispanic	4	6	2

Males were more likely than females to have been injured in a fight. Black and Hispanic students were more likely than white students to suffer fight injuries.

### Fights at high school are fairly common—especially for minority males

Nationwide, 15% of high school students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey. Male students were substantially more apt to fight at school than female students at all grade levels. Males and females in grades 9 and 10 were significantly more likely to fight than those in grade 12.

Percent who were in a physical fight at school in the past 12 months

	Total	Male	Female
Total	15%	20%	9%
9th grade	21	29	12
10th grade	17	22	11
11th grade	13	18	6
12th grade	10	13	5
White	13	19	6
Black	21	25	17
Hispanic	19	25	12

Hispanic and black students were more likely than white students to fight at school. This was especially true for females.

### One-third of high school students had property stolen or vandalized at school

High school students were more likely to experience property crime than fights at school. One-third said they had property such as a car, clothing, or books stolen or deliberately damaged on school property one or more times during the past 12 months. A greater proportion of

male than female students reported such property crimes at school. Students' reports of school property crime did not vary significantly across grade or racial/ethnic groups.

Percent who had property stolen or deliberately damaged at school in the past 30 days

	Total	Male	Female
Total	33%	36%	29%
9th grade	37	40	34
10th grade	35	40	30
11th grade	32	36	28
12th grade	28	30	25
White	33	36	29
Black	34	38	31
Hispanic	32	33	31

### Fear of school-related crime kept 4 in 100 high schoolers home at least once in the past month

Nationwide, 4% of high school students missed at least 1 day of school in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or when traveling to or from school.

Males and females in grade 9 were more likely than those in grade 12 to have felt too unsafe to go to school. Hispanic and black students were more likely than white students to have missed school because they felt unsafe.

Percent who felt too unsafe to go to school in the past 30 days

	Total	Male	Female
Total	4%	4%	4%
9th grade	6	5	6
10th grade	4	4	4
11th grade	4	5	3
12th grade	3	2	3
White	2	2	3
Black	7	8	6
Hispanic	7	7	8

## Half of high school students who said they carried a weapon said they took that weapon to school

### 9% of high school students carried a weapon on school property in the past month

The 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System found that 9% of high school students said that in the past 30 days they had carried a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club) on school property. This was half the proportion of students (18%) who said they had carried a weapon anywhere in the past month. Males were more likely than females to say they carried a weapon at school.

Percent who had carried a weapon on school property in the past 30 days

	Total	Male	Female
Total	9%	13%	4%
9th grade	10	15	5
10th grade	8	11	4
11th grade	9	15	3
12th grade	7	10	3
White	8	12	2
Black	9	11	8
Hispanic	10	16	4

### In a year, 7% of high school students were threatened or injured with a weapon at school

The vast majority of students did not report weapon-related threats or injuries during the 12 months prior to the survey. Overall, 7% had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, including 4% of females and 10% of males.

Percent threatened or injured with a weapon at school in the past year

	Total	Male	Female
Total	7%	10%	4%
9th grade	10	14	6
10th grade	8	10	5
11th grade	6	9	2
12th grade	6	8	3
White	6	8	4
Black	10	14	6
Hispanic	9	13	5

### Across States, the proportion of high school students carrying weapons to school in 1997 ranged from 5% to 17%

Reporting States	Percent reporting they carried a weapon on school property in the past 30 days			Percent reporting they were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the past year		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
U.S. total*	9%	13%	4%	7%	10%	4%
Alabama	11	17	5	8	10	5
Arkansas	12	18	6	8	11	6
<b>California</b> <sup>†</sup>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>
Los Angeles	6	9	3	9	13	5
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>
Connecticut	7	10	3	6	8	5
<b>Delaware</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>
Dist. of Columbia	17	19	13	13	18	9
<b>Florida</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
Hawaii	6	9	3	6	8	5
Iowa	9	14	3	7	10	4
Kentucky	15	27	4	7	10	4
Louisiana	7	11	4	8	9	5
Maine	11	19	3	8	9	5
Massachusetts	8	12	4	8	10	4
Michigan	8	13	4	9	13	5
Mississippi	10	15	5	9	13	6
Missouri	10	16	3	8	11	4
Montana	12	19	5	7	9	6
Nevada	10	15	5	9	11	6
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>
New York	9	14	4	7	10	4
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
North Dakota	8	15	2	6	8	4
Ohio	8	13	3	7	9	5
Rhode Island	8	11	4	8	11	6
South Carolina	10	14	5	9	11	7
South Dakota	9	15	2	5	8	3
<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
Utah	11	18	3	8	11	4
Vermont	12	19	5	7	10	4
West Virginia	11	19	3	8	10	6
Wisconsin	5	8	3	8	9	6
Wyoming	13	22	4	7	11	4

\*U.S. total is based on a national sample.

<sup>†</sup>Data do not include students from the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Note: **Bold** indicates data are unweighted because the overall response rate was less than 60%. Thus, data apply only to respondents.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Kann et al.'s Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 1997, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 47(SS-3).

# 1 in 5 juvenile arrestees carried a gun all or most of the time

## Gun use and crime among male arrestees/detainees is studied

The National Institute of Justice interviewed a sample of arrested and/or detained individuals during the first 6 months of 1995 to learn about gun acquisition and use. Seven of eleven study sites provided data on juvenile males: Denver, District of Columbia, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Phoenix, St. Louis, and San Diego.

Although sites varied, the juvenile males studied were disproportionately black or Hispanic, and most were age 15 or older. Because 5 of the 7 sites limited the study to juveniles in detention rather than all juveniles arrested, the offense profile for juveniles studied was skewed to more serious offenses (crimes against persons ranged from 15% to 29%). Also, the proportion of juveniles who admitted to current membership in a gang ranged from 2% to 41%.

## Juveniles are more likely than arrestees overall to commit a crime with a gun

The proportion of respondents who were charged with a weapons offense ranged from 1% to 12%. Among the juvenile males interviewed, however, 20% said they carried a gun all or most of the time, compared with 14% of arrestees overall.

Juvenile arrestees were nearly twice as likely as arrestees overall to say they had stolen a gun (25% vs. 13%). Gang members and drug sellers were also more likely than other arrestees to have stolen a gun (each about 30%).

Overall, 23% of arrestees who owned a gun had used one in a crime. The proportion was higher for juveniles (33%) and higher still for drug sellers (42%) and gang members (50%).

## Arrestees were often the victims of gun violence

Juvenile males and gang members were more likely than arrestees overall to have been shot at. The proportion who said they had been shot at was about 4 in 10 overall, compared with about 5 in 10 for juvenile males and about 8 in 10 for gang members.

Although juveniles were more likely than adults to be shot at, they were not more likely to suffer gunshot injury. Overall, 16% of arrestees reported gunshot injuries.

## Arrestees say they carry guns for protection and respect

Two-thirds of respondents said they had a gun for protection/self-defense. Almost one-third of arrestees agreed that, "Your crowd respects you if you have a gun." Among drug sellers and gang members, the proportion agreeing was higher (4 in 10). When asked when using a gun was appropriate, 9% of arrestees agreed that, "It is okay to shoot someone who disrespected you." Among juveniles, the proportion agreeing was double (18%). Among drug sellers, 21% agreed; among gang members, 34% agreed.

## More crime guns were recovered from youth ages 16 and 17 than from adults of any age over 26

In 1996, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms established the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative to trace crime guns (i.e., any firearm illegally possessed, used in a crime, or suspected to have been used in a crime) recovered by law enforcement. More than 76,000 crime guns were traced from 27 cities during a 1-year period between 1997 and 1998. Almost one-half (44%) of crime guns were recovered from persons under the age of 25; 11% were recovered from youth age 17 or younger.

Age	Percent of crime guns
All	100%
17 or younger	11
18-24	32
25 or older	56

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

## 4 in 5 recovered firearms were handguns

A handgun was the most common type of recovered firearm traced by law enforcement. Of these, a semi-automatic pistol was the most frequently possessed handgun among all age groups (52%). Semiautomatic pistols were more common among youth under age 18 (58%) and those ages 18-24 (60%) than among persons age 25 or older (47%).

Type of gun	Age		
	17 or younger	18-24	25 or older
Total	100%	100%	100%
Semiautomatic pistol	58	60	47
Revolver	29	24	27
Long gun	12	15	25

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

## More than half of high school seniors have used an illicit drug at least once—more have used alcohol

### The Monitoring the Future Study tracks the drug use of secondary school students

In 1998, the Monitoring the Future (MTF) Study asked a nationally representative sample of nearly 50,000 secondary school students in public and private schools to describe their drug use patterns through self-administered questionnaires. Surveying seniors annually since 1975, the study expanded in 1991 to include 8th and 10th graders. By design, MTF excludes dropouts and institutionalized, homeless, and runaway youth.

### More than half of seniors in 1998 said they used illicit drugs

In 1998, 54% of all seniors said they had at least tried illicit drugs. Marijuana was by far the most commonly used illicit drug: in 1998, 49% of high school seniors said they had tried marijuana. About half of those who said they had used marijuana (or 25% of all seniors) said they had not used any other illicit drug. About 3 in 10 seniors (29%) (or slightly more than half of seniors who used illicit drugs) had used an illicit drug other than marijuana. While almost half of high school seniors used marijuana at least once, 37% said they had used it in the past year, and 23% said they used it in the previous month. A large number of seniors used marijuana on nearly a daily basis. MTF asked students if they had used marijuana on 20 or more occasions in the previous 30 days. In 1998, 6% of high school seniors said they used marijuana that frequently.

Sixteen percent (16%) of high school seniors reported using stimulants, making stimulants the

second most prevalent illicit drug after marijuana. Inhalants were the next most prevalent drug: 15% of seniors reported they had used inhalants. Stimulants also ranked second to marijuana in terms of current use.

In 1998, almost 1 in 10 seniors (9%) said they had used cocaine. More than half of this group (6%) reported that they used it in the previous year, and about one-quarter of users (2% of seniors) had used it in the preceding 30 days. About 1 in 20 seniors reported previous use of crack cocaine: about 1 in 40 in the previous year, and about 1 in 100 in the previous month.

Heroin was the least commonly used illicit drug, with 2.0% of seniors reporting they had used it at

least once. MTF found that a greater proportion of younger students (2.3% each for 8th and 10th graders) reported heroin use. These higher rates for younger age groups may reflect the fact that heroin users are more likely than other students to drop out of school before their senior year.

### Alcohol and tobacco use is more widespread than use of any illicit drug

In 1998, 4 in 5 high school seniors said they had tried alcohol at least once; half said they had used it in the previous month. Even among 8th graders, the use of alcohol was high: one-half had tried alcohol, and almost one-quarter had used it in the month prior to the survey.

### More high school seniors use marijuana on a daily basis than drink alcohol daily

	Proportion of seniors who used			
	in lifetime	in last year	in last month	daily*
Alcohol	81.4%	74.3%	52.0%	3.9%
Been drunk	62.4	52.0	32.9	—
Cigarettes	65.3	—	35.1	22.4
Marijuana/hashish	49.1	37.5	22.8	5.6
Stimulants	16.4	10.1	4.6	0.3
Inhalants	15.2	6.2	2.3	0.2
LSD	12.6	7.6	3.2	0.1
Cocaine, not crack	9.3	5.7	2.4	0.2
Tranquilizers	8.5	5.5	2.4	0.1
MDMA (ecstasy)	5.8	3.6	1.5	0.2
Crack cocaine	4.4	2.5	1.0	0.1
PCP	3.9	2.1	1.0	0.3
Steroids	2.7	1.7	1.1	0.3
Heroin	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.1

■ More than 1 in 5 high school seniors smoked cigarettes on a regular basis, with more than 1 in 10 smoking half a pack or more per day.

\*Used on 20 or more occasions in the last 30 days.

—Not included in survey.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman's *Drug use by American young people begins to turn downward*.

Perhaps of greater concern are the juveniles who indicated heavy drinking (defined as five or more drinks in a row) in the preceding 2 weeks: 31% of seniors, 24% of 10th graders, and 14% of 8th graders reported this behavior.

Tobacco use was less prevalent than alcohol use. In 1998, 65% of 12th graders and 46% of 8th graders had tried cigarettes, and 35% of seniors and 19% of 8th graders had smoked in the preceding month. Of more concern is the fact that 22% of seniors, 16% of 10th graders, and 9% of 8th graders were currently smoking cigarettes on a regular basis.

### **Males were more likely than females to drink alcohol and to use drugs**

Males were more likely than females to drink alcohol at all or to drink heavily. Alcohol use in the past 30 days was reported by 57% of males and 47% of females. Almost 2 in 5 males and more than 1 in 4 females had five or more drinks in a row in the previous 2 weeks.

Males were more likely than females to have used marijuana in the previous year (42% vs. 33%), but the proportions of male and female high school seniors using illicit drugs other than marijuana in the previous year were more similar (22% vs. 18%). Males had higher annual use rates for inhalants, LSD, crack, cocaine, steroids, and heroin. Annual use rates were similar for males and females for stimulants, barbiturates, and tranquilizers.

### **Blacks had lower drug, alcohol, and tobacco use rates than whites**

In 1998, 42% of white seniors said they had smoked in the past 30 days, compared with 15% of blacks. More than one-half of white seniors reported alcohol use in the past 30 days, compared with one-third of black seniors. Whites were three times more likely than blacks to have had five or more drinks in a row in the previous 2 weeks (36% vs. 12%).

The same general pattern held for illicit drugs. The proportion of seniors who reported using marijuana in the past year was lower among blacks than whites (30% vs. 40%).

Whites were seven times more likely than blacks to have used cocaine in the previous year. White seniors were also three times as likely as blacks to have tried heroin at least once and nine times as likely to have tried LSD.

### **Fewer than 1 in 10 high school students used alcohol or marijuana at school**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, 6% of high school students said they had had at least one drink of alcohol on school property in the past month. Similarly, 7% said they had used marijuana on school property during the same time period.

### **Drug use was more common among males than females, and among whites than blacks**

	Proportion of seniors who used in previous year				
	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic
Alcohol*	57.3%	46.9%	57.7%	33.3%	49.8%
Been drunk*	39.0	26.6	39.3	13.8	25.9
Marijuana/hashish	41.7	33.0	39.9	30.0	37.2
Cigarettes*	36.3	33.3	41.7	14.9	26.6
Stimulants	10.3	9.8	12.1	2.8	7.0
Inhalants	7.5	5.1	7.9	1.7	4.5
LSD	9.3	5.7	9.5	1.1	5.9
Cocaine, not crack	6.8	4.5	6.3	0.9	6.7
Barbiturates	6.3	4.8	6.5	1.4	3.3
Tranquilizers	6.3	4.7	6.2	1.0	3.3
Crack cocaine	3.1	2.0	2.6	0.3	3.9
Steroids	2.8	0.3	1.5	0.9	2.4
Heroin	1.4	0.7	1.2	0.4	0.8

Note: Race proportions include data for 1997 in addition to 1998, to increase subgroup sample size and provide more stable estimates.

\*Alcohol and cigarette proportions are based on use in the prior 30 days.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman's *National survey results on drug use from the Monitoring the Future Study, 1975-1998. Volume I: Secondary school students.*

Overall, males were more likely than females to drink alcohol or use marijuana at school. This was true for all grades and all racial/ethnic groups. Only females showed significant variation across grade levels, with a greater proportion of 9th graders drinking alcohol or using marijuana at school than 12th graders. Hispanic students were more likely than non-Hispanic white students to drink alcohol or use marijuana at school.

Percent who had used on school property in the past 30 days

	Total	Male	Female
<b>Alcohol</b>			
Total	6%	7%	4%
9th grade	6	6	5
10th grade	5	6	3
11th grade	6	8	4
12th grade	6	9	2
White	5	6	3
Black	6	7	4
Hispanic	8	9	8
<b>Marijuana</b>			
Total	7%	9%	5%
9th grade	8	10	7
10th grade	6	8	4
11th grade	8	10	5
12th grade	6	8	3
White	6	7	4
Black	9	13	5
Hispanic	10	14	6

**High school students were three times more likely to use alcohol than to use marijuana before age 13**

	Percent who had used before age 13					
	Alcohol			Marijuana		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	31%	36%	26%	10%	12%	7%
9th grade	42	45	39	15	19	11
10th grade	32	36	28	10	12	8
11th grade	30	35	23	8	11	5
12th grade	23	29	15	6	8	4
White	29	33	24	8	9	6
Black	33	39	27	11	16	7
Hispanic	38	43	32	13	17	8

- Nearly one-third of high school students said they had drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips) before they turned 13; marijuana use before age 13 was reported by 1 in 10 students, and cocaine use before age 13 was reported by 1 in 100.
- Females were less likely than males to have used alcohol or marijuana before age 13. Males and females in grade 9 were more likely than those in grade 12 to have tried alcohol and marijuana before age 13.
- Compared with non-Hispanic white students, a greater proportion of Hispanic students had tried alcohol or marijuana before age 13.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Kann et al.'s Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 1997, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 47(SS-3).

One in three high school students said they had been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property at least once during the past 12 months. For all grades and all racial/ethnic groups, males were more likely than females to say they had been offered, sold, or given illegal drugs at school. Hispanic students were more likely than white or black students to report being offered, sold, or given illegal drugs at school.

Percent who had been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in past 12 months

	Total	Male	Female
Total	32%	37%	25%
9th grade	31	35	28
10th grade	33	40	25
11th grade	33	39	26
12th grade	29	36	20
White	31	36	25
Black	25	35	17
Hispanic	41	47	34

**Across States, the proportion of high school students who had been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property during the year ranged from 15% to 42%**

	Percent who had used alcohol on school property in the past 30 days			Percent who had used marijuana on school property in the past 30 days			Percent who had been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the past year		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
U.S. Total	6%	7%	4%	7%	9%	5%	32%	37%	25%
Alabama	6	8	5	5	8	2	29	36	23
Arkansas	6	7	4	8	11	4	26	31	21
<b>California*</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>30</b>
Los Angeles	9	9	8	10	13	7	36	42	31
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>
Connecticut	7	8	6	8	10	6	29	33	26
<b>Delaware</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>33</b>
Dist. of Columbia	12	17	7	14	18	9	25	29	20
<b>Florida</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>29</b>
Hawaii	9	9	8	13	15	10	41	47	35
Iowa	4	6	3	5	6	3	23	27	18
Kentucky	7	7	6	8	11	4	34	40	28
Louisiana	5	7	4	5	7	3	28	33	23
Maine	6	7	5	10	12	6	41	45	36
Massachusetts	6	8	5	10	13	7	42	47	38
Michigan	7	8	6	9	12	6	36	43	30
Mississippi	7	9	5	5	9	2	24	30	19
Missouri	5	7	4	9	12	5	26	31	20
Montana	8	10	7	9	11	7	35	38	31
Nevada	8	8	8	10	11	8	38	42	33
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>22</b>
New York	6	8	5	8	10	5	27	33	22
<b>North Carolina</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>26</b>
North Dakota	7	8	6	8	8	7	29	31	27
Ohio	4	5	3	7	9	5	28	33	23
Rhode Island	7	9	6	9	12	7	29	34	25
South Carolina	6	8	4	7	10	3	—	—	—
South Dakota	8	11	5	5	8	2	30	34	26
<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>23</b>
Utah	5	6	4	5	6	3	27	29	25
Vermont	6	8	4	11	14	7	40	46	34
West Virginia	7	9	4	9	14	5	34	39	29
Wisconsin	4	5	3	8	10	5	28	31	25
Wyoming	7	9	6	8	10	6	32	36	27

\*Data do not include students from the Los Angeles Unified School District.

—Data not available

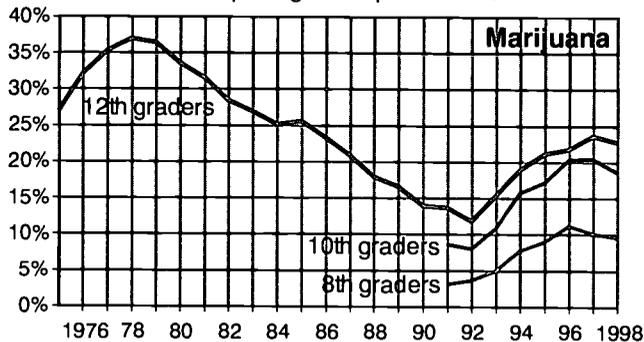
Note: **Bold** indicates data are unweighted because the overall response rate was less than 60%. Thus, data apply only to respondents.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Kann et al.'s Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 1997, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 47(SS-3).

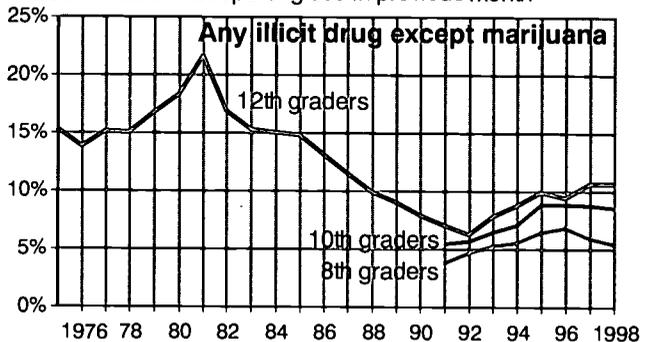
## Illicit drug use by juveniles declined during the 1980's but has increased since 1992

In 1998, the proportion of high school seniors who reported they had used illicit drugs in the previous month, while above the 1992 levels, was well below the levels reported in the early 1980's

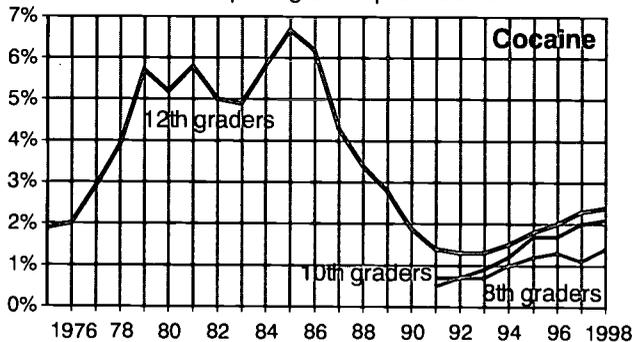
Percent of students reporting use in previous month



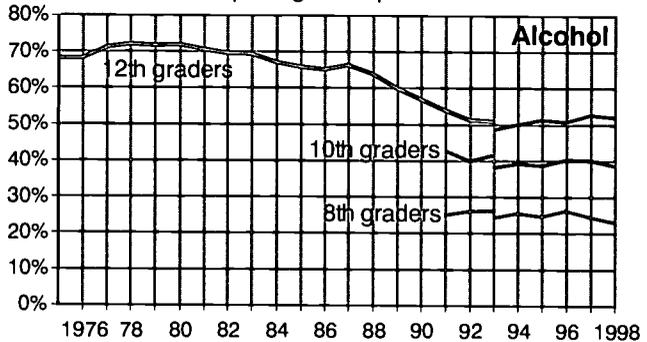
Percent of students reporting use in previous month



Percent of students reporting use in previous month



Percent of students reporting use in previous month



- After years of continuous decline, reported drug use by high school seniors grew in several categories after 1992. Similar increases in drug use were reported by 8th and 10th graders, although their levels of use were below those of 12th graders.
- In recent years, the proportion of students reporting use of illicit drugs during the 30 days prior to the survey appears to have stabilized for some categories of drug use. There was a statistically significant decline in reported marijuana use among 10th graders between 1997 and 1998.
- In 1998, the proportion of seniors who said they had used marijuana in the past month was more than double the proportion who reported past-month use of illicit drugs other than marijuana (23% vs. 11%) but less than half the proportion who reported past-month alcohol use (52%).
- Past-month cocaine use among seniors peaked in 1985 at nearly 7%. Although use levels for cocaine have increased recently, the 1998 level is slightly above 2%.
- Between 1997 and 1998, alcohol use among 8th and 10th graders remained unchanged.

Note: The survey question on alcohol use was revised in 1993 to indicate that a "drink" meant "more than a few sips." In 1993, half the sample responded to the original question and half to the revised question. In 1994 through 1998, all respondents were asked the revised question.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman's *Drug use by American young people begins to turn downward*.

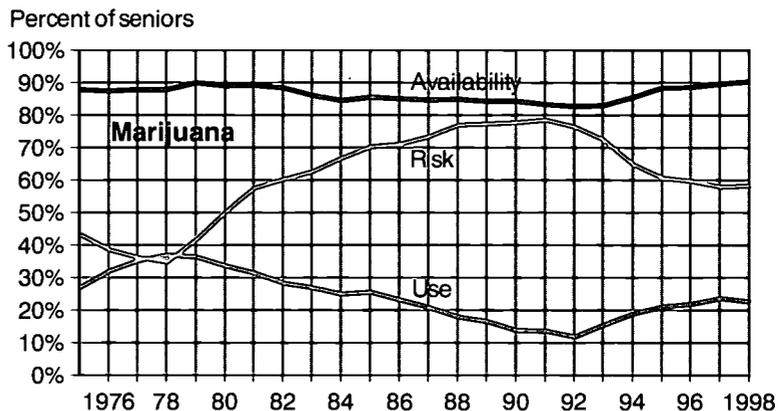
### Change in students' use of marijuana and alcohol is tied to their perception of possible harm from use

The annual Monitoring the Future Study, in addition to collecting information about students' use of illicit drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, also collects data on students' perceptions regarding the availability of these substances and the risk of harm from using them.

Between 1975 and 1998, the proportion of high school seniors reporting use of marijuana in the 30 days prior to the survey fluctuated, peaking in 1978 and then declining consistently through 1992. Since then, reported use has increased, but the 1998 rate was still far below the peak level of 1978. When the perceived risk of "great harm" from either regular or occasional use of marijuana increased, use declined; when perceived risk declined, use increased. The perception that obtaining marijuana was "fairly easy" or "very easy" remained relatively constant between 1975 and 1998.

Students' reported use of alcohol also shifted from 1975 to 1998. After 1978, alcohol use declined through 1993. Alcohol use fluctuated within a limited range thereafter, but the 1998 rate was far lower than the 1978 rate. As with marijuana, when the perceived risk of "great harm" from either weekend "binge" drinking or daily drinking increased, use declined; when perceived risk declined, use increased.

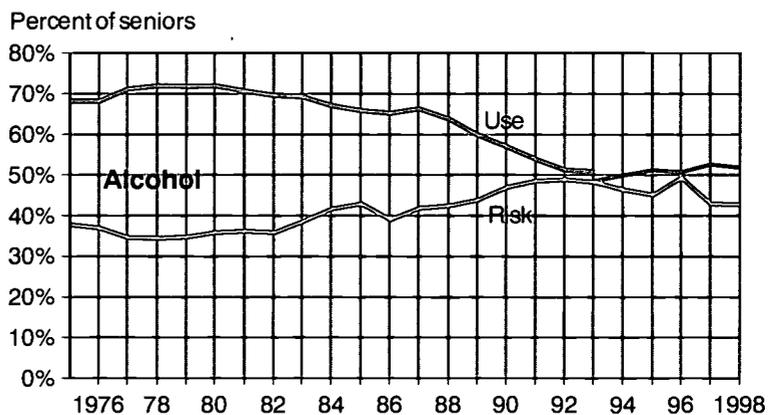
### Over the past 20 years, while availability remained constant, changes in marijuana and alcohol use reflected changes in perceived harm



Availability: Percent saying fairly easy or very easy to get.

Risk: Percent saying great risk of harm in regular use.

Use: Percent using once or more in the past 30 days.



Risk: Percent saying great risk of harm in having five or more drinks once or twice each weekend.

Use: Percent using once or more in the past 30 days.

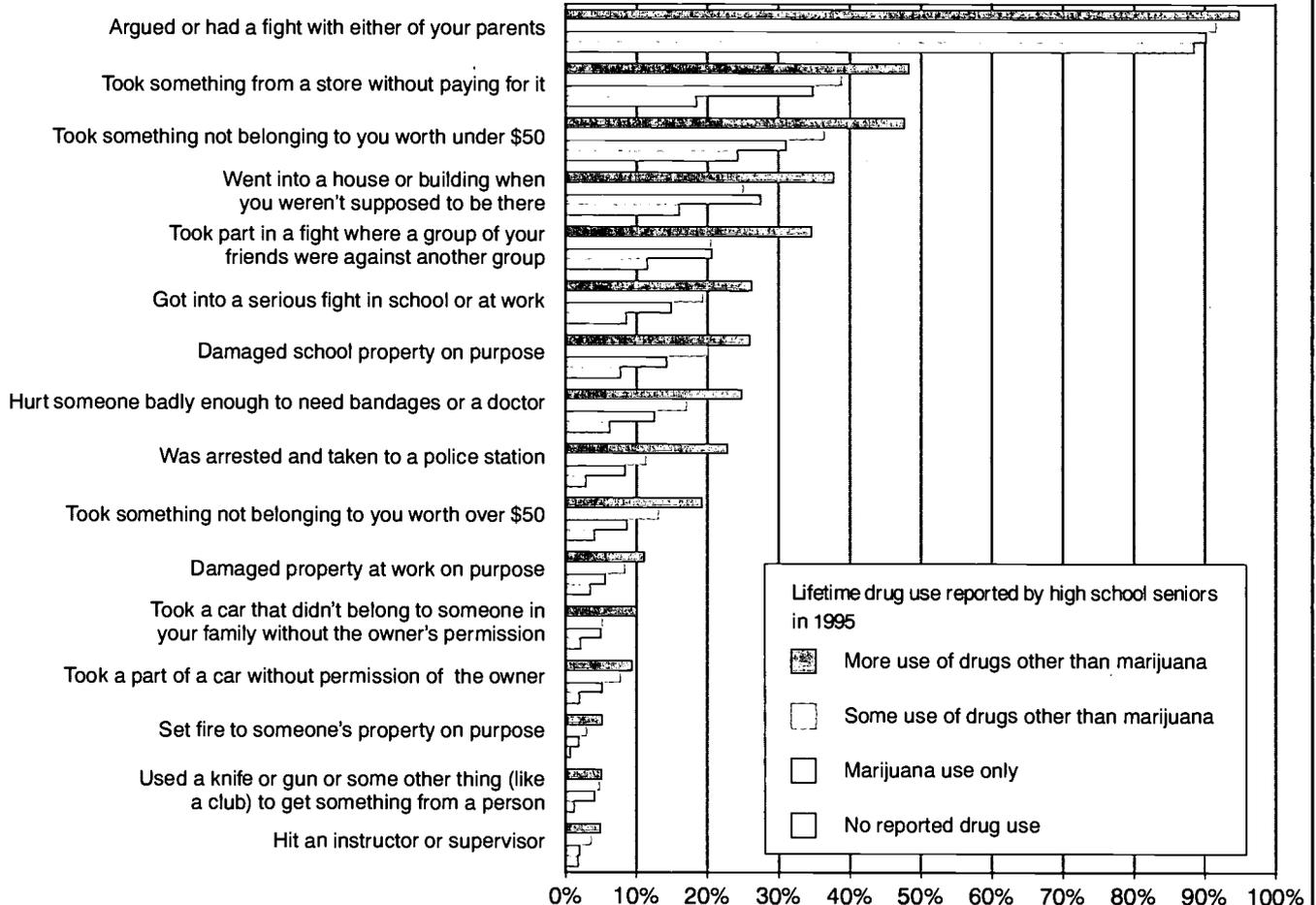
Note: The survey question on alcohol use was revised in 1993 to indicate that a "drink" meant "more than a few sips." In 1993, half the sample responded to the original question. In 1994 through 1998, all respondents were asked the revised question.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston, O'Malley, and Bachman's *Drug use by American young people begins to turn downward*.

## The proportion of seniors who reported breaking the law was greater among drug users than nonusers

### Nearly all high school seniors said they had argued with their parents, and substantial proportions reported breaking the law—law-violating behavior was more common for those who used drugs

Behavior reported by high school seniors in the past 12 months:



- Half of seniors (50%) reported no drug use; 21% reported using only marijuana (or hashish); 11% said they had used drugs other than marijuana (LSD/psychedelics, cocaine, amphetamines, tranquilizers, methaqualone, barbiturates) but had never used any one class of them more than twice and had never used heroin; 14% said they had used drugs other than marijuana three or more times and had never used heroin; and 2% said they had used heroin at least once.
- Nearly 2 in 10 seniors who said they had never used illicit drugs reported that in the past year they had taken something from a store without paying. Among those who had used marijuana only, the figure was more than 3 in 10; for those reporting some use of other drugs, the figure was nearly 4 in 10; for those reporting more use of other drugs, it was nearly 5 in 10.
- Of seniors who said they had used drugs other than marijuana three or more times, 35% reported that in the past year they had taken part in a fight where a group of their friends was against another group; the proportion for those in the "some use" and "marijuana only" categories was 21%; among seniors reporting no drug use the proportion was 12%.

Note: Detailed data for those reporting heroin use are not presented because there were too few cases.

Source: Graph developed from data presented in Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley's *Monitoring the Future, questionnaire responses from the Nation's high school seniors, 1995*.

## Gang problems now affect more jurisdictions than before—including rural and suburban areas

### Information about gangs in the U.S. has increased markedly, but forming an accurate national picture remains difficult

Until recently, no national-level data were collected on the number of gangs or gang members, the juvenile proportion of gang members, or the volume of gang crime. This has begun to change in the past few years. A National Youth Gang Survey is now conducted annually for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention by the National Youth Gang Center. The survey gathers basic data on gangs from police and sheriffs' departments across the country. The 1996 survey, which collected information for the year 1995 from a nationally representative sample of 2,629 law enforcement agencies, was extensive enough to shed considerable

light on the scope of youth gang activity nationwide. In addition, analyses of several large-scale youth surveys have yielded insight into the dynamics of gang involvement and patterns of gang membership and gang crime.

Nevertheless, it remains difficult to form a clear statistical picture of youth gangs in America. While most youth gang definitions share a handful of common elements—a self-formed, recurrently interacting group, a common involvement in crime, communication through symbols, control of a particular territory or enterprise—there are no universally agreed-upon criteria for identifying gangs and gang members. Crucial distinctions between active core members, fringe members, and mere “wannabes” are typically lost in gang membership statistics. Since

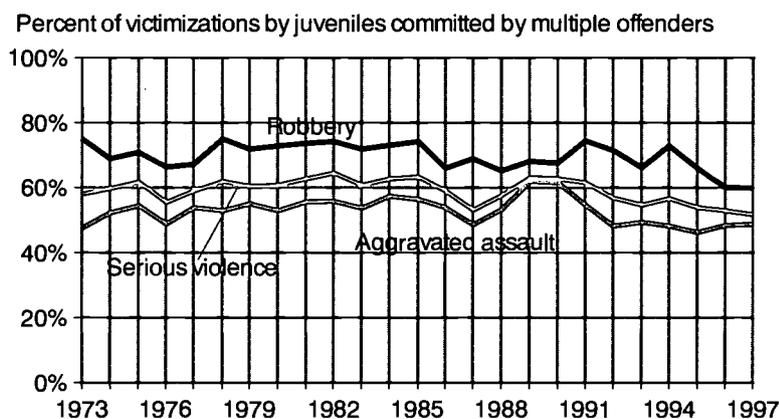
there is no uniform procedure for purging the files of no-longer-active gang members, law enforcement agencies' estimates of the number and age range of gang members in their jurisdictions may be artificially inflated. Also, political pressures to deny or minimize local gang problems—not to mention monetary incentives to exaggerate them—undoubtedly play a role in distorting gang membership statistics.

Estimating the volume of gang crime is also difficult. Some jurisdictions that acknowledge gang problems—even some that maintain files on gangs and gang members—do not keep track of gang-related criminal activity as such in their records. Some do so only for certain kinds of incidents, such as gang-related homicides. Even the definition of “gang crime” varies from place to place. In some cities, gang crime is member defined—all offenses involving gang members as perpetrators or victims, alone or in groups, are counted as gang crimes. In others, gang crime is motive defined—only offenses committed on behalf of the gang, such as crimes committed in defense of territory, retaliations, intimidation of witnesses, and graffiti, are counted.

### The Nation's youth gang problem is substantial and affects all sorts of communities

The 1996 National Youth Gang Survey indicates that an estimated 31,000 gangs were operating in close to 4,800 U.S. cities in 1995. These gangs had more than 846,000 members, half of whom were under age 18. These estimates are higher than those emerging from most previous gang studies. Regardless of whether this reflects actual growth in gang membership, more comprehensive

### The proportion of juvenile crime committed in groups did not change appreciably between 1973 and 1997



Note: It is improper to use these data to estimate the proportion of juvenile crime that is gang crime. Most juvenile crime has been committed in groups over the entire time period represented. It is, however, interesting to note that the large reported increase in juvenile gang activity in the late 1980's and early 1990's did not result in any apparent increase in the proportion of juvenile crime committed in groups.

Source: Authors' analyses of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 1973–1997 National Crime Victimization Survey data [Web site data files].

surveying, or other factors, the 1996 survey makes clear that gang problems now affect more jurisdictions than before, including many smaller cities and rural and suburban areas with no previous gang experience. Proportionally more big-city police departments (population 25,000 or more) responding to the survey reported an active gang presence in their jurisdictions in 1995 than did departments in other types of jurisdictions. However, substantial proportions of the police and sheriffs' departments in suburbs, smaller towns (population between 2,500 and 25,000), and even rural counties reported active gangs in 1995.

Type of jurisdiction	Percent reporting active gangs	Average year of gang problem onset
Big cities	74%	1989
Suburbs	57	1990
Small cities	34	1992
Rural areas	25	1993

Gang problems have emerged more recently in rural areas and small towns than in big cities and suburbs.

### The spread of gang problems is not due to gang migration

While it is true that gangs have proliferated in recent years and that the problem has spread from large cities to small towns and rural areas, this does not mean that the physical migration of gang members is the cause. Most studies have concluded that, while such migration does occur, it does not play a major role in gang proliferation. Some exceptionally well-organized gangs are thought to be engaged in interstate drug trafficking and to be deliberately expanding their reach through member relocation. But overall, migrating gang members are relatively

few, and their movements are attributable to normal residential relocation. Most law enforcement agencies regard their local gang problems as "home grown."

### Gang demographics are changing as gangs emerge in new areas

Law enforcement agencies surveyed were asked to report the ages and racial and ethnic backgrounds of gang members in their jurisdictions.

	Demographic profile of gang members, 1995
Total number	846,000 100%
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	90%
Female	10
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	
Hispanic	44%
Black	35
White	14
Asian	5
Other	2
<b>Age</b>	
14 or younger	16%
15-17	34
18-24	37
25 or older	13

A comparison between these figures and those emerging from previous surveys suggests that white participation in gangs is on the rise. The change may be associated with the proliferation of gangs in rural counties and small cities, where the white proportion of gang membership (reported at 32% and 31%, respectively) is much higher than in large cities.

The proportion of female gang members, while small, may also be increasing. While respondents reported that in 1995 about 10% of gang members were female, the best

estimate of female gang participation emerging from a similar 1992 survey was only 6%. Here again, part of this change may be associated with the emergence of new gangs in smaller cities, where female gang participation is higher. The change may also be associated with the fact that the percentage of female gang members also increased in nearly three-quarters of the 55 cities that reported female gang members in both the 1992 and 1996 surveys.

It should be noted that there are some marked differences between gang demographic profiles based on law enforcement records (like those described above) and those emerging from youth surveys. Most notably, those who identify themselves as gang members in response to youth surveys tend to include many more females and many more non-minority males than are found in law enforcement records on gangs. For example, in a survey of nearly 6,000 8th graders completed in 1995 as part of a national evaluation of the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program, 25% of self-reported gang members were white and 38% were female.

### The criminal activities of gang members are extensive and varied

Crimes that are designated "gang-related" in law enforcement agencies' records tend to be overwhelmingly violent. In 93 cities that kept data on gang-related criminal activity in 1992, homicides and other violent crimes accounted for more than half of the recorded gang crimes, while property crimes accounted for less than 15% and drug crimes only about 10%. But this is not necessarily an accurate reflection of

gang members' criminal activities. Law enforcement agencies responding to the 1996 National Youth Gang Survey reported significant youth gang involvement in a range of non-violent crimes in their jurisdictions in 1995, especially larceny, burglary, and auto theft. The types of crimes in which youth gangs were involved varied according to locality, however. Large-city and suburban youth gangs were more prone to aggravated assault and robbery than were those in small towns and rural areas. Gang involvement in burglary was more common in suburban and rural areas than in small and large cities.

In any case, self-report studies indicate that youth gang members are responsible for a disproportionate share of all offenses, violent and nonviolent. For example, in a large-scale survey of Rochester, NY, youth by Thornberry and Burch, gang members making up less than a third of the sample accounted for 69% of the violent acts, 68% of the property crimes, and 70% of the drug sales reported in interviews. Surveys in other cities have yielded even more disproportionate results. Even when compared with similarly situated (that is, comparably at risk) young people—including those

who associate to the same extent with delinquent peers—gang members commit crimes at considerably higher rates than nonmembers. Also, individual gang members tend to be more deeply involved in crime while active in gangs than either before joining or after leaving. These findings strongly suggest that a gang is much more than a mere association of criminally inclined young people and that the gang structure itself may encourage, facilitate, or even demand a heightened level of criminality among members.

#### **The typical gang member's progress from "wannabe" status to serious crime is gradual**

According to data compiled by Huff from confidential gang interviews in selected urban and suburban communities in Colorado, Florida, and Ohio, the median age for beginning to associate with gangs was 13, while the median age for actually joining—as well as the median age for first arrest—was 14. A companion study tracking the arrest histories of 83 gang members in Columbus, OH, found a clear progression in offense seriousness, beginning with property crimes and moving, within about 1.5 to 2 years, to violent crimes and drug crimes.

#### **The extent of organized gang involvement in drug trafficking is difficult to gauge**

On average, law enforcement agencies canvassed in the 1996 survey reported that gangs were involved in 43% of the illegal drug sales in their jurisdictions. While this percentage is remarkably high, it may be indicative only of the activities of individual gang members or drug-selling cliques within gangs, rather than the gangs themselves. Generally, researchers have concluded that, with some notable exceptions, street gang structures do not organizationally support drug distribution.

#### **Gang presence in schools is increasing**

While the overall amount of school crime reported by students showed no significant increase between 1989 and 1995, the proportion of those students who reported the presence of gangs in their schools increased from 15% to 28%. Moreover, the violent victimization rate for students in schools where gangs were reported was 7.5%, considerably higher than the 2.7% rate for students in schools with no reported gang presence.

## 54% of males and 73% of females who enter the juvenile justice system never return on a new referral

### Official records can highlight gender differences in law-violating behavior

Information on the delinquent behavior of youth captured in the official records of law enforcement agencies and juvenile courts forms the picture of juvenile offenders available to the juvenile justice system. Self-report surveys of offending certainly yield more (and more varied) law-violating behavior. Official records, however, can highlight differences in the behaviors of various categories of juveniles—for example, differences in the law-violating behaviors of males and females.

To investigate gender differences in law-violating behavior, the records of the Maricopa County Juvenile Court (in Phoenix, AZ) were studied. Maricopa County is a large, urban area with a total population of nearly 2.5 million in 1995. The court's automated information system contains a description of each referral made to court intake since 1969. Records studied capture the complete juvenile court careers of more than 150,000 youth born between 1962 and 1977—youth who reached age 18 (and therefore were outside the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court) between 1980 and 1995.

During these years, there was a standing policy in the county that all youth arrested be referred to juvenile court for screening. Therefore, the court records actually provide a complete history of a youth's official contacts with the juvenile justice system.

### 3 in 10 youth with official delinquent careers are female

In this community, 31% of the youth with an official record of delinquency were female. This means that for every two males with an official delinquency record, there was one female whose behavior brought her to the attention of the juvenile justice system.

Males who came to the attention of the justice system were likely to have substantially more court contacts before they became an adult than were females: 46% of males referred to court intake in Maricopa County for the first time were referred at least one more time, compared with only 27% of females. In fact, 19% of males eventually accrued four or more referrals, compared with only 5% of females.

### A smaller proportion of female careers contained a serious offense

Serious offenses include murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, kidnapping, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, serious larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, weapons offenses, and drug trafficking. Female careers were less likely to include a serious crime than were male careers: 16% of female careers and 42% of male careers included at least one serious offense referral. Even for youth with four or more referrals in their careers, a smaller proportion of female (62%) than male (86%) careers included a serious referral. Violent referrals were also found in a smaller proportion of female than

male careers (3% vs. 10%), even in those careers with four or more total referrals (18% vs. 30%).

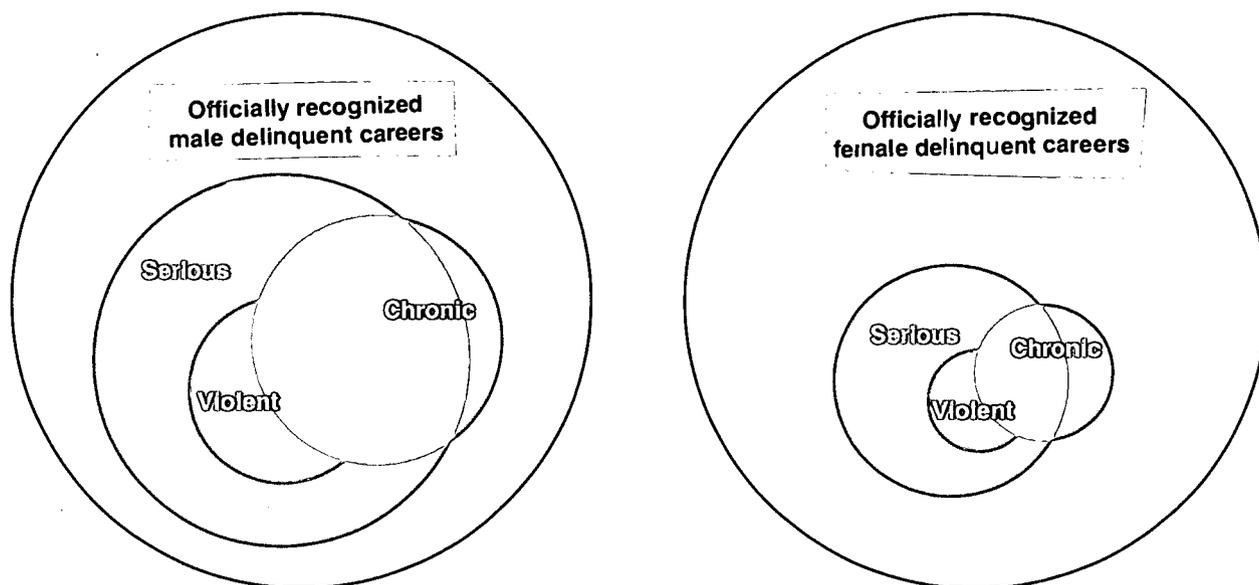
A chronic offender is defined as a youth with four or more referrals to court intake. Male chronic offenders were responsible for 52% of all male delinquency referrals, 62% of all male serious referrals, and 63% of all male violent referrals. In contrast, female chronic offenders were responsible for just 19% of all female delinquency referrals, 32% of all female serious referrals, and 33% of all female violent referrals.

### About 1 in 4 males and females with delinquency records was first referred before age 14

The ages at which females and males enter the juvenile justice system were similar: 28% of males and 23% of females who would eventually have an official juvenile delinquency record were referred for the first time before age 14. A similar proportion of males (21%) and females (19%) had their first referral at age 17.

Youth who were known to the juvenile justice system by age 13 were responsible for a disproportionate share of the serious and the violent careers: 40% of all males with a violent career and 34% of all females with a violent career had been seen by the justice system by age 13. These early-onset offenders were also more likely to have long careers. Of chronic offenders, 52% of males and 53% of females had their first referral by age 13.

10% of males and 3% of females who had contact with the juvenile justice system for a delinquent offense were charged with at least one violent offense by the time they reached age 18



- The portion of the large circle not covered by the circles for serious, chronic, and violent offenders represents offender careers with fewer than four referrals and no referrals for a serious offense. Overlaps represent careers with multiple attributes. The circles and their overlaps are drawn in proportion to the number of careers with those attributes.
- **Violent offenses** include murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, kidnaping, violent sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.
- **Serious offenses** include the violent offenses plus burglary, serious larceny, motor vehicle theft, arson, weapons offenses, and drug trafficking.
- **Chronic offenders** are youth with four or more referrals to the juvenile justice system.
- The delinquency careers of 1,000 typical males with officially recognized delinquent behavior prior to age 18 had the following characteristics: 557 careers involved fewer than four referrals, with no referrals for a serious offense; 188 careers involved four or more referrals; 416 careers involved a referral for a serious offense; 103 careers involved at least one referral for a violent offense; and 57 careers involved at least four referrals, with at least one for a violent crime.
- The delinquency careers of 1,000 typical females with officially recognized delinquent behavior prior to age 18 had the following characteristics: 821 careers involved fewer than four referrals, with no referrals for a serious offense; 55 careers involved four or more referrals; 158 careers involved a referral for a serious offense; 32 careers involved at least one referral for a violent offense; and 10 careers involved at least four referrals, with at least one for a violent crime.

Note: The data supporting this presentation capture the court careers of all 150,000 youth born between 1962 and 1977 (i.e., youth who turned age 18 between 1980 and 1995) who were referred to the Maricopa County Juvenile Court in Phoenix, AZ, for a delinquent act. Of these youth, 69% were male and 31% were female. The figures above represent the male and female cohorts with circles of equal size for ease of reading. If the two circles were drawn in proportion to the number of youth in each cohort, the male circle would have more than twice the area of the female circle.

Source: Authors' analysis of data supplied to the National Center for Juvenile Justice's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Maricopa County Juvenile Court case records, birth cohort 1962-1977* [machine-readable data file].

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## Allowing one youth to leave high school for a life of crime and drug abuse costs society \$1.7–\$2.3 million

A 1998 study by Mark Cohen estimated the external marginal costs imposed on society by the average career criminal, heavy drug abuser, and high school dropout. Though necessarily somewhat speculative, cost estimates of this kind help to convey a sense of the actual “waste” involved in a wasted life—as well as the substantial potential benefits to be expected from even modestly successful prevention efforts aimed at high-risk youth.

The portion of the study that focused on crime costs was based on estimates of the number and range of crimes committed by the average career criminal (68–80 crimes of various levels of seriousness, over an active career of about 10 years, including 4 as a juvenile); the tangible and intangible costs that such crimes impose on their victims; the expenses borne by the criminal justice system in connection with investigation, processing, and punishment; and productivity losses caused by incarceration. Discounted to a present-value dollar amount, the total crime costs imposed by a single lifetime of crime were estimated at \$1.3–\$1.5 million.

Note that these are *external* costs borne by those other than the perpetrator—victims, fellow citizens, and taxpayers. About half are intangible costs—pain, suffering, and diminished quality of life—imposed on victims alone and monetized according to widely accepted techniques developed by economists for

<b>Invoice</b>	
<b>To:</b>	<b>American public</b>
<b>For:</b>	<b>One lost youth</b>
Description	Cost
<b>Crime:</b>	
Juvenile career (4 years @ 1–4 crimes/year)	
Victim costs	\$62,000–\$250,000
Criminal justice costs	\$21,000–\$84,000
Adult career (6 years @ 10.6 crimes/year)	
Victim costs	\$1,000,000
Criminal justice costs	\$335,000
Offender productivity loss	\$64,000
<b>Total crime cost</b>	<b>\$1.5–\$1.8 million</b>
<b>Present value*</b>	<b>\$1.3–\$1.5 million</b>
<b>Drug abuse:</b>	
Resources devoted to drug market	\$84,000–\$168,000
Reduced productivity loss	\$27,600
Drug treatment costs	\$10,200
Medical treatment of drug-related illnesses	\$11,000
Premature death	\$31,800–\$223,000
Criminal justice costs associated with drug crimes	\$40,500
<b>Total drug abuse cost</b>	<b>\$200,000–\$480,000</b>
<b>Present value*</b>	<b>\$150,000–\$360,000</b>
<b>Costs imposed by high school dropout:</b>	
Lost wage productivity	\$300,000
Fringe benefits	\$75,000
Nonmarket losses	\$95,000–\$375,000
<b>Total dropout cost</b>	<b>\$470,000–\$750,000</b>
<b>Present value*</b>	<b>\$243,000–\$388,000</b>
<b>Total loss</b>	<b>\$2.2–\$3 million</b>
<b>Present value*</b>	<b>\$1.7–\$2.3 million</b>
* Present value is the amount of money that would need to be invested today to cover the future costs of the youth's behavior.	
Source: Authors' adaptation of Cohen's The monetary value of saving a high-risk youth, <i>Journal of Quantitative Criminology</i> , 14(1).	

purposes of cost-benefit analysis. The analysis, however, includes only marginal cost items—those associated with adding a single individual to the pool of career criminals. No attempt was made to gauge a single criminal's share of *aggregate* crime costs (expenses incurred because of the fear of crime generally, for example), which would have yielded a much higher figure.

### **Drug abuse and lack of education impose heavy costs on society as well**

The study calculated external marginal costs associated with the average lifetime of heavy cocaine or heroin abuse on the basis of estimated drug treatment and rehabilitation costs, emergency and other medical costs, lost productivity costs, criminal justice costs incurred in connection with drug possession and other drug-defined crime, and the cost of resources diverted away from productive uses and into the drug market itself. The present-value total of all such costs for the average heavy drug abuser was estimated at \$150,000–\$360,000. (This figure does not include costs associated with additional drug-motivated and drug-related crime, which were estimated at \$283,000–\$781,000, or \$220,000–\$606,000 discounted to present value.)

The external marginal costs imposed by the average high school dropout were estimated largely on the basis of productivity losses and other “nonmarket” educational benefits foregone. Discounted to present value, the total loss suffered by society over the lifetime of the average high school dropout came to \$243,000–\$388,000.

### **Quantitative analysis of this kind suggests the practical wisdom of early investment in high-risk youth**

Adding all of these marginal cost estimates together produces an estimate of the present value of preventing a single youth from leaving school and turning to drugs and crime as a way of life: \$1.7–\$2.3 million.

Obviously, it is not possible to arrive at an estimate of this kind without making a number of assumptions, including some about matters that are at least controversial, if not unknowable. The figures do, however, serve to illustrate that, under almost any reasonable set of assumptions, intervention efforts that are narrowly focused on high-risk youth and that succeed at least some of the time are likely to pay for themselves many times over.

### **What is present value?**

To determine the savings produced by an action, economists employ the concept of *present value*. Present value is the amount that would have to be set aside today to pay for a related series of events that occur now and in the future. From this pool of funds, amounts can be deducted as expenses are realized. For the case of a criminal career, some expenses occur early in the career (e.g., the costs associated with the first referral to juvenile court). These expenses would be subtracted from the *present value* amount, while the remaining funds accrue interest before they are expended. As a result, the present value of a savings is somewhat less than the total amount of the savings realized by diverting a person from a criminal career.

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# Chapter 4

## Juvenile justice system structure and process

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The first juvenile court in the United States was established in Chicago in 1899, 100 years ago. In the long history of law and justice, juvenile justice is a relatively new development. The juvenile justice system has weathered significant modifications in the past 30 years, resulting from Supreme Court decisions, Federal legislation, and changes in State legislation.

Perceptions of a juvenile crime epidemic in the early 1990's fueled public scrutiny of the system's ability to effectively control violent juvenile offenders. As a result, States have adopted numerous legislative changes in an effort to crack down on juvenile crime. While some differences between the criminal and juvenile justice system have diminished in recent years, the juvenile justice system remains unique, guided by its own philosophy and legislation and implemented by its own sets of agencies.

This chapter describes the juvenile justice system, focusing on structure and process features that relate to delinquency and status offense matters. (The chapter on victims discusses the handling of child maltreatment matters.) Sections in this chapter provide an overview of the history of juvenile justice in this country and present the significant Supreme Court decisions that have shaped the modern juvenile justice system. In addition, the chapter describes the juvenile justice system's case processing and compares and contrasts the juvenile and adult systems. This chapter also summarizes changes made by States with regard to the system's jurisdictional authority, sentencing, corrections programming, confidentiality of records and court hearings, and victim involvement in court hearings. Much of the information was drawn from National Center for Juvenile Justice analyses of juvenile codes in each State.

## The juvenile justice system was founded on the concept of rehabilitation through individualized justice

### Early in U.S. history, children who broke the law were treated the same as adult criminals

Throughout the late 18th century, “infants” below the age of reason (traditionally age 7) were presumed to be incapable of criminal intent and were, therefore, exempt from prosecution and punishment. Children as young as 7, however, could stand trial in criminal court for offenses committed and, if found guilty, could be sentenced to prison or even to death.

The 19th-century movement that led to the establishment of the juvenile court in the U.S. had its roots in 16th-century European educational

reform movements. These earlier reform movements changed the perception of children from one of miniature adults to one of persons with less than fully developed moral and cognitive capacities.

As early as 1825, the Society for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency was advocating the separation of juvenile and adult offenders. Soon, facilities exclusively for juveniles were established in most major cities. By mid-century, these privately operated youth “prisons” were under criticism for various abuses. Many States then took on the responsibility of operating juvenile facilities.

### The first juvenile court in this country was established in Cook County, Illinois, in 1899

Illinois passed the Juvenile Court Act of 1899, which established the Nation’s first juvenile court. The British doctrine of *parens patriae* (the State as parent) was the rationale for the right of the State to intervene in the lives of children in a manner different from the way it intervenes in the lives of adults. The doctrine was interpreted to mean that, because children were not of full legal capacity, the State had the inherent power and responsibility to provide protection for children whose natural parents were not providing appropriate care or supervision. A key element was the focus on the welfare of the child. Thus, the delinquent child was also seen as in need of the court’s benevolent intervention.

### Juvenile courts flourished for the first half of the 20th century

By 1910, 32 States had established juvenile courts and/or probation services. By 1925, all but two States had followed suit. Rather than merely punishing delinquents for their crimes, juvenile courts sought to turn delinquents into productive citizens—through treatment.

The mission to help children in trouble was stated clearly in the laws that established juvenile courts. This benevolent mission led to procedural and substantive differences between the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

During the next 50 years, most juvenile courts had exclusive original jurisdiction over all youth under age 18 who were charged with violating criminal laws. Only if the juvenile court waived its jurisdiction in a case could a child be transferred to criminal court and tried as an adult. Transfer decisions were made on a case-by-case basis using a “best interests of the child and public” standard, and were thus within the realm of individualized justice.

### The focus on offenders and not offenses, on rehabilitation and not punishment, had substantial procedural impact

Unlike the criminal justice system, where district attorneys select cases for trial, the juvenile court controlled its own intake. And unlike criminal prosecutors, juvenile court intake considered extra-legal as well as legal factors in deciding how to handle cases. Juvenile court intake also had discretion to handle cases informally, bypassing judicial action.

### John Augustus—planting the seeds of juvenile probation (1847)

“I bailed nineteen boys, from 7 to 15 years of age, and in bailing them it was understood, and agreed by the court, that their cases should be continued from term to term for several months, as a season of probation; thus each month at the calling of the docket, I would appear in court, make my report, and thus the cases would pass on for 5 or 6 months. At the expiration of this term, twelve of the boys were brought into court at one time, and the scene formed a striking and highly pleasing contrast with their appearance when first arraigned. The judge expressed much pleasure as well as surprise at their appearance, and remarked, that the object of law had been accomplished and expressed his cordial approval of my plan to save and reform.”

### Some juvenile codes emphasize prevention and treatment goals, some stress punishment, and others seek a balanced approach

Philosophical goals stated in juvenile code purpose clauses, 1997

Prevention/ diversion/treatment	Punishment	Both prevention/diversion/ treatment and punishment	
Arizona*	Arkansas	Alabama	Nevada
Dist. of Columbia	Georgia	Alaska	New Hampshire
Kentucky	Hawaii	California	New Jersey
Massachusetts	Illinois	Colorado	New Mexico
North Carolina	Iowa	Connecticut	New York
Ohio	Louisiana	Delaware	North Dakota
South Carolina	Michigan	Florida	Oklahoma
Vermont	Missouri	Idaho	Oregon
West Virginia	Rhode Island	Indiana	Pennsylvania
		Kansas	Tennessee
		Maryland	Texas
		Maine	Utah
		Minnesota	Virginia
		Mississippi	Washington
		Montana	Wisconsin
		Nebraska	Wyoming

- Most States seek to protect the interests of the child, the family, the community, or some combination of the three.
- In 17 States, the purpose clause incorporates the language of the balanced and restorative justice philosophy, emphasizing offender accountability, public safety, and competency development.
- Purpose clauses also address court issues such as fairness, speedy trials, and even coordination of services. In nearly all States, the code also includes protections of the child's constitutional and statutory rights.

\*Arizona's statutes and court rules did not contain a purpose clause; however, the issue is addressed in case law.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Torbet and Szymanski's *State legislative responses to violent juvenile crime: 1996–97 update* [unpublished background research].

In the courtroom, juvenile court hearings were much less formal than criminal court proceedings. In this benevolent court—with the express purpose of protecting children—due process protections afforded criminal defendants were deemed unnecessary. In the early juvenile courts, and even in some to this day, attorneys for the State and the youth are not considered essential to the operation of the system, especially in less serious cases.

A range of dispositional options was available to a judge wanting to help rehabilitate a child. Regardless of offense, outcomes ranging from warnings to probation supervision to training school confinement could be part of the treatment plan. Dispositions were tailored to “the best interests of the child.” Treatment lasted until the child was “cured” or became an adult (age 21), whichever came first.

### As public confidence in the treatment model waned, due process protections were introduced

In the 1950's and 1960's, many came to question the ability of the juvenile court to succeed in rehabilitating delinquent youth. The treatment techniques available to juvenile justice professionals never reached the desired levels of effectiveness. Although the goal of rehabilitation through individualized justice—the basic philosophy of the juvenile justice system—was not in question, professionals were concerned about the growing number of juveniles institutionalized indefinitely in the name of treatment.

In a series of decisions beginning in the 1960's, the U.S. Supreme Court required that juvenile courts become more formal—more like criminal courts. Formal hearings were now required in waiver situations, and delinquents facing possible confinement were given protection against self-incrimination and rights to receive notice of the charges against them, to present witnesses, to question witnesses, and to have an attorney. Proof “beyond a reasonable doubt” rather than merely “a preponderance of evidence” was now required for an adjudication. The Supreme Court, however, still held that there were enough “differences of substance between the criminal and juvenile courts . . . to hold that a jury is not required in the latter.” (See Supreme Court decisions later in this chapter.)

Meanwhile Congress, in the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act of 1968, recommended that children charged with noncriminal (status) offenses be handled outside the court system. A few years later, Con-

gress passed the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, which as a condition for State participation in the Formula Grants Program required deinstitutionalization of status offenders and non-offenders as well as the separation of juvenile delinquents from adult offenders. (In the 1980 amendments to the 1974 Act, Congress added a requirement that juveniles be removed from adult jail and lockup facilities.) Community-based programs, diversion, and deinstitutionalization became the banners of juvenile justice policy in the 1970's.

### In the 1980's, the pendulum began to swing toward law and order

During the 1980's, the public perceived that serious juvenile crime was increasing and that the system was too lenient with offenders. Although there was substantial misperception regarding increases in juvenile crime, many States responded by passing more punitive laws. Some laws removed certain classes of offenders from the juvenile justice system and handled them as adult criminals in criminal court. Others required the juvenile justice system to be more like the criminal justice system and to treat certain classes of juvenile offenders as criminals but in juvenile court.

As a result, offenders charged with certain offenses are *excluded* from juvenile court jurisdiction or face *mandatory* or *automatic waiver* to criminal court. In some States, concurrent jurisdiction provisions give prosecutors the discretion to file certain juvenile cases directly in criminal court rather than juvenile court. In some States, some adjudicated juvenile offenders face *mandatory sentences*.

### The core requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act primarily address custody issues

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended, (the Act) establishes four custody-related requirements:

- The "deinstitutionalization of status offenders and nonoffenders" requirement (1974) specifies that juveniles not charged with acts that would be crimes for adults "shall not be placed in secure detention facilities or secure correctional facilities."
- The "sight and sound separation" requirement (1974) specifies that, "juveniles alleged to be or found to be delinquent and [status offenders and nonoffenders] shall not be detained or confined in any institution in which they have contact with adult persons incarcerated because they have been convicted of a crime or are awaiting trial on criminal charges." This requires that juvenile and adult inmates cannot see each other and no conversation between them is possible.
- The "jail and lockup removal" requirement (1980) states that juveniles shall not be detained or confined in adult jails or lockups. There are, however, several exceptions to the jail and lockup removal requirement. Regulations implementing the Act exempt juveniles held in secure adult facilities if the juvenile is being tried as a criminal for a felony or has been convicted as a criminal felon. In addition, there is a 6-hour grace period that allows adult jails and lockups to hold delinquents temporarily until other arrangements can be made. Jails and lockups in rural areas may hold delinquents up to 24 hours under certain conditions. Some jurisdictions have obtained approval for separate juvenile detention centers that are collocated with an adult jail or lockup facility.

- The "disproportionate confinement of minority youth" requirement (1992) specifies that States determine the existence and extent of the problem in their State and demonstrate efforts to reduce it where it exists.

Regulations effective December 10, 1996, modify the Act's requirements in several ways:

- Clarify the sight and sound separation requirement—in nonresidential areas brief, accidental contact is not a reportable violation.
- Permit time-phased use of nonresidential areas for both juveniles and adults in collocated facilities.
- Expand the 6-hour grace period to include 6 hours both before and after court appearances.
- Allow adjudicated delinquents to be transferred to adult institutions once they have reached the State's age of full criminal responsibility, where such transfer is expressly authorized by State law.

The revised regulations offer flexibility to States in carrying out the Act's requirements. States must agree to comply with each requirement to receive Formula Grants funds under the Act's provisions. States must submit plans outlining their strategy for meeting the requirements and other statutory plan requirements. Noncompliance with core requirements results in the loss of 25% of the State's annual Formula Grants Program allocation.

As of 1998, 55 of 57 eligible States and territories are participating in the Formula Grants Program. Annual State monitoring reports show that the vast majority are in compliance with the requirements, either reporting no violations or meeting *de minimis* or other compliance criteria.

### The 1990's have been a time of unprecedented change as State legislatures crack down on juvenile crime

Five areas of change have emerged as States passed laws designed to crack down on juvenile crime. These laws generally involve expanded eligibility for criminal court processing and adult correctional sanctioning and reduced confidentiality protections for a subset of juvenile offenders. Between 1992 and 1997, all but three States changed laws in one or more of the following areas:

- Transfer provisions—Laws made it easier to transfer juvenile offenders from the juvenile justice system to the criminal justice system (45 States).
- Sentencing authority—Laws gave criminal and juvenile courts expanded sentencing options (31 States).
- Confidentiality—Laws modified or removed traditional juvenile court confidentiality provisions by making records and proceedings more open (47 States).

In addition to these areas, there was change relating to:

- Victims rights—Laws increased the role of victims of juvenile crime in the juvenile justice process (22 States).
- Correctional programming—As a result of new transfer and sentencing laws, adult and juvenile correctional administrators developed new programs.

The 1980's and 1990's have seen significant change in terms of treating more juvenile offenders as criminals. Recently, States have been attempting to strike a balance in their juvenile justice systems among sys-

### From 1992 through 1997, legislatures in 47 States and the District of Columbia enacted laws that made their juvenile justice systems more punitive

State	Changes in law or court rule*			State	Changes in law or court rule*		
Alabama	T		C	Montana	T	S	C
Alaska	T		C	Nebraska			
Arizona	T	S	C	Nevada	T		C
Arkansas	T	S	C	New Hampshire	T	S	C
California	T		C	New Jersey		S	C
Colorado	T	S	C	New Mexico	T	S	C
Connecticut	T	S	C	New York			
Delaware	T	S	C	North Carolina	T		C
D. of Columbia	T	S		North Dakota	T		C
Florida	T	S	C	Ohio	T	S	C
Georgia	T	S	C	Oklahoma	T	S	C
Hawaii	T		C	Oregon	T	S	C
Idaho	T	S	C	Pennsylvania	T		C
Illinois	T	S	C	Rhode Island	T	S	C
Indiana	T	S	C	South Carolina	T		C
Iowa	T	S	C	South Dakota	T		
Kansas	T	S	C	Tennessee	T	S	C
Kentucky	T	S	C	Texas	T	S	C
Louisiana	T	S	C	Utah	T		C
Maine			C	Vermont			
Maryland	T		C	Virginia	T	S	C
Massachusetts	T	S	C	Washington	T		C
Michigan		S	C	West Virginia	T		C
Minnesota	T	S	C	Wisconsin	T	S	C
Mississippi	T		C	Wyoming	T		C
Missouri	T	S	C				

\*T = Transfer provisions, S = Sentencing authority, C = Confidentiality

Source: Authors' adaptation of Torbet et al.'s *State responses to serious and violent juvenile crime* and Torbet and Szymanski's *State legislative responses to violent juvenile crime: 1996-97 update*.

tem and offender accountability, offender competency development, and community protection. Juvenile code purpose clauses also incorporate restorative justice language (offenders repair the harm done to victims and communities and accept responsibility for their criminal actions). Many States have added to the purpose clauses of their juvenile codes phrases such as:

- Hold juveniles accountable for criminal behavior.
- Provide effective deterrents.
- Protect the public from criminal activity.
- Balance attention to offenders, victims, and the community.
- Impose punishment consistent with the seriousness of the crime.

## U.S. Supreme Court cases have had an impact on the character and procedures of the juvenile justice system

### The Supreme Court has made its mark on juvenile justice

Issues arising from juvenile delinquency proceedings rarely come before the U.S. Supreme Court. Beginning in the late 1960's, however, the Court decided a series of landmark cases that dramatically changed the character and procedures of the juvenile justice system.

#### ***Kent v. United States*** **383 U.S. 541, 86 S.Ct. 1045 (1966)**

In 1961, while on probation from an earlier case, Morris Kent, age 16, was charged with rape and robbery. Kent confessed to the offense as well as to several similar incidents. Assuming that the District of Columbia juvenile court would consider waiving jurisdiction to the adult system, Kent's attorney filed a motion requesting a hearing on the issue of jurisdiction.

The juvenile court judge did not rule on this motion filed by Kent's attorney. Instead, he entered a motion stating that the court was waiving jurisdiction after making a "full investigation." The judge did not describe the investigation or the grounds for the waiver. Kent was subsequently found guilty in criminal court on six counts of house-breaking and robbery and sentenced to 30 to 90 years in prison.

Kent's lawyer sought to have the criminal indictment dismissed, arguing that the waiver had been invalid. He also appealed the waiver and filed a writ of habeas corpus asking the State to justify Kent's detention. Appellate courts rejected both the appeal and the writ, refused to scrutinize the judge's "investigation," and accepted the waiver as valid. In appealing to the U.S. Supreme

Court, Kent's attorney argued that the judge had not made a complete investigation and that Kent was denied constitutional rights simply because he was a minor.

The Court ruled the waiver invalid, stating that Kent was entitled to a hearing that measured up to "the essentials of due process and fair treatment," that Kent's counsel should have had access to all records involved in the waiver, and that the judge should have provided a *written* statement of the reasons for waiver.

Technically, the *Kent* decision applied only to D.C. courts, but its impact was more widespread. The Court raised a potential constitutional challenge to *parens patriae* as the foundation of the juvenile court. In its past decisions, the Court had interpreted the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment to mean that certain classes of people could receive less due process if a "compensating benefit" came with this lesser protection. In theory, the juvenile court provided less due process but a greater concern for the interests of the juvenile. The Court referred to evidence that this compensating benefit may not exist in reality and that juveniles may receive the "worst of both worlds"—"neither the protection accorded to adults nor the solicitous care and regenerative treatment postulated for children."

#### ***In re Gault*** **387 U.S. 1, 87 S.Ct. 1428 (1967)**

Gerald Gault, age 15, was on probation in Arizona for a minor property offense when, in 1964, he and a friend made a crank telephone call to an adult neighbor, asking her, "Are your cherries ripe today?" and

"Do you have big bombers?" Identified by the neighbor, the youth were arrested and detained.

The victim did not appear at the adjudication hearing, and the court never resolved the issue of whether Gault made the "obscene" remarks. Gault was committed to a training school for the period of his minority. The maximum sentence for an adult would have been a \$50 fine or 2 months in jail.

An attorney obtained for Gault after the trial filed a writ of habeas corpus that was eventually heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. The issue presented in the case was that Gault's constitutional rights (to notice of charges, counsel, questioning of witnesses, protection against self-incrimination, a transcript of the proceedings, and appellate review) were denied.

The Court ruled that in hearings that could result in commitment to an institution, juveniles have the right to notice and counsel, to question witnesses, and to protection against self-incrimination. The Court did not rule on a juvenile's right to appellate review or transcripts, but encouraged the States to provide those rights.

The Court based its ruling on the fact that Gault was being punished rather than helped by the juvenile court. The Court explicitly rejected the doctrine of *parens patriae* as the founding principle of juvenile justice, describing the concept as murky and of dubious historical relevance. The Court concluded that the handling of Gault's case violated the due process clause of the 14th amendment: "Juvenile court history has again demonstrated that unbridled discretion, however benevolently

motivated, is frequently a poor substitute for principle and procedure.”

***In re Winship***  
397 U.S. 358, 90 S.Ct. 1068 (1970)

Samuel Winship, age 12, was charged with stealing \$112 from a woman's purse in a store. A store employee claimed to have seen Winship running from the scene just before the woman noticed the money was missing; others in the store stated that the employee was not in a position to see the money being taken.

Winship was adjudicated delinquent and committed to a training school. New York juvenile courts operated under the civil court standard of a “preponderance of evidence.” The court agreed with Winship's attorney that there was “reasonable doubt” of Winship's guilt, but based its ruling on the “preponderance” of evidence.

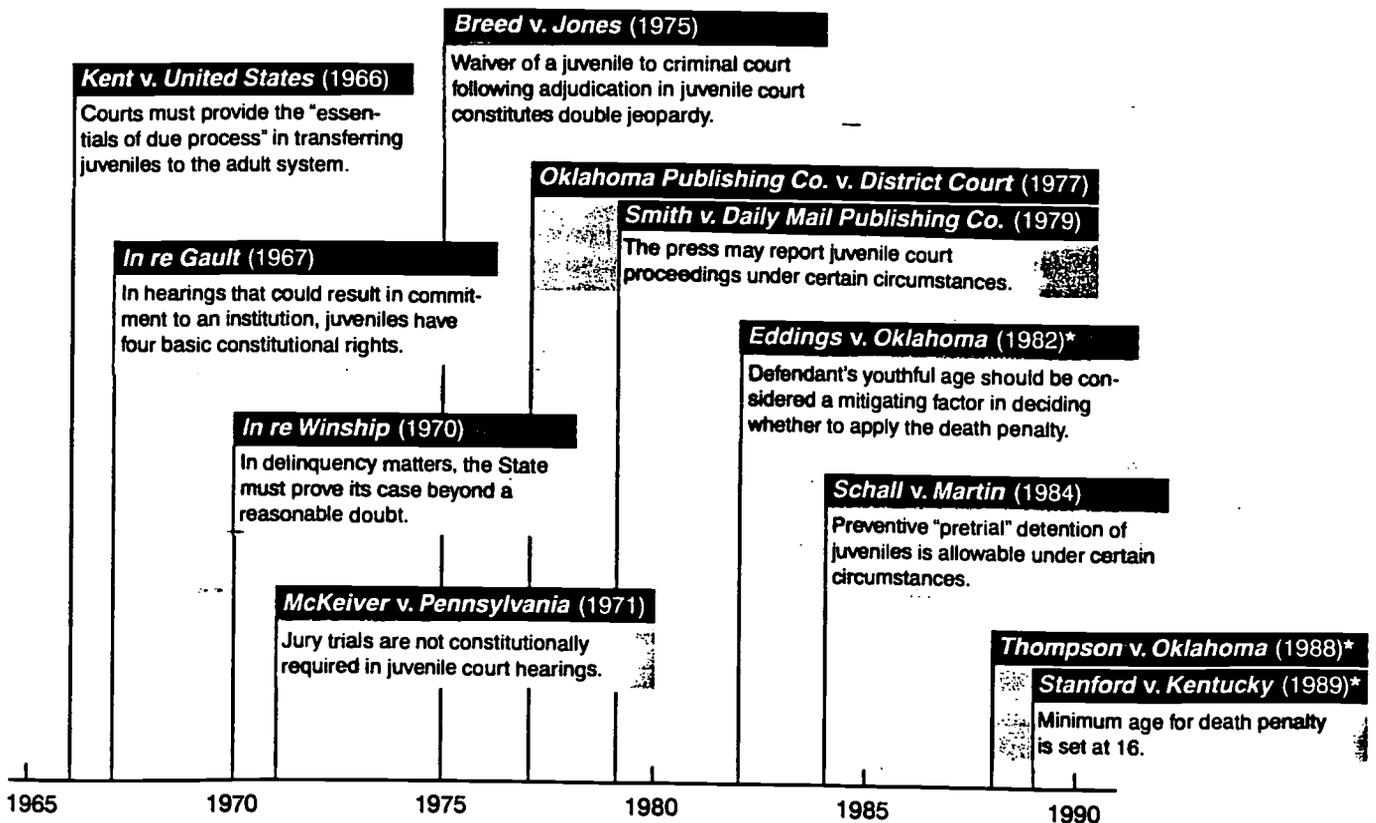
Upon appeal to the Supreme Court, the central issue in the case was whether “proof beyond a reasonable doubt” should be considered among the “essentials of due process and fair treatment” required during the adjudicatory stage of the

juvenile court process. The Court rejected lower court arguments that juvenile courts were not required to operate on the same standards as adult courts because juvenile courts were designed to “save” rather than to “punish” children. The Court ruled that the “reasonable doubt” standard should be required in all delinquency adjudications.

***McKeiver v. Pennsylvania***  
403 U.S. 528, 91 S.Ct. 1976 (1971)

Joseph McKeiver, age 16, was charged with robbery, larceny, and receiving stolen goods. He and 20 to 30 other youth allegedly chased 3

**A series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions made juvenile courts more like criminal courts but maintained some important differences**



\*Death penalty case decisions are discussed in chapter 7.

youth and took 25 cents from them. McKeiver met with his attorney for only a few minutes before his adjudicatory hearing. At the hearing, his attorney's request for a jury trial was denied by the court. He was subsequently adjudicated and placed on probation.

The State supreme court cited recent decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court that had attempted to include more due process in juvenile court proceedings without eroding the essential benefits of the juvenile court. The State supreme court affirmed the lower court, arguing that of all due process rights, trial by jury is most likely to "destroy the traditional character of juvenile proceedings."

The U.S. Supreme Court found that the due process clause of the 14th amendment did not require jury trials in juvenile court. The impact of the Court's *Gault* and *Winship* decisions was to enhance the accuracy of the juvenile court process in the fact-finding stage. In *McKeiver*, the Court argued that juries are not known to be more accurate than judges in the adjudication stage and could be disruptive to the informal atmosphere of the juvenile court, tending to make it more adversarial.

***Breed v. Jones***  
**421 U.S. 519, 95 S.Ct. 1779 (1975)**

In 1970, Gary Jones, age 17, was charged with armed robbery. Jones appeared in Los Angeles juvenile court and was adjudicated delinquent on the original charge and two other robberies.

At the dispositional hearing, the judge waived jurisdiction over the case to criminal court. Counsel for Jones filed a writ of habeas corpus, arguing that the waiver to criminal

court violated the double jeopardy clause of the fifth amendment. The court denied this petition, saying that Jones had not been tried twice because juvenile adjudication is not a "trial" and does not place a youth in jeopardy.

Upon appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that an adjudication in juvenile court, in which a juvenile is found to have violated a criminal statute, is equivalent to a trial in criminal court. Thus, Jones *had* been placed in double jeopardy. The Court also specified that jeopardy applies at the adjudication hearing when evidence is first presented. Waiver cannot occur after jeopardy attaches.

***Oklahoma Publishing Company v. District Court in and for Oklahoma City***  
**480 U.S. 308, 97 S.Ct. 1045 (1977)**

The *Oklahoma Publishing Company* case involved a court order prohibiting the press from reporting the name and photograph of a youth involved in a juvenile court proceeding. The material in question was obtained legally from a source outside the court. The U.S. Supreme Court found the court order to be an unconstitutional infringement on freedom of the press.

***Smith v. Daily Mail Publishing Company***  
**443 U.S. 97, 99 S.Ct. 2667 (1979)**

The *Daily Mail* case held that State law cannot stop the press from publishing a juvenile's name that it obtained independently of the court. Although the decision did not hold that the press should have access to juvenile court files, it held that if information regarding a juvenile

case is lawfully obtained by the media, the first amendment interest in a free press takes precedence over the interests in preserving the anonymity of juvenile defendants.

***Schall v. Martin***  
**467 U.S. 253, 104 S.Ct. 2403 (1984)**

Gregory Martin, age 14, was arrested in 1977 and charged with robbery, assault, and possession of a weapon. He and two other youth allegedly hit a boy on the head with a loaded gun and stole his jacket and sneakers.

Martin was held pending adjudication because the court found there was a "serious risk" that he would commit another crime if released. Martin's attorney filed a habeas corpus action challenging the fundamental fairness of preventive detention. The lower appellate courts reversed the juvenile court's detention order, arguing in part that pretrial detention is essentially punishment because many juveniles detained before trial are released before, or immediately after, adjudication.

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the preventive detention statute. The Court stated that preventive detention serves a legitimate State objective in protecting both the juvenile and society from pretrial crime and is not intended to punish the juvenile. The Court found there were enough procedures in place to protect juveniles from wrongful deprivation of liberty. The protections were provided by notice, a statement of the facts and reasons for detention, and a probable cause hearing within a short time. The Court also reasserted the *parens patriae* interests of the State in promoting the welfare of children.

# State statutes define who is under the jurisdiction of juvenile court

## State statutes define age limits for the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court

In most States, the juvenile court has original jurisdiction over all youth charged with a law violation who were below the age of 18 at the time of the offense, arrest, or referral to court. Since 1975, four States have changed their age criteria: Alabama increased its upper age from 15 to 16 in 1976 and to 17 in 1977; Wyoming reduced its upper age from 18 to 17 in 1993; and New Hampshire and Wisconsin lowered their upper age from 17 to 16 in 1996.

Oldest age for original juvenile court jurisdiction in delinquency matters:

Age	State
15	Connecticut, New York, North Carolina
16	Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin
17	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming

Many States have higher upper ages of juvenile court jurisdiction in status offense, abuse, neglect, or dependency matters—typically through age 20.

In many States, the juvenile court has original jurisdiction over young

adults who committed offenses while juveniles. Many States exclude married or otherwise emancipated juveniles from juvenile court jurisdiction.

Many States have statutory exceptions to basic age criteria. The exceptions, related to the youth's age, alleged offense, and/or prior court history, place certain youth under the original jurisdiction of the criminal court. In some States, a combination of the youth's age, offense, and prior record places the youth under the original jurisdiction of both the juvenile and criminal courts. In these situations where juvenile and criminal courts have concurrent jurisdiction, the prosecutor has the authority to decide which court will initially handle the case.

## Statutes in 16 States determine the lowest age of juvenile court delinquency jurisdiction

Youngest age for original juvenile court jurisdiction in delinquency matters:

Age	State
6	North Carolina
7	Maryland, Massachusetts, New York
8	Arizona
10	Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Wisconsin

## In most States, juvenile court authority over a youth may extend beyond the upper age of original jurisdiction

Through extended jurisdiction mechanisms, legislatures enable the court to provide sanctions and services for a duration of time that is in the best interests of the juvenile and

the public, even for older juveniles who have reached the age at which original juvenile court jurisdiction ends.

Oldest age over which the juvenile court may retain jurisdiction for disposition purposes in delinquency matters:

Age	State
17	Arizona*, North Carolina
18	Alaska, Iowa, Kentucky, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Tennessee
19	Mississippi, North Dakota
20	Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming
22	Kansas
24	California, Montana, Oregon, Wisconsin
**	Colorado, Hawaii, New Jersey

\*Arizona statute extends jurisdiction through age 20, but a 1979 State Supreme Court decision held that juvenile court jurisdiction terminates at age 18.

\*\*Until the full term of the disposition order.

Note: Extended jurisdiction may be restricted to certain offenses or juveniles.

In some States, the juvenile court may impose adult correctional sanctions on certain adjudicated delinquents that extend the term of confinement well beyond the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction. Such sentencing options are included in the set of dispositional options known as "blended sentencing."

# The juvenile justice system differs from the criminal justice system, but there is common ground

## The juvenile justice system grew out of the criminal justice system

After working within the criminal justice system, designers of the juvenile justice system retained many of the components of the criminal justice system as they constructed a new process to respond

to delinquent youth. An understanding of what was retained and what was changed helps to make clear the basic differences between the two systems as they exist today.

During its nearly 100-year history, the juvenile justice system in the U.S. has seen fundamental changes in certain aspects of process and

philosophy. Recently, there has been some discussion about the possibility of essentially merging the juvenile and criminal systems. An understanding of similarities and differences between the two systems is valuable in assessing the implications of the proposed changes.

**Although the juvenile and criminal justice systems are more alike in some jurisdictions than in others, generalizations can be made about the distinctions between the two systems and about their common ground**

Juvenile justice system	Common ground	Criminal justice system
<b>Operating Assumptions</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Youth behavior is malleable.</li> <li>■ Rehabilitation is usually a viable goal.</li> <li>■ Youth are in families and not independent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Community protection is a primary goal.</li> <li>■ Law violators must be held accountable.</li> <li>■ Constitutional rights apply.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sanctions should be proportional to the offense.</li> <li>■ General deterrence works.</li> <li>■ Rehabilitation is not a primary goal.</li> </ul>
<b>Prevention</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Many specific delinquency prevention activities (e.g., school, church, recreation) are used.</li> <li>■ Prevention is intended to change individual behavior and is often focused on reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors in the individual, family, and community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Educational approaches are taken to specific behaviors (drunk driving, drug use).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Prevention activities are generalized and are aimed at deterrence (e.g., Crime Watch).</li> </ul>
<b>Law Enforcement</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Specialized "juvenile" units are used.</li> <li>■ Some additional behaviors are prohibited (truancy, running away, curfew violations).</li> <li>■ Some limitations are placed on public access to information.</li> <li>■ A significant number of youth are diverted away from the juvenile justice system, often into alternative programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Jurisdiction involves the full range of criminal behavior.</li> <li>■ Constitutional and procedural safeguards exist.</li> <li>■ Both reactive and proactive approaches (targeted at offense types, neighborhoods, etc.) are used.</li> <li>■ Community policing strategies are employed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Open public access to all information is required.</li> <li>■ Law enforcement exercises discretion to divert offenders out of the criminal justice system.</li> </ul>

Juvenile justice system	Common ground	Criminal justice system
<b>Intake—Prosecution</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In many instances, juvenile court intake, not the prosecutor, decides what cases to file.</li> <li>■ The decision to file a petition for court action is based on both social and legal factors.</li> <li>■ A significant portion of cases are diverted from formal case processing.</li> <li>■ Intake or the prosecutor diverts cases from formal processing to services operated by the juvenile court, prosecutor's office, or outside agencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Probable cause must be established.</li> <li>■ The prosecutor acts on behalf of the State.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Plea bargaining is common.</li> <li>■ The prosecution decision is based largely on legal facts.</li> <li>■ Prosecution is valuable in building history for subsequent offenses.</li> <li>■ Prosecution exercises discretion to withhold charges or divert offenders out of the criminal justice system.</li> </ul>
<b>Detention—Jail/lockup</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Juveniles may be detained for their own protection or the community's protection.</li> <li>■ Juveniles may not be confined with adults unless there is "sight and sound separation."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Accused offenders may be held in custody to ensure their appearance in court.</li> <li>■ Detention alternatives of home or electronic detention are used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Accused individuals have the right to apply for bond/bail release.</li> </ul>
<b>Adjudication—Conviction</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Juvenile court proceedings are "quasi-civil" (not criminal) and may be confidential.</li> <li>■ If guilt is established, the youth is adjudicated delinquent regardless of offense.</li> <li>■ Right to jury trial is not afforded in all States.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Standard of "proof beyond a reasonable doubt" is required.</li> <li>■ Rights to be represented by an attorney, to confront witnesses, and to remain silent are afforded.</li> <li>■ Appeals to a higher court are allowed.</li> <li>■ Experimentation with specialized courts (i.e., drug courts, gun courts) is underway.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Defendants have a constitutional right to a jury trial.</li> <li>■ Guilt must be established on individual offenses charged for conviction.</li> <li>■ All proceedings are open.</li> </ul>

Juvenile justice system	Common ground	Criminal justice system
<b>Disposition—Sentencing</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Disposition decisions are based on individual and social factors, offense severity, and youth's offense history.</li> <li>■ Dispositional philosophy includes a significant rehabilitation component.</li> <li>■ Many dispositional alternatives are operated by the juvenile court.</li> <li>■ Dispositions cover a wide range of community-based and residential services.</li> <li>■ Disposition orders may be directed to people other than the offender (e.g., parents).</li> <li>■ Disposition may be indeterminate, based on progress demonstrated by the youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Decisions are influenced by current offense, offending history, and social factors.</li> <li>■ Decisions hold offenders accountable.</li> <li>■ Decisions may give consideration to victims (e.g., restitution and "no contact" orders).</li> <li>■ Decisions may not be cruel or unusual.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sentencing decisions are bound primarily by the severity of the current offense and by the offender's criminal history.</li> <li>■ Sentencing philosophy is based largely on proportionality and punishment.</li> <li>■ Sentence is often determinate, based on offense.</li> </ul>
<b>Aftercare—Parole</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Function combines surveillance and reintegration activities (e.g., family, school, work).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The behavior of individuals released from correctional settings is monitored.</li> <li>■ Violation of conditions can result in reincarceration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Function is primarily surveillance and reporting to monitor illicit behavior.</li> </ul>

## Young law violators generally enter the juvenile justice system through law enforcement

### Each State's processing of law violators is unique

Juvenile case processing of law violators varies from State to State. Even within States, case processing often varies from community to community, reflecting local practice and tradition. Consequently, any description of juvenile justice processing in the U.S. must be general, outlining a common series of decision points.

### Law enforcement diverts many juvenile offenders out of the justice system

At arrest, a decision is made either to send the matter further into the justice system or to divert the case out of the system, often into alternative programs. Usually, law enforcement makes this decision, after talking to the victim, the juvenile, and the parents and after reviewing the juvenile's prior contacts with the juvenile justice system. Approximately one-quarter of all juveniles arrested in 1996 were handled within the police department and then released; nearly 7 in 10 arrested juveniles were referred to juvenile court.

Federal regulations discourage holding juveniles in adult jails and lock-ups. If law enforcement must detain a juvenile in secure custody for a brief period in order to contact a parent or guardian or to arrange transportation to a juvenile detention facility, Federal regulations require that the juvenile be securely detained for no longer than 6 hours and in an area that is not within sight or sound of adult inmates.

### Most juvenile court cases are referred by law enforcement

Law enforcement accounted for 85% of all delinquency cases referred to juvenile court in 1996. The remaining referrals were made by others such as parents, victims, schools, and probation officers.

### The intake department screens cases referred to juvenile court for formal processing

The court intake function is generally the responsibility of the juvenile probation department and/or the prosecutor's office. Intake decides whether to dismiss the case, to handle the matter informally, or to request formal intervention by the juvenile court.

To make this decision, an intake officer or prosecutor first reviews the facts of the case to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation. If not, the case is dismissed. If there is sufficient evidence, intake then determines whether formal intervention is necessary.

About half of all cases referred to juvenile court intake are handled informally. Most informally processed cases are dismissed. In the other informally processed cases, the juvenile voluntarily agrees to specific conditions for a specific time period. These conditions often are outlined in a written agreement, generally called a "consent decree." Conditions may include such things as victim restitution, school attendance, drug counseling, or a curfew.

In most jurisdictions, a juvenile may be offered an informal disposition only if he or she admits to committing the act. The juvenile's compliance with the informal agreement often is monitored by a probation officer. Consequently, this process is sometimes labeled "informal probation."

If the juvenile successfully complies with the informal disposition, the case is dismissed. If, however, the juvenile fails to meet the conditions, the intake decision may be revised to prosecute the case formally, and the case then proceeds just as it would have if the initial decision had been to refer the case for an adjudicatory hearing.

If the case is to be handled formally in juvenile court, intake files one of two types of petitions: a delinquency petition requesting an adjudicatory hearing or a waiver petition requesting a waiver hearing to transfer the case to criminal court.

A delinquency petition states the allegations and requests the juvenile court to *adjudicate* (or judge) the youth a delinquent, making the juvenile a ward of the court. This language differs from that used in the criminal court system, where an offender is *convicted* and sentenced.

In response to the delinquency petition, an adjudicatory hearing is scheduled. At the adjudicatory hearing (trial), witnesses are called and the facts of the case are presented. In nearly all adjudicatory hearings, the determination that the juvenile was responsible for the

offense(s) is made by a judge; although, in some States, the juvenile has the right to a jury trial. In 1996, juveniles were adjudicated delinquent in 58% of cases petitioned to juvenile court for criminal law violations.

**During the processing of a case, a juvenile may be held in a secure detention facility**

Juvenile courts may hold delinquents in a secure juvenile deten-

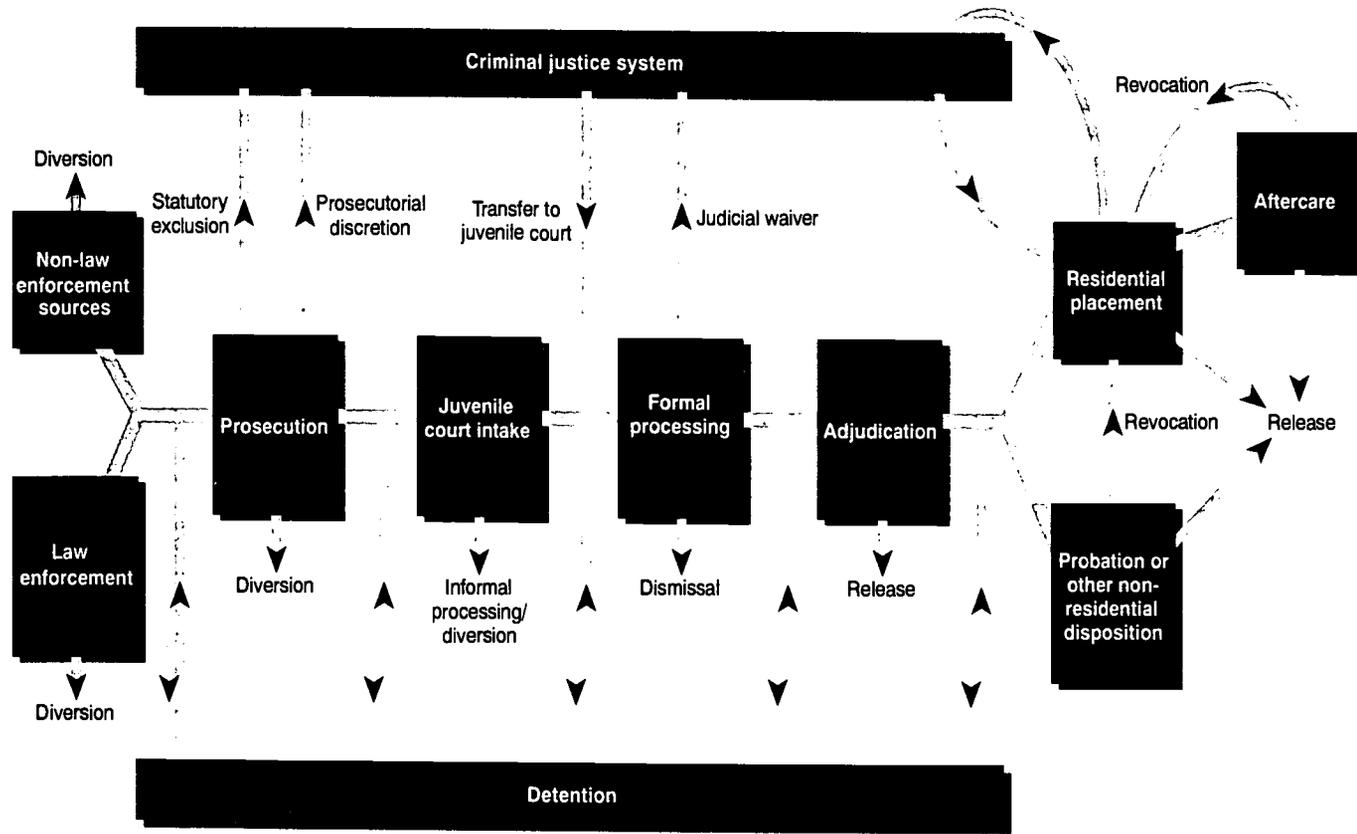
tion facility if this is determined to be in the best interest of the community and/or the child.

After arrest, law enforcement may bring the youth to the local juvenile detention facility. Juvenile probation officers or detention workers then review the case to decide whether the juvenile should be detained pending a hearing by a judge. In all States, a detention hearing must be held within a time period defined by statute, generally within 24 hours.

At the detention hearing, a judge reviews the case and determines whether continued detention is warranted. In 1996, juveniles were detained in 18% of delinquency cases processed by juvenile courts.

Detention may extend beyond the adjudicatory and dispositional hearings. If residential placement is ordered, but no placement beds are available, detention may continue until a bed becomes available.

**What are the stages of delinquency case processing in the juvenile justice system?**



Note: This chart gives a simplified view of caseflow through the juvenile justice system. Procedures vary among jurisdictions.

### **The juvenile court may transfer the case to criminal court**

A waiver petition is filed when the prosecutor or intake officer believes that a case under jurisdiction of the juvenile court would be handled more appropriately in criminal court. The court decision in these matters follows a review of the facts of the case and a determination that there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile committed the act. With this established, the court then considers whether jurisdiction over the matter should be waived and the case transferred to criminal court.

The judge's decision in such cases generally centers on the issue of whether the juvenile is amenable to treatment in the juvenile justice system. The prosecution may argue that the juvenile has been adjudicated several times previously and that interventions ordered by the juvenile court have not kept the juvenile from committing subsequent criminal acts. The prosecutor may also argue that the crime is so serious that the juvenile court is unlikely to be able to intervene for the time period necessary to rehabilitate the youth.

If the judge decides that the case should be transferred to criminal court, juvenile court jurisdiction is waived and the case is filed in criminal court. If the judge does not approve the waiver request, an adjudicatory hearing is scheduled in juvenile court. In 1996, juvenile courts waived 1% of all formally processed delinquency cases.

### **Prosecutors file certain cases directly in criminal court**

In more than half of the States, the legislature has decided that in certain cases (generally those involving serious offenses) juveniles should be tried as criminal offenders. The law excludes such cases from juvenile court; prosecutors must file them in criminal court. In a smaller number of States, the legislature has given both the juvenile and adult courts original jurisdiction in certain cases. Thus, prosecutors have discretion to file such cases in either criminal court or juvenile court.

### **Between the adjudication decision and the disposition hearing, probation staff prepares an investigation report**

Once the juvenile is adjudicated delinquent in juvenile court, probation staff develop a disposition plan. To prepare this plan, probation staff assess the youth, available support systems, and programs. To assist in this process, the court may order psychological evaluations, diagnostic tests, or a period of confinement in a diagnostic facility.

At the disposition hearing, probation staff present dispositional recommendations to the judge. The prosecutor and the youth may also present dispositional recommendations. After considering the recommendations, the judge orders a disposition in the case.

### **Most cases placed on probation also receive other dispositions**

Most juvenile dispositions are multifaceted. A probation order often includes additional requirements such as drug counseling, weekend confinement in the local detention center, and community or victim restitution. The term of probation may be for a specified period of time or it may be open ended. Review hearings are held to monitor the juvenile's progress and to hear reports from probation staff. After conditions of probation have been

### **A juvenile court by any other name is still a juvenile court**

Every State has at least one court with juvenile jurisdiction, but in most States it is not actually called "Juvenile Court." The names of the courts with juvenile jurisdiction vary by State—District, Superior, Circuit, County, Family, or Probate court, to name a few. Often the court of juvenile jurisdiction has a separate division for juvenile matters. Courts with juvenile jurisdiction generally have jurisdiction over delinquency, status offense, and abuse/neglect matters and may also have jurisdiction in other matters such as adoption, termination of parental rights, and emancipation. Whatever their name, courts with juvenile jurisdiction are generically referred to as juvenile courts.

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successfully met, the judge terminates the case. In 1996, formal probation was the most severe disposition ordered in 54% of the cases in which the youth was adjudicated delinquent.

### **The judge may order residential placement**

In 1996, juvenile courts ordered residential placement in 28% of the cases in which the youth was adjudicated delinquent. Residential commitment may be for a specific or indeterminate time period. The facility may be publicly or privately operated and may have a secure, prison-like environment or a more open (even home-like) setting. In many States, when the judge commits a juvenile to the State department of juvenile corrections, the department determines where the juvenile will be placed and when the juvenile will be released. In other States, the judge controls the type and length of stay; in these situations, review hearings are held to assess the progress of the juvenile.

### **Juvenile aftercare is similar to adult parole**

Upon release from an institution, the juvenile is often ordered to a period of aftercare or parole. During this period, the juvenile is under supervision of the court or the juvenile corrections department. If the juvenile does not follow the conditions of aftercare, he or she may be recommitted to the same facility or may be committed to another facility.

### **Status offense and delinquency case processing differ**

A delinquent offense is an act committed by a juvenile for which an adult could be prosecuted in criminal court. There are, however, behaviors (such as alcohol possession or use) that are law violations only for juveniles and/or young adults because of their status. These "status offenses" may include such behaviors as running away from home, truancy, ungovernability, curfew violations, and underage drinking.

In many ways, the processing of status offense cases parallels that of delinquency cases. Not all States,

however, consider all of these behaviors to be law violations. Many States view such behaviors as indicators that the child is in need of supervision. These States handle status offense matters more like dependency cases than delinquency cases, responding to the behaviors through the provision of social services.

While many status offenders enter the juvenile justice system through law enforcement, in many States the initial, official contact is a child welfare agency. In 1996, half of all status offense cases referred to juvenile court came from law enforcement.

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act discourages the holding of status offenders in secure juvenile facilities for detention or placement. This policy has been labeled *deinstitutionalization of status offenders*. There is an exception to the general policy: a status offender may be confined in a secure juvenile facility if he or she has violated a valid court order, such as a probation order requiring the youth to attend school and observe a curfew.

# Juvenile court proceedings and records are more open as statutes reduce confidentiality

## Most State statutes specify exceptions to the confidentiality of juvenile court records

Although legal and social records maintained by law enforcement agencies and juvenile courts have traditionally been confidential, legislatures have recently made significant changes in how information about juvenile offenders is treated by the justice system. The juvenile code in most States specifies which individuals or agencies are allowed access to such records. Formerly confidential records are being made available to a wide variety of individuals. Many States open records to schools and youth-serving agencies as well as individuals and agencies within the justice system. However, access is not necessarily unlimited or automatic. It may be restricted to certain parts of the record and may require a court order.

As of the end of the 1997 legislative session, juvenile codes in 47 States and the District of Columbia allowed information contained in juvenile court records to be specifically released to at least one of the following parties:

- The prosecutor.
- Law enforcement.
- Social agencies.
- School(s).
- The victim(s).
- The public.

In all States, statutes allow those with a "legitimate interest" to have at least partial access to juvenile

court or law enforcement records. "Interested parties" generally must obtain the court's permission to gain access.

Many States specifically allow inspection of the juvenile's record by the juvenile who is the subject of the proceedings (35 States), the juvenile's parents or guardian (40 States), or the juvenile's attorney (40 States).

## Many States allow school notification, fingerprinting, and photography

During 1996 and 1997 legislative sessions, 11 States enacted new laws permitting or requiring the juvenile court to notify the school district regarding juveniles charged with or convicted of serious or violent crimes. An additional eight States modified existing statutes regarding notice to schools.

As of the end of 1997, 46 States and the District of Columbia allow law enforcement agencies to fingerprint juveniles who have been arrested for felonies or who have reached a certain age. In 45 States and the District of Columbia, statutes allow photographing of juveniles under certain circumstances, for criminal history record purposes.

## Most States maintain central repositories for information about certain juvenile offenders

As of the end of the 1997 legislative session, 44 States required that information about certain juvenile of-

fenders (typically fingerprints and other identifying information) be reported to a statewide repository. Some States include such information in their criminal history repository for adult offenders while others maintain a separate repository for information on juvenile offenders.

## In most States, juveniles' names may be released to the media in certain circumstances

Juvenile codes in 42 States allow names (and sometimes even pictures and court records) of juveniles involved in delinquency proceedings to be released to the media. Many States' statutes outline the circumstances in which media access is allowed. In 16 States, the media may have access to the juvenile's identity because court records or proceedings are public. In 27 States, the juvenile's identity may be released only in cases involving certain crimes and/or repeat offenders. In 11 States, a court order is required for media access.

Illinois and Wisconsin specifically include the media among those who may have access to juvenile records and may attend hearings. In Illinois, such media access requires a court order. In Wisconsin, media are prohibited from revealing the identity of the juvenile involved. In the District of Columbia, media may attend hearings, but, as in Wisconsin, may not identify the child or members of the child's family. In Washington, hearings are presumed to be open to the public; thus, the media may attend unless the court orders a closed hearing.

# All States allow juveniles to be tried as adults in criminal court under certain circumstances

## Transferring juveniles to criminal court is not a new phenomenon

In some States, provisions that enabled transfer of certain juveniles to criminal court were in place before the 1920's. Other States have permitted transfers since at least the 1940's. For many years, all States have had at least one provision for trying certain youth of juvenile age as adults in criminal court. Such provisions are typically limited by age and offense criteria. Transfer mechanisms vary regarding where the responsibility for transfer decisionmaking lies.

Transfer provisions fall into three general categories:

**Judicial waiver:** The juvenile court judge has the authority to waive juvenile court jurisdiction and transfer the case to criminal court. States may use terms other than judicial waiver. Some call the process *certification, remand, or bind over* for criminal prosecution. Others *transfer or decline* rather than waive jurisdiction.

**Concurrent jurisdiction:** Original jurisdiction for certain cases is shared by both criminal and juvenile courts, and the prosecutor has discretion to file such cases in either court. Transfer under concurrent jurisdiction provisions is also known as *prosecutorial waiver, prosecutor discretion, or direct file*.

**Statutory exclusion:** State statute excludes certain juvenile offenders from juvenile court jurisdiction. Under statutory exclusion provisions, cases originate in criminal rather than juvenile court. Statutory exclusion is also known as *legislative exclusion*.

## Most States have a combination of transfer provisions

	Judicial waiver			Concurrent jurisdiction	Statutory exclusion	Reverse waiver	Once an adult/ always an adult
	Discretionary	Presumptive	Mandatory				
Total number of States:	46	15	14	15	28	23	31
Alabama	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Alaska	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Arizona	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arkansas	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
California	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>
Colorado	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Connecticut			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delaware	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dist. of Columbia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Florida	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Georgia	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hawaii	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Idaho	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Illinois	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Iowa	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kansas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Kentucky	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	
Louisiana	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Maine	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Maryland	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Massachusetts				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
Minnesota	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Mississippi	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Missouri	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Montana	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Nebraska				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Nevada	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Hampshire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Jersey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					
New Mexico					<input type="checkbox"/>		
New York					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
North Carolina	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				
North Dakota	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Ohio	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Oklahoma	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oregon	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pennsylvania	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhode Island	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
South Carolina	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
South Dakota	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tennessee	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Texas	<input type="checkbox"/>					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Utah	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Vermont	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Virginia	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Washington	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
West Virginia	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>
Wisconsin	<input type="checkbox"/>				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wyoming	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

In States with a combination of transfer mechanisms, the exclusion, mandatory waiver, or concurrent jurisdiction provisions generally target the oldest juveniles and/or those charged with the most serious offenses, while those charged with relatively less serious offenses and/or younger juveniles may be eligible for discretionary waiver.

Source: Author's adaptation of Torbet and Szymanski's *State legislative responses to violent juvenile crime: 1996-97 update*.

### **Many States have changed the boundaries of juvenile court jurisdiction**

Traditionally, discretionary judicial waiver was the transfer mechanism on which most States relied. Beginning in the 1970's and continuing through the present, however, State legislatures have increasingly moved juvenile offenders into criminal court based on age and/or offense seriousness, without the case-specific consideration offered by the discretionary juvenile court judicial waiver process.

State transfer provisions changed extensively in the 1990's. From 1992 through 1997, all but six States enacted or expanded transfer provisions. An increasing number of State legislatures have enacted mandatory waiver or exclusion statutes. Less common, then and now, are concurrent jurisdiction provisions.

### **In most States, juveniles convicted in criminal court cannot be tried in juvenile court for subsequent offenses**

In 31 States, juveniles who have been tried as adults must be prosecuted in criminal court for any subsequent offenses. Nearly all of these

"once an adult/always an adult" provisions require that the youth must have been convicted of the offenses that triggered the initial criminal prosecution.

### **Judicial waiver is the most common transfer provision**

In all States except Nebraska, New Mexico, and New York, juvenile court judges may waive jurisdiction over certain cases and transfer them to criminal court. Such action is usually in response to a request by the prosecutor; in several States, however, juveniles or their parents may request judicial waiver. In most States, statutes limit waiver by age and offense.

Waiver provisions vary in terms of the degree of decisionmaking flexibility allowed. Under some waiver provisions, the decision is entirely *discretionary*. Under others, there is a rebuttable *presumption* in favor of waiver. Under others, waiver is *mandatory* once the juvenile court judge determines that certain statutory criteria have been met. Mandatory waiver provisions are distinguished from statutory exclusion provisions in that the case originates in juvenile rather than criminal court.

### **Statutes establish waiver criteria other than age and offense**

In some States, waiver provisions target youth charged with offenses involving firearms or other weapons. Most State statutes also limit judicial waiver to juveniles who are "no longer amenable to treatment." The specific factors that determine lack of amenability vary, but typically include the juvenile's offense history and previous dispositional outcomes. Such amenability criteria are generally not included in statutory exclusion or concurrent jurisdiction provisions.

Many statutes instruct juvenile courts to consider other factors when making waiver decisions, such as the availability of dispositional alternatives for treating the juvenile, the time available for sanctions, public safety, and the best interests of the child. The waiver process must also adhere to certain constitutional principles of fairness (see Supreme Court decisions earlier in this chapter).

**In most States, juvenile court judges can waive juvenile court jurisdiction over certain cases and transfer them to criminal court**

State	Minimum age for judicial waiver	Judicial waiver offense and minimum age criteria, 1997							
		Any criminal offense	Certain felonies	Capital crimes	Murder	Certain person offenses	Certain property offenses	Certain drug offenses	Certain weapon offenses
Alabama	14	14							
Alaska	NS	NS							
Arizona	NS		NS				NS		
Arkansas	14		14	14	14	14			14
California	14	16	16		14	14	14	14	
Colorado	12		12		12	12			
Connecticut	14		14	14	14				
Delaware	NS	NS	15 <sup>a</sup>		NS	NS	16 <sup>b</sup>	16 <sup>b</sup>	
Dist. of Columbia	NS	15	15		15	15	15		NS
Florida	14	14							
Georgia	13	15		13	14 <sup>c</sup>	14 <sup>c</sup>	15 <sup>b</sup>		
Hawaii	NS		14		NS	NS			
Idaho	NS	14	NS		NS	NS	NS	NS	
Illinois	13	13	15						
Indiana	NS	14	NS <sup>b</sup>		10			16	
Iowa	14	14	15						
Kansas	10	10	14			14		14	
Kentucky	14		14	14					
Louisiana	14				14	14			
Maine	NS		NS		NS				
Maryland	NS	15		NS					
Michigan	14	14							
Minnesota	14		14						
Mississippi	13	13							
Missouri	12		12						
Montana	NS	NS							
Nevada	14	14	14			14			
New Hampshire	13		15		13	13		15	
New Jersey	14	14 <sup>b</sup>			14	14	14	14	14
North Carolina	13		13	13					
North Dakota	14	16	14 <sup>b</sup>		14	14		14	
Ohio	14		14		14	14	16		
Oklahoma	NS		NS						
Oregon	NS		15		NS	NS	15		
Pennsylvania	14		14		15	15			
Rhode Island	NS		16	NS	17	17			
South Carolina	NS	16	14		NS	NS		14	14
South Dakota	NS		NS						
Tennessee	NS	16			NS	NS			
Texas	14		14	14				14	
Utah	14		14			16	16		16
Vermont	10				10	10	10		
Virginia	14		14		14	14			
Washington	NS	NS							
West Virginia	NS		NS		NS	NS	NS	NS	
Wisconsin	14	15	14		14	14	14	14	
Wyoming	13	13							

Examples: Alabama allows waiver for any delinquency (criminal) offense involving a juvenile age 14 or older. Arizona allows waiver for any juvenile charged with a felony. New Jersey allows waiver for juveniles age 14 or older who are charged with murder or certain person, property, drug, or weapon offenses. In New Jersey, juveniles age 14 or older who have prior adjudications or convictions for certain offenses can be waived regardless of the current offense.

Note: Ages in minimum age column may not apply to all offense restrictions, but represent the youngest possible age at which a juvenile may be judicially waived to criminal court. "NS" indicates that in at least one of the offense restrictions indicated, no minimum age is specified.

<sup>a</sup>Only if committed while escaping from specified juvenile facilities.

<sup>b</sup>Requires prior adjudication(s) or conviction(s), which may be required to have been for the same or a more serious offense type.

<sup>c</sup>Only if committed while in custody.

Sources: Authors' adaptation of Griffin et al.'s *Trying juveniles as adults in criminal court: An analysis of State transfer provisions*.

### Few States allow prosecutorial discretion, but many juveniles are tried as adults in this way

As of the end of the 1997 legislative session, 15 States had concurrent jurisdiction provisions, which gave both juvenile court and criminal court original jurisdiction in certain cases. Thus, prosecutors have discretion to file such cases in either court.

State appellate courts have taken the view that prosecutor discretion

is equivalent to the routine charging decisions made in criminal cases. Thus, prosecutorial transfer is considered an "executive function," which is not subject to judicial review and is not required to meet the due process standards established in *Kent*. Some States, however, have written prosecutorial transfer guidelines.

Concurrent jurisdiction is typically limited by age and offense criteria. Often concurrent jurisdiction is limited to cases involving serious, vio-

lent, or repeat crimes or offenses involving firearms or other weapons. Juvenile and criminal courts often also share jurisdiction over minor offenses such as traffic, watercraft, or local ordinance violations.

There are no national data at the present time on the number of juvenile cases tried in criminal court under concurrent jurisdiction provisions. Florida alone reports an average of nearly 5,000 such transfers per year.

### In States with concurrent jurisdiction, the prosecutor has discretion to file certain cases, generally involving juveniles charged with serious offenses, in either criminal court or juvenile court

State	Minimum age for concurrent jurisdiction	Concurrent jurisdiction offense and minimum age criteria, 1997							
		Any criminal offense	Certain felonies	Capital crimes	Murder	Certain person offenses	Certain property offenses	Certain drug offenses	Certain weapon offenses
Arizona	14		14						
Arkansas	14		14	14	14	14			14
Colorado	14		14			14	14	14	14
Dist. of Columbia	16				16	16	16		
Florida	NS	16 <sup>a</sup>	16	NS <sup>b</sup>	14	14	14		14
Georgia	NS			NS					
Louisiana	15				15	15	15	15	
Massachusetts	14		14			14			14
Michigan	14		14		14	14	14	14	
Montana	12				12	12	16	16	16
Nebraska	NS	16 <sup>c</sup>	NS						
Oklahoma	15				15	15	15	16	15
Vermont	16	16							
Virginia	14				14	14			
Wyoming	14	17	14						

Examples: In Arizona, prosecutors have discretion to file directly in criminal court those cases involving juveniles age 14 or older charged with certain felonies (defined in State statutes). In Florida, prosecutors may "direct file" cases involving juveniles age 16 or older charged with a misdemeanor (if they have a prior adjudication) or a felony offense, as well as those age 14 or older charged with murder or certain person, property, or weapon offenses; no minimum age is specified for cases in which a grand jury indicts a juvenile for a capital offense.

Note: Ages in minimum age column may not apply to all offense restrictions, but represent the youngest possible age at which a juvenile may be filed directly in criminal court. "NS" indicates that in at least one of the offense restrictions indicated, no minimum age is specified.

<sup>a</sup>Applies to misdemeanors and requires prior adjudication(s), which may be required to have been for the same or a more serious offense type.

<sup>b</sup>Requires grand jury indictment.

<sup>c</sup>Applies to misdemeanors.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Griffin et al.'s *Trying juveniles as adults in criminal court: An analysis of State transfer provisions*.

**Statutory exclusion accounts for the largest number of juveniles tried as adults in criminal court**

Legislatures “transfer” large numbers of young offenders to criminal court by enacting statutes that exclude certain cases from juvenile court jurisdiction. As of the end of the 1997 legislative session, 28 States had statutory exclusions. Although not typically thought of as transfers, large numbers of youth under age 18 are tried as adults in the 13 States where the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction is 15 or 16. If the 1.8 million 16- and 17-year-olds in these 13 States are referred to criminal court at the same rate that 16- and 17-year-olds are referred to juvenile court in other States, then as many as 218,000

cases involving youth under the age of 18 could have faced trial in criminal court in 1996 because the offenders were defined as adults under State laws.

Many States exclude certain serious offenses from juvenile court jurisdiction. State laws typically also set age limits for excluded offenses. The offenses most often excluded are capital crimes and murders, and other serious offenses against persons. Some States exclude juveniles charged with felonies if they have prior felony adjudications or convictions. Minor offenses, such as traffic, watercraft, fish, or game violations, are often excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction in States where they are not covered by concurrent jurisdiction provisions.

**Criminal courts may transfer cases to juvenile court or order juvenile sanctions**

Of the 35 States with statutory exclusion or concurrent jurisdiction provisions, 20 also have provisions for transferring “excluded” or “direct filed” cases from criminal court to juvenile court under certain circumstances. This procedure is sometimes referred to as “reverse” waiver or transfer. In some States, juveniles tried as adults in criminal court may be transferred to juvenile court for disposition. Some States allow juveniles tried as adults in criminal court to receive dispositions involving either criminal or juvenile court sanctions, under what have come to be known as “blended sentencing” provisions.

**In most States, no minimum age is specified in at least one judicial waiver, concurrent jurisdiction, or statutory exclusion provision for transferring juveniles to criminal court**

Minimum transfer age indicated in section(s) of juvenile code specifying transfer provisions, 1997

No minimum age		10	12	13	14	15
Alaska	Nevada*	Kansas	Colorado	Illinois	Alabama	New Mexico
Arizona	Oklahoma*	Vermont	Missouri	Mississippi	Arkansas	
Delaware	Oregon*		Montana	New Hampshire	California	
Dist. of Columbia	Pennsylvania			New York	Connecticut	
Florida	Rhode Island			North Carolina	Iowa	
Georgia*	South Carolina			Wyoming	Kentucky	
Hawaii	South Dakota				Louisiana	
Idaho*	Tennessee				Massachusetts	
Indiana	Washington*				Michigan	
Maine	West Virginia				Minnesota	
Maryland	Wisconsin				New Jersey	
Nebraska					North Dakota	
					Ohio	
					Texas	
					Utah	
					Virginia	

\*Other sections of State statute specify an age below which children cannot be tried in criminal court. This minimum age for criminal responsibility is 14 in Idaho, 12 in Georgia, 8 in Nevada and Washington, and 7 in Oklahoma. In Washington, 8- to 12-year-olds are presumed to be incapable of committing a crime. In Oklahoma, in cases involving 7- to 14-year-olds, the State must prove that at the time of the act, the child knew it was wrong.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Griffin et al.'s *Trying juveniles as adults in criminal court: An analysis of State transfer provisions*.

### In States with statutory exclusion provisions, certain cases involving juveniles originate in criminal court rather than juvenile court

State	Minimum age for statutory exclusion	Statutory exclusion offense and minimum age criteria, 1997							
		Any criminal offense	Certain felonies	Capital crimes	Murder	Certain person offenses	Certain property offenses	Certain drug offenses	Certain weapon offenses
Alabama	16		16	16				16	
Alaska	16						16		
Arizona	15		15 <sup>a</sup>		15	15			
Delaware	15		15						
Florida	NS	NS <sup>a</sup>				NS			
Georgia	13				13	13			
Idaho	14				14	14	14	14	
Illinois	13		15 <sup>b</sup>		13	15		15	15
Indiana	16		16		16	16		16	16
Iowa	16		16					16	16
Louisiana	15				15	15			
Maryland	14			14	16	16			16
Massachusetts	14				14				
Minnesota	16				16				
Mississippi	13		13	13					
Montana	17				17	17	17	17	17
Nevada	NS	NS <sup>a</sup>			NS	16 <sup>a</sup>			
New Mexico	15				15 <sup>c</sup>				
New York	13				13	14	14		
Oklahoma	13				13				
Oregon	15				15	15			
Pennsylvania	NS				NS	15			
South Carolina	16		16						
South Dakota	16		16						
Utah	16		16 <sup>d</sup>		16				
Vermont	14				14	14	14		
Washington	16				16	16	16		
Wisconsin	NS				10	NS <sup>e</sup>			

Examples: In Delaware, juveniles age 15 or older charged with certain felonies must be tried as adults. In Arizona, juveniles age 15 or older must be tried as adults if they are charged with murder or certain person offenses or they have prior felony adjudications and are charged with a felony.

Note: Ages in minimum age column may not apply to all offense restrictions, but represent the youngest possible age at which a juvenile may be excluded from juvenile court. "NS" indicates that in at least one of the offense restrictions indicated, no minimum age is specified.

<sup>a</sup> Requires prior adjudication(s) or conviction(s), which may be required to have been for the same or a more serious offense type.

<sup>b</sup> Only escape or bail violation while subject to prosecution in criminal court.

<sup>d</sup> Requires prior commitment in a secure facility.

<sup>c</sup> Requires grand jury indictment.

<sup>e</sup> Only if charged while confined or on probation or parole.

Sources: Authors' adaptation of Griffin et al.'s *Trying juveniles as adults in criminal court: An analysis of State transfer provisions*.

# New laws have had a dramatic impact on sentencing for serious or violent juvenile offenders

## A trend away from traditional juvenile dispositions is emerging

Juvenile court dispositions were traditionally based on the offender's individual characteristics and situation. Dispositions were frequently indeterminate and generally had rehabilitation as a primary goal. As many States have shifted the purpose of juvenile court away from rehabilitation and toward punishment, accountability, and public safety, the emerging trend is toward dispositions based more on the offense than the offender. Offense-based dispositions tend to be determinate and proportional to the offense; retribution and deterrence replace rehabilitation as the primary goal.

## Many State legislatures have changed disposition and sentencing options

From 1992 through 1997, statutes requiring mandatory minimum periods of incarceration for certain violent or serious offenders were added or modified in 16 States.

States have also raised the maximum age of the juvenile court's continuing jurisdiction over juvenile offenders. Such laws allow juvenile courts to order dispositions that extend beyond the upper age of original jurisdiction, most often to age 21. From 1992 through 1997, 17 States extended their age limit for delinquency dispositions.

Perhaps the most dramatic change will result from "blended sentences." Blended sentencing statutes, which allow courts to impose juvenile and/or adult correctional sanctions on certain young offenders, were in place in 20 States at the end of 1997.

### Blended sentencing options create a "middle ground" between traditional juvenile sanctions and adult sanctions

Blended sentencing option

State

**Juvenile-exclusive blend:** The juvenile court may impose a sanction involving either the juvenile or adult correctional systems.

New Mexico



**Juvenile-inclusive blend:** The juvenile court may impose both juvenile and adult correctional sanctions. The adult sanction is suspended pending a violation and revocation.

Connecticut  
Kansas  
Minnesota  
Montana



**Juvenile-contiguous blend:** The juvenile court may impose a juvenile correctional sanction that may remain in force after the offender is beyond the age of the court's extended jurisdiction, at which point the offender may be transferred to the adult correctional system.

Colorado<sup>1</sup>  
Massachusetts  
Rhode Island  
South Carolina  
Texas



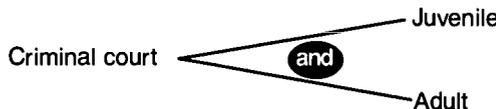
**Criminal-exclusive blend:** The criminal court may impose a sanction involving either the juvenile or adult correctional systems.

California  
Colorado<sup>2</sup>  
Florida  
Idaho  
Michigan  
Oklahoma  
Virginia  
West Virginia



**Criminal-inclusive blend:** The criminal court may impose both juvenile and adult correctional sanctions. The adult sanction is suspended, but is reinstated if the terms of the juvenile sanction are violated and revoked.

Arkansas  
Iowa  
Missouri  
Virginia<sup>3</sup>



Note: Blends apply to a subset of juveniles specified by State statute.

<sup>1</sup>Applies to those designated as "aggravated juvenile offenders."

<sup>2</sup>Applies to those designated as "youthful offenders."

<sup>3</sup>Applies to those designated as "violent juvenile felony offenders."

Source: Authors' adaptation of Torbet and Szymanski's *State legislative responses to violent juvenile crime: 1996-97 update*.

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# Chapter 5

## Law enforcement and juvenile crime

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For delinquents, law enforcement is the doorway to the juvenile justice system. Once a juvenile is apprehended for a law violation, it is the police officer who first determines if the juvenile will move deeper into the justice system or will be diverted.

Law enforcement agencies track the volume and characteristics of crimes reported to them and use this information to monitor the changing levels of crime in their communities. Not all crimes are reported to law enforcement, and most of those that are reported remain unsolved. Consequently, information on crimes reported to law enforcement cannot shed much light on the problem of juvenile crime. Law enforcement agencies, however, also report arrest statistics that can be used to monitor the flow of juveniles and adults into the justice system. These arrest statistics are the most frequently cited

source of information on juvenile crime trends.

This chapter describes the volume and characteristics of juvenile crime from law enforcement's perspective. It presents information on the number of juvenile arrests made annually, the nature of these arrests, and arrest trends. The chapter also includes arrest rate trends for violent and property crimes, drug and weapons offenses, alcohol violations, and curfew and loitering law violations. Male and female juvenile arrests and arrest rate trends are compared. Arrests and arrest trends of juvenile offenders under age 13 are examined. Trends in age-specific arrest rates presented allow comparisons of juvenile and adult trends. The data presented in this chapter were originally compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as part of its Uniform Crime Reporting Program.

# The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program is the primary source of information on juvenile arrests

## Since the 1930's, police agencies have reported to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program

Each year, thousands of agencies voluntarily report the following data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI):

- Number of reported Index crimes (see sidebar).
- Number of arrests and the most serious charge involved in each arrest.
- Age, sex, and race of arrestees.
- Proportion of reported Index crimes cleared by arrest and the proportion of these cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18.
- Dispositions of juvenile arrests.
- Detailed victim, assailant, and circumstance information in homicide cases.

For 1997, law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction over 95% of the U.S. population contributed data on reported crimes, but agencies contributing data on arrests represented only 68% of the population. The proportion of the population represented by arrest statistics was lower in 1997 than at any time in the prior 20 years.

## What can the UCR data tell us about crime and young people?

The UCR data can provide estimates of the annual number of arrests of juveniles within specific offense categories. UCR data can also provide detail on juvenile arrests by sex, race, and type of location (urban, suburban, or rural area). The data can be used to compare the relative number of arrests of adults and juveniles within offense categories, to

develop estimates of change in arrests over various time periods, and to monitor the proportion of crimes cleared by arrests of juveniles.

## UCR data document the number of crimes reported, not the number of crimes committed

The UCR Program monitors the number of Index crimes that come to the attention of law enforcement agencies. Although this information is useful in identifying trends in the volume of reported crime, it is important to recognize that not all crimes are brought to the attention of law enforcement.

Crimes are more likely to be reported if they involve a serious injury or a large economic loss. For example, the National Crime Victimization Survey for 1996 found that victims reported 76% of motor vehicle thefts to police, 55% of aggravated assaults, 54% of robberies, 51% of burglaries, 37% of simple assaults, 31% of sexual assaults, and 28% of thefts. Overall, victims reported only 43% of violent crimes and 35% of property crimes.

Changes in reported crime may reflect changes not only in the number of crimes actually committed, but also in the willingness of victims to report crimes to law enforcement agencies, and in the inclination of the police to make records of incidents reported by victims.

It is important to keep in mind that UCR reported crime data reflect only crimes that come to the attention of law enforcement and therefore cannot be used to measure the number or the proportion of crimes actually committed by juveniles.

## What are the Crime Indexes?

The designers of the UCR Program wanted to create an index (similar in concept to the Dow Jones Industrial Average or the Consumer Price Index) that would be sensitive to changes in the volume and nature of reported crime. They decided to incorporate specific offenses into the index based on several factors: likelihood of being reported, frequency of occurrence, pervasiveness in all geographical areas of the country, and relative seriousness.

The Crime Index is divided into two components: the Violent Crime Index and the Property Crime Index:

**Violent Crime Index**—Includes murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

**Property Crime Index**—Includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

**Crime Index**—Includes all eight crimes included in the Violent Crime Index and Property Crime Index.

While some violent crimes such as kidnaping and extortion are excluded, the Violent Crime Index contains what are generally considered to be serious crimes. In contrast, a substantial proportion of the crimes in the Property Crime Index are generally considered less serious crimes, such as shoplifting, theft from motor vehicles, and bicycle theft, all of which are included in the larceny-theft category.

### UCR data document the number of arrests made, not the number of persons arrested

A person can be arrested more than once in a year. Each arrest is counted separately in the UCR data. One arrest can represent many crimes. If a person was arrested for allegedly committing 40 burglaries, it would show up in the UCR data as one arrest for burglary. Also, one crime may also result in multiple arrests. For example, three youth may be arrested for one burglary. A single crime with multiple arrests is more likely to occur with juveniles than with adults, because juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups.

### UCR arrest data reflect only the most serious offense for which a person was arrested

An arrest of a person for both robbery and weapons possession would appear in the UCR data as one robbery arrest. The UCR data on number of weapons arrests reflect only those arrests in which a weapons charge was the most serious offense charged. This aspect of UCR counting rules must be taken into consideration when the data are used in analysis of arrest volume and trends for less serious offenses.

### UCR data document the result of a juvenile arrest

Local agencies report to the FBI what happened to arrestees who are classified as juveniles in their jurisdictions. This is the only information in the UCR Program that is sensitive to the States' statutory distinction between adults and juve-

niles. The UCR Program defines five categories for juvenile arrest dispositions: handled within the department and released; transferred to another police agency; or referred to a welfare agency, a juvenile court, or a criminal court. In 1997, law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction over 57% of the U.S. population reported this information.

### Clearance data provide another perspective on law enforcement

A crime is considered *cleared* if someone is charged with the crime or if someone is believed to have committed the crime but for some reason (e.g., the death of the suspect) the arrest cannot be made. If a person is arrested and charged with committing 40 burglaries, UCR records 40 burglary clearances. If three people are arrested for robbing a liquor store, UCR records one robbery cleared.

Knowing both the number of crimes reported and the number cleared in a year makes it possible to compute the proportion of crimes cleared in a year.

### A much greater proportion of violent crimes than property crimes are cleared

Most serious offense	Percent of all crimes cleared in 1997
Violent Crime Index	48%
Murder	66
Forcible rape	51
Robbery	26
Aggravated assault	58
Property Crime Index	18%
Burglary	14
Larceny-theft	20
Motor vehicle theft	14
Arson	17

### UCR data capture the proportion of crimes cleared by juvenile arrest

UCR data also document the proportion of cleared crimes that were cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18. Assessments of the juvenile contribution to the U.S. crime problem are often based on this proportion. Clearance and arrest statistics give a very different picture of the juvenile contribution to crime. To use the UCR data properly, it is important to understand this difference.

Most serious offense	1997 juvenile proportion	
	Arrests	Crimes cleared
Violent Crime Index	17%	12%
Murder	14	8
Forcible rape	17	11
Robbery	30	17
Aggravated assault	14	12
Property Crime Index	35	23
Burglary	37	20
Larceny-theft	34	24
Motor vehicle theft	40	21
Arson	50	46

### How should juvenile arrest and clearance data be interpreted?

Considerations in interpreting UCR data on juvenile arrests and clearances can be demonstrated by attempting to answer a typical question about juvenile crime: "What proportion of all robberies were committed by juveniles in 1997?" The UCR data show that 30% of all persons arrested for robbery in 1997 were under age 18 but that 17% of all robberies cleared in 1997 were cleared by the arrest of persons under age 18.

The key to reconciling the difference between the two percentages is the fact, noted previously, that juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups. If a police department cleared all five of its robberies in a year by arresting two juveniles for one incident and four different adults for the other four incidents, the juvenile proportion of persons arrested for robbery would be 33% (2 in 6), and the juvenile proportion of robberies cleared would be 20% (1 in 5). Arrest percentages are offender-based; clearance percentages are offense-based.

Clearance data would seem a better choice than arrest data for answering the questions posed about juveniles' proportion of all robberies committed. There are, however, concerns about what clearance figures actually represent. One concern is whether it is safe to assume that characteristics of robberies cleared are similar to characteristics of robberies not cleared (i.e., whether the 26% cleared in 1997 were like the 74% not cleared). This does not seem to be the case.

A study by Snyder of more than 21,000 robberies in seven States between 1991 and 1993 that were reported to the FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) found that certain offense characteristics increased the likelihood of arrest (and therefore of clearance). This study found that juvenile offenders were 23% more likely than adults to be arrested in robbery incidents. Therefore, robberies cleared differed from those not cleared in terms of the proportion of crimes committed by juveniles.

Arrest data and clearance data can be used in exploring different types

of questions. Arrest data provide a rough estimate of how many juveniles entered the justice system in a given year; but it must be remembered that a particular individual may have been arrested more than once during the year (and therefore counted more than once), and that a particular arrest may have involved more than one offense (even though only the most serious charge is counted). Clearance data are more useful than arrest data in estimating the proportion of crimes committed by juveniles; but the evidence that juveniles are more likely than adults to be arrested for their crimes indicates that clearance percentages exaggerate juveniles' actual share of total crimes.

Arrest percentages and, to a lesser extent, clearance percentages overestimate the extent to which juveniles are responsible for crimes known to law enforcement. The lesson from all of this is that it is problematic to use aggregate UCR statistics to answer questions they were not specifically designed to answer.

#### **Incident-based reporting expands the capabilities of the UCR data**

In the late 1980's, the UCR Program decided to enhance its data collection efforts by moving from aggregate statistics to detailed incident-based reporting. The redesigned data-reporting protocol was labeled NIBRS. The differences between the two systems can best be described by example.

Under the aggregate system, an incident in which a female victim reported being robbed and raped at knifepoint by two juveniles would be recorded as a rape, with no other

details about the incident. NIBRS is designed to allow law enforcement agencies to report to the FBI information on many attributes of an incident, including the following: the demographic characteristics of the victim; all the offenses involved; the date, time, and place(s) of the incident; the level of victim injury; the weapon involved; the type and dollar value of property lost; and the victim's perception of the demographic characteristics of the offender(s).

If the two juveniles were arrested a month later, the aggregate system would note the age, sex, and race of each arrestee and the most serious charge on which the arrest was based. NIBRS would link the demographic characteristics of the arrestees and the arrest information to the other incident information gathered earlier, to give a complete picture of the crimes.

As of the end of 1998, law enforcement agencies reporting NIBRS data to the FBI had jurisdiction over less than 10% of the U.S. population. NIBRS coverage is growing, as more law enforcement agencies upgrade their management information systems and are able to provide the FBI with NIBRS-compatible data.

In the near future, justice professionals and policymakers will have a much more complete picture of the crimes, victims, and offenders that come to the attention of the justice system. Analyses of NIBRS data have already provided unique insights. The future of the UCR Program is in the incident-based reporting system.

## Law enforcement agencies in the U.S. made 2.8 million arrests of persons under age 18 in 1997

**The most serious charge in over 40% of all juvenile arrests in 1997 was larceny-theft, simple assault, drug abuse violation, or disorderly conduct**

Most serious offense charged	1997 juvenile arrest estimates	Percent of total juvenile arrests					
		Female	Ages 16-17	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,838,300</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Violent Crime Index	123,400	16	51	53	44	1	2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	2,500	6	74	40	58	0	2
Forcible rape	5,500	2	45	56	42	1	1
Robbery	39,500	9	54	42	55	1	2
Aggravated assault	75,900	21	49	60	38	1	1
Property Crime Index	701,500	28	41	70	27	1	2
Burglary	131,000	10	43	73	24	1	2
Larceny-theft	493,900	34	40	70	26	1	2
Motor vehicle theft	66,600	16	51	59	37	2	2
Arson	10,000	11	20	79	19	1	1
Nonindex							
Other assaults	241,800	29	41	63	34	1	1
Forgery and counterfeiting	8,500	39	75	77	20	1	2
Fraud	11,300	35	71	69	29	1	1
Embezzlement	1,400	45	88	63	34	1	2
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	39,500	13	54	60	37	1	2
Vandalism	136,500	12	38	80	17	1	1
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	52,200	9	51	64	33	1	2
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1,400	56	70	60	39	1	1
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	18,500	9	33	70	28	1	1
Drug abuse violations	220,700	13	66	64	34	1	1
Gambling	2,600	3	69	10	89	0	1
Offenses against family and children	10,200	37	45	76	20	1	2
Driving under the influence	19,600	17	93	91	6	2	1
Liquor laws	158,500	30	74	90	5	3	1
Drunkenness	24,100	17	72	89	9	2	1
Disorderly conduct	215,100	26	46	64	34	1	1
Vagrancy	3,100	15	56	68	31	1	0
All other offenses (except traffic)	468,000	24	53	72	25	1	2
Suspicion	1,600	23	60	60	39	0	1
Curfew and loitering law violations	182,700	31	48	75	23	1	1
Runaways	196,100	58	33	77	18	1	4
U.S. population ages 10-17	30,640,000	49	25	79	15	1	4

- Five percent of juvenile arrests in 1997 were for the violent crimes of aggravated assault, robbery, forcible rape, or murder.
- While black youth accounted for 15% of the juvenile population in 1997, they were involved in more than half of the arrests for gambling (89%), murder (58%), and robbery (55%).
- Females accounted for the majority of juvenile arrests for running away from home (58%) and prostitution (56%).

Notes: UCR data do not distinguish the ethnic group Hispanic; Hispanics may be of any race. In 1997, 91% of Hispanics ages 10-17 were classified racially as white. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of data presented in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*. National estimates of juvenile arrests were developed using FBI estimates of total arrests and juvenile arrest proportions in reporting sample.

## In 1997, approximately 1 in 5 arrests made by law enforcement agencies involved a juvenile

**Juveniles accounted for 37% of all burglary arrests in 1997, 30% of robbery arrests, 24% of weapon arrests, 14% of murder arrests, and 14% of drug arrests**

Most serious offense charged	Juvenile arrests as a percent of total arrests						
	All persons	Males	Females	Whites	Blacks	American Indians	Asians
<b>Total</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Violent Crime Index	17	17	17	16	19	15	23
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	14	14	8	13	14	9	23
Forcible rape	17	17	27	17	18	13	13
Robbery	30	30	28	31	29	31	47
Aggravated assault	14	14	16	14	15	13	18
Property Crime Index	35	35	34	38	29	40	45
Burglary	37	37	32	39	30	43	48
Larceny-theft	34	34	33	37	27	39	44
Motor vehicle theft	40	39	43	41	38	54	42
Arson	50	52	37	54	39	44	50
Other assaults	17	16	24	17	17	16	22
Forgery and counterfeiting	7	7	7	8	4	9	10
Fraud	3	3	2	3	3	4	6
Embezzlement	8	8	7	8	8	10	10
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	25	26	21	27	23	36	37
Vandalism	43	44	34	47	30	39	52
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	24	24	26	26	20	30	35
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	18	18	17	17	21	12	14
Drug abuse violations	14	15	11	14	13	19	18
Gambling	17	18	6	6	22	4	4
Offenses against family and children	7	5	10	8	4	5	8
Driving under the influence	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Liquor laws	25	22	35	27	11	26	29
Drunkenness	3	3	4	4	2	2	5
Disorderly conduct	27	25	31	27	25	18	35
Vagrancy	11	12	7	14	7	4	16
All other offenses (except traffic)	12	11	14	14	9	10	19

- Persons between ages 10 and 49 commit most crimes: in 1997, 95% of all arrests involved persons in this age range. Persons ages 10–17 make up about 19% of this segment of the population. Therefore, based on their representation in this population, juveniles were disproportionately involved in arrests for arson, vandalism, motor vehicle theft, burglary, larceny-theft, robbery, and weapons law violations. In contrast, juveniles were underrepresented in arrests for murder, aggravated assault, forcible rape, driving under the influence, drunkenness, and drug abuse violations.
- A greater portion of female arrests involved a juvenile (23%) than did male arrests (18%). Juveniles were involved in a larger proportion of female arrests than male arrests for liquor law violations (35% vs. 22%) and simple assaults (24% vs. 16%). Juveniles were involved in a larger proportion of male arrests than female arrests for arson (52% vs. 37%), vandalism (44% vs. 34%), murder (14% vs. 8%), and drug abuse violations (15% vs. 11%). There was little gender difference in juvenile proportions of arrests for most other crimes.
- A greater proportion of white arrests involved a juvenile (20%) than did black arrests (16%). Juveniles accounted for a larger proportion of white arrests than black arrests for burglary (39% vs. 30%), weapons law violations (26% vs. 20%), vandalism (47% vs. 30%), larceny-theft (37% vs. 27%), and liquor law violations (27% vs. 11%).

Source: Authors' adaptation of the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*, tables 38, 39, 40, and 43.

## The past decade saw large growth in juvenile arrests for violence, weapons, drugs, and curfew violations

**While drug arrests continued to increase for both juveniles and adults between 1993 and 1997, arrests for most serious violent offenses and property offenses declined**

Most serious offense charged	Percent change in arrests					
	1993-1997			1988-1997		
	Total	Juvenile	Adult	Total	Juvenile	Adult
<b>Total</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Violent Crime Index	-2	-6	-1	23	49	19
Murder & nonnegligent manslaughter	-25	-39	-22	-12	11	-15
Forcible rape	-18	-16	-19	-14	6	-17
Robbery	-12	-2	-15	8	56	-4
Aggravated assault	3	-5	5	33	51	31
Property Crime Index	-7	-3	-9	-8	1	-12
Burglary	-14	-9	-17	-21	-15	-24
Larceny-theft	-3	3	-7	-3	9	-8
Motor vehicle theft	-19	-30	-11	-15	-17	-14
Arson	0	-2	2	-2	22	-19
Other assaults	14	17	13	52	84	47
Forgery & counterfeiting	13	3	13	24	2	26
Fraud	1	3	1	15	58	14
Embezzlement	32	74	30	25	6	27
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	-6	-15	-2	-5	-8	-5
Vandalism	-6	-12	-1	12	20	6
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	-23	-23	-23	0	44	-9
Prostitution & commercialized vice	2	11	2	9	-28	10
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	-10	-13	-9	-3	11	-6
Drug abuse violations	38	82	33	48	125	41
Gambling	-5	-7	-5	-18	166	-28
Offenses against family & children	24	73	22	109	150	107
Driving under the influence	-9	35	-9	-20	-21	-20
Liquor laws	23	33	20	2	1	2
Drunkennes	-10	31	-10	-20	-9	-21
Disorderly conduct	6	31	-1	15	86	1
Vagrancy	32	2	37	-1	-7	-1
All other offenses (except traffic)	24	29	23	47	55	46
Curfew and loitering law violations	87	87	*	190	190	*
Runaway	-2	-2	*	19	19	*

■ Because the absolute number of juvenile arrests is far below the number for adults, a larger percentage increase in juvenile arrests does not necessarily imply a larger increase in the actual number of arrests. For example, while the **percentage** increase in juvenile arrests for a drug law violation was much greater than the adult increase between 1993 and 1997, the increase in the **number** of arrests was 240% greater for adults.

\* Not applicable to adults.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*, tables 32 and 34.

### Juvenile arrest trends in States may differ from national trends

State	Reporting population coverage	Percent change 1993-1997	
		Violent Crime Index	Property Crime Index
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>-6%</b>	<b>-3%</b>
Alabama	90	3	28
Alaska	44	11	-26
Arizona	83	-1	-2
Arkansas	89	-1	10
California	97	-2	-13
Colorado	59	-28	-14
Connecticut	83	1	-9
Delaware	4	-8	32
Georgia	32	-22	13
Hawaii	97	59	-7
Idaho	89	-27	-10
Illinois	23	-14	-24
Indiana	49	13	0
Iowa	64	-4	12
Kentucky	16	2	-9
Louisiana	56	-21	14
Maine	82	20	12
Maryland	100	17	9
Massachusetts	66	5	-12
Michigan	74	-17	-8
Minnesota	98	-45	-13
Mississippi	24	8	7
Missouri	50	-18	18
Montana	32	37	-3
Nebraska	91	-15	13
Nevada	34	-15	13
New Jersey	96	-14	-11
New Mexico	46	-28	-1
New York	41	-6	0
North Carolina	97	12	18
North Dakota	77	-25	-9
Ohio	47	11	-1
Oklahoma	98	-7	5
Oregon	84	-12	-10
Pennsylvania	39	-3	12
Rhode Island	97	-23	-10
South Carolina	95	19	14
South Dakota	43	-12	-3
Tennessee	35	42	32
Texas	93	-21	0
Utah	67	-42	-36
Virginia	97	6	-3
Washington	54	16	-1
West Virginia	95	12	-1
Wisconsin	75	-2	-5
Wyoming	96	2	18

Note: Arrest data were unavailable for the District of Columbia, Florida, Kansas, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Source: Authors' adaptation of data from an unpublished data file provided by the Communications Unit of the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division, 1999.

# In 1997, about two-thirds of the States had a juvenile violent crime arrest rate below the national average

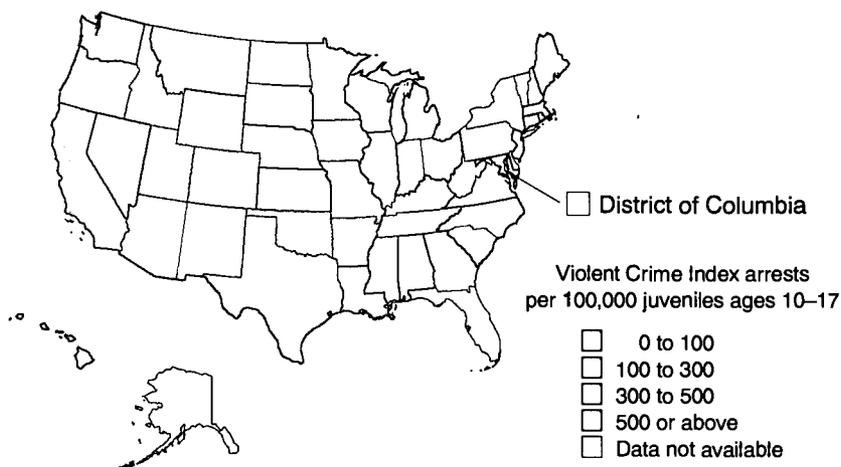
**States with the lowest reported juvenile violent crime arrest rates were North Dakota, West Virginia, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Maine**

State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17					State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17				
		Violent Crime Index	Murder	Forcible rape	Robbery	Agg. assault			Violent Crime Index	Murder	Forcible rape	Robbery	Agg. assault
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>252</b>	Missouri	60%	406	11	22	153	220
Alabama	94	218	12	9	88	109	Montana	39	105	0	2	0	103
Alaska	44	456	8	35	53	360	Nebraska	94	132	3	9	56	65
Arizona	85	438	7	12	93	326	Nevada	46	418	5	29	167	217
Arkansas	89	288	6	22	82	178	New Hampshire	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
California	99	575	10	12	223	330	New Jersey	96	576	6	19	220	332
Colorado	70	258	4	31	50	173	New Mexico	68	301	5	12	64	221
Connecticut	85	505	4	19	169	313	New York	46	332	3	11	125	193
Delaware	41	953	0	85	250	617	N. Carolina	99	430	9	11	122	288
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N. Dakota	90	64	0	5	15	44
Florida	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ohio	55	367	4	34	133	196
Georgia	33	517	8	29	161	318	Oklahoma	100	289	6	16	81	187
Hawaii	97	347	0	13	236	98	Oregon	87	269	4	19	84	162
Idaho	98	226	2	10	25	190	Pennsylvania	47	301	3	15	85	197
Illinois	23	1,015	43	48	369	555	Rhode Island	100	411	3	27	79	302
Indiana	57	491	4	8	67	412	S. Carolina	99	432	13	21	105	292
Iowa	82	256	0	8	38	210	S. Dakota	45	227	0	28	35	165
Kansas	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Tennessee	42	378	21	12	85	259
Kentucky	19	752	26	15	221	489	Texas	97	296	6	18	89	183
Louisiana	79	525	19	28	141	337	Utah	75	292	5	16	37	233
Maine	94	133	1	11	45	76	Vermont	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maryland	100	739	20	19	303	397	Virginia	98	233	8	14	81	130
Massachusetts	83	542	2	13	108	419	Washington	61	416	5	34	118	259
Michigan	81	309	11	25	88	185	West Virginia	96	79	2	4	28	45
Minnesota	100	207	2	28	53	124	Wisconsin	76	404	15	25	138	226
Mississippi	37	283	14	14	114	141	Wyoming	98	131	0	8	18	105

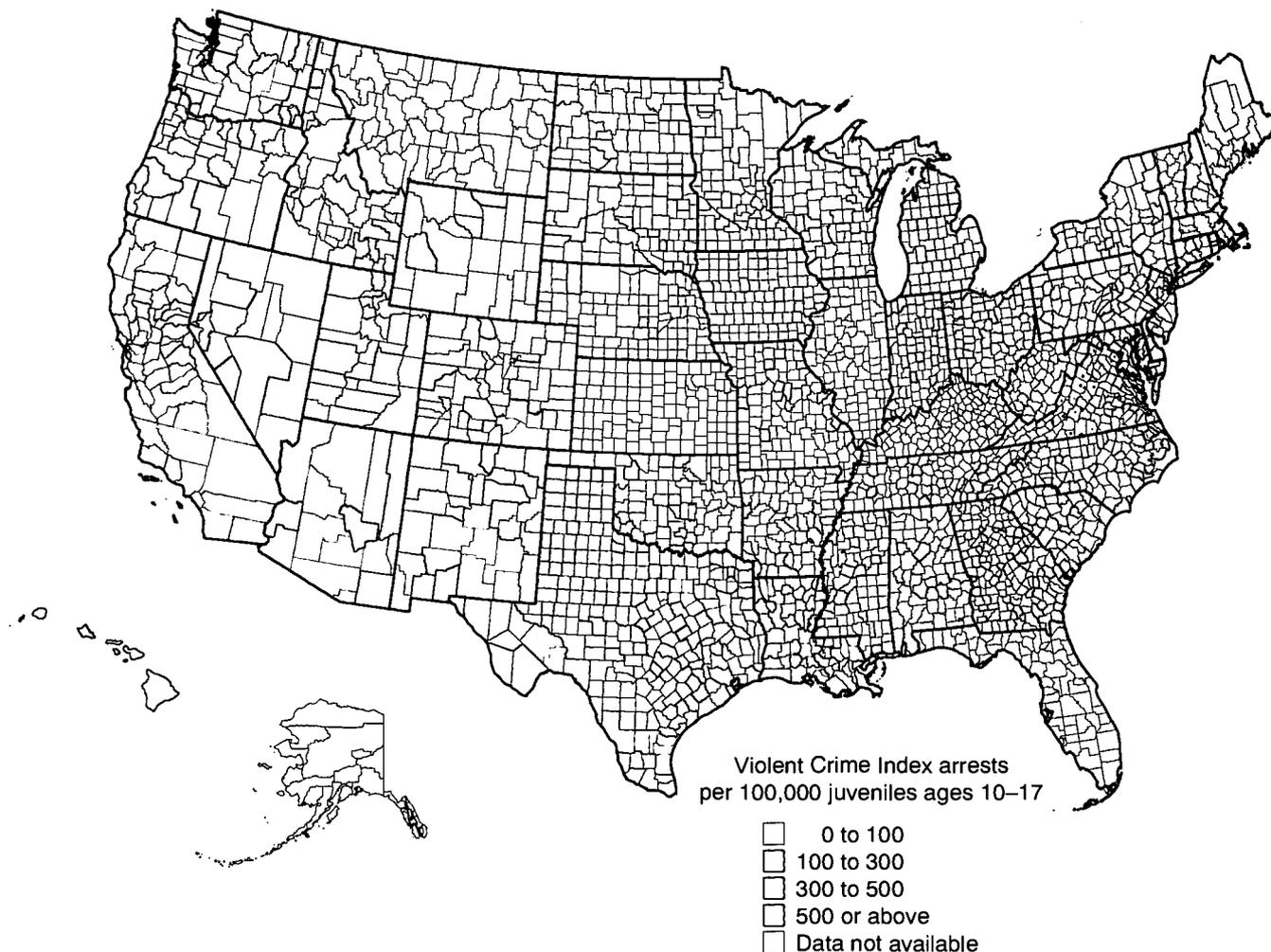
NA = Arrest counts were not available for this State in *Crime in the United States 1997*.

Notes: Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire State. In the map, rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their State's population did not report. Readers should consult the related technical note at the end of this chapter. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997* and population data from the Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1997* [machine-readable data file].



### Juvenile violent crime arrest rates varied considerably among counties within a State in 1996



Note: Rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their county's population did not report.

Source: Authors' analysis of county-level arrest estimates from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research's *Uniform Crime Reporting Program data [United States]: County-level detailed arrest and offense data, 1996* [machine-readable data file] and population estimates from the Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of counties by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1996* [machine-readable data file].

#### High violent crime arrest rates are found in a relatively small proportion of counties

In 1997, the national juvenile arrest rate for offenses included in the Violent Crime Index was 412 arrests of

persons under age 18 for every 100,000 persons ages 10–17 in the U.S. population. The rate was higher than the national average in just 14% of the 3,141 counties in the U.S.; in fact, 62% of the counties had rates less than half the national av-

erage. High rates of juvenile violent crime arrests are found in counties with large and small population, an indication that high levels of juvenile violence can occur in any community.

## The juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased from 1988 to 1994 but has declined since then

### In 1989, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased to a level not seen in prior years

From the early 1970's through 1988, the number of juvenile arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses (murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) varied with the size of the juvenile population; that is to say, the arrest rate remained constant. In 1989, however, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate jumped to its highest level since the 1960's, the earliest period for which comparable data are available. The rate continued to climb each year thereafter until it reached a peak in 1994. In the 7-year period between 1988 and 1994, the rate surged 62%, straining the resources of the juvenile justice system and causing policymakers to ask what had changed.

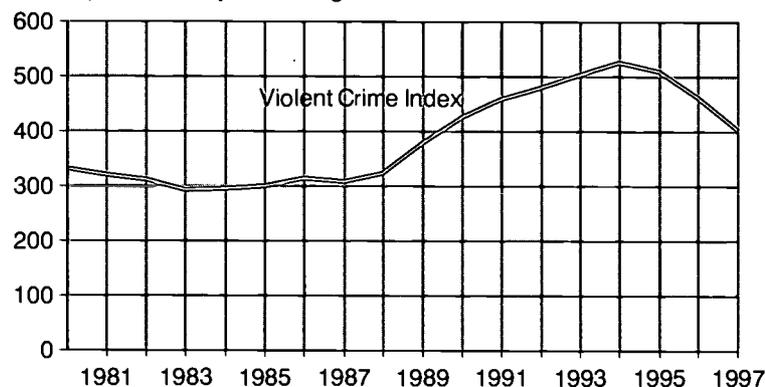
The rapid increase was followed by a rapid decline. By 1997, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate was at its lowest level in the 1990's: just 7% above the 1989 rate, but still 25% above the 1988 rate.

### The proportion of violent crimes cleared by juvenile arrest shows similar patterns

In 1980 and 1990, 11% of all violent crimes cleared by law enforcement were cleared by juvenile arrest. Between 1980 and 1990, this proportion first declined and then increased. The early 1990's saw the proportion grow to new levels, reaching a peak of 14% in 1994. By 1997, the proportion had dropped back to 12%: 1 in 8 violent crimes cleared was cleared by a juvenile arrest.

### The juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased dramatically in the late 1980's and early 1990's

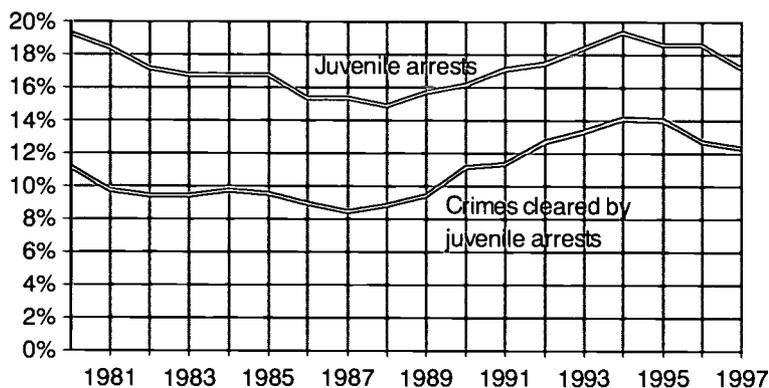
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



- After years of relative stability, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate began to increase in the late 1980's. After 1994, however, the rate declined; by 1997, it had returned to a level near that of 1989.

### As the juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate increased, so did the juvenile proportions of arrests and crimes cleared

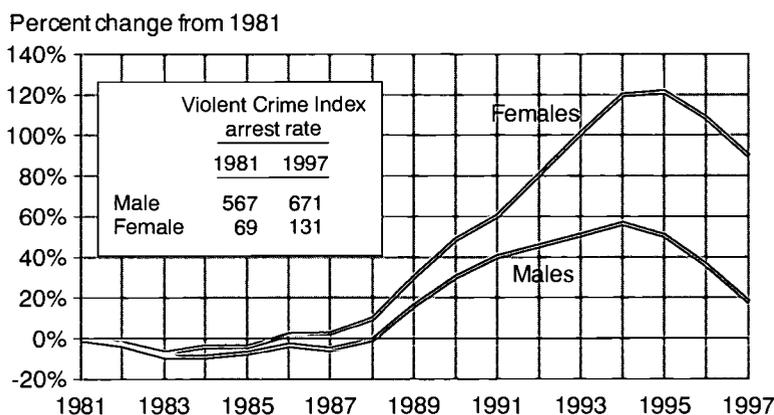
Percent of total



- In 1997, 17% of persons entering the justice system via arrest for an alleged violent crime were under age 18.
- Clearance statistics show that, between 1980 and 1997, adults (persons age 18 and over) were responsible each year for between 86% and 91% of all violent crime in the U.S.

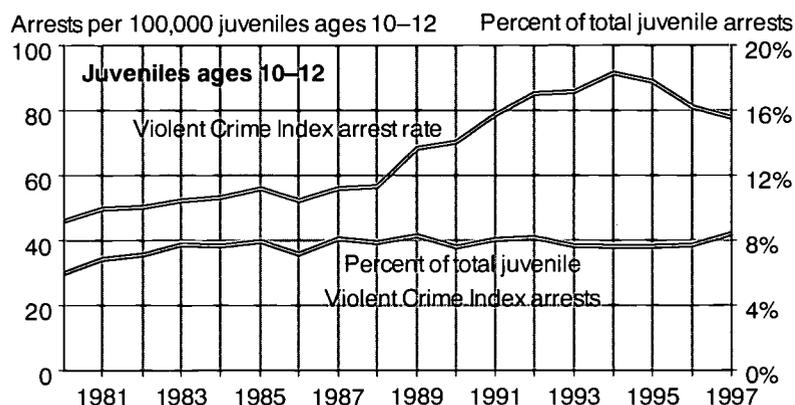
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

**Between 1987 and 1994, the female juvenile violent crime arrest rate more than doubled, while the male rate increased by two-thirds**



- Even though the juvenile violent crime arrest rates declined from 1994 to 1997 for both genders, the male rate in 1997 was still 24% above the 1987 rate and the female rate was 85% higher.
- Even with the large increase in female rates, the 1997 Violent Crime Index arrest rate for juvenile males was more than five times the female arrest rate.

**Between 1987 and 1994, the violent crime arrest rate for very young juveniles increased 63%, paralleling older juvenile trends**



- Although violent crime arrest rates for very young juveniles declined from 1994 to 1997, the 1997 rate was still 39% greater than the 1987 rate.
- The proportion of all juvenile violent crime arrests involving very young juveniles remained essentially constant in the 1980's and 1990's, an indication that arrest trends for very young juveniles paralleled those for older juveniles.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

**Increases in the female juvenile violent crime arrest rate out-paced increases in the male rate**

In 1981, the female juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate was 12% of the male rate. Between 1981 and 1997, both rates increased substantially but the increase was greater for females than for males. As a result, in 1997, the female rate was 20% of the male rate.

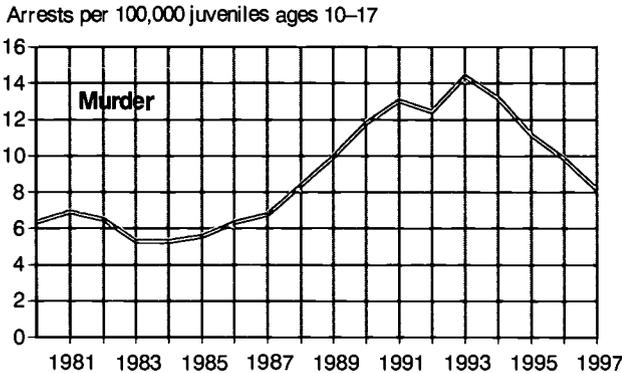
These differential changes in arrest rates for females and males changed the composition of violent offenders entering the juvenile justice system. States and local jurisdictions were faced not only with a growing number of violent juvenile offenders, but also with a disproportionate need for intervention services and placement alternatives designed to address problems unique to female offenders.

**Arrest trends for very young offenders paralleled those for older juveniles**

Very young offenders present unique service needs to the juvenile justice system. Between 1980 and 1994, the violent crime arrest rate for youth under age 13 nearly doubled. The absolute number of arrests for this age group is still rather small (e.g., an estimated 10,700 Violent Crime Index arrests in 1997, or 8% of all juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests). The relative rarity of such arrests (about 30 per day in the U.S.) indicates that most jurisdictions rarely require services that specifically address the developmental needs of very young offenders. The substantial growth in arrests in this age group, however, indicates that the scarce resources available for providing such services are more and more in demand.

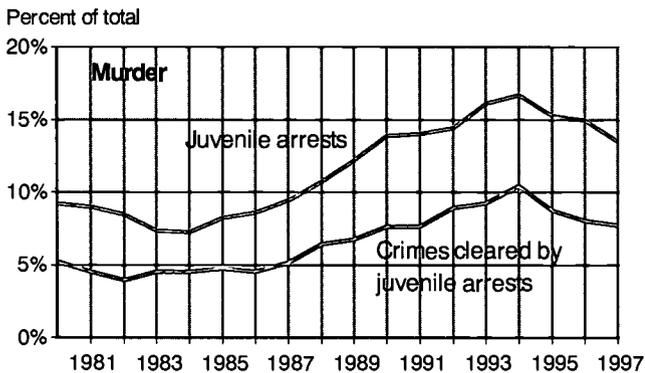
# Arrest and clearance trends differed across violent offenses

**The U.S. experienced an unprecedented doubling of the juvenile murder arrest rate between 1987 and 1993**



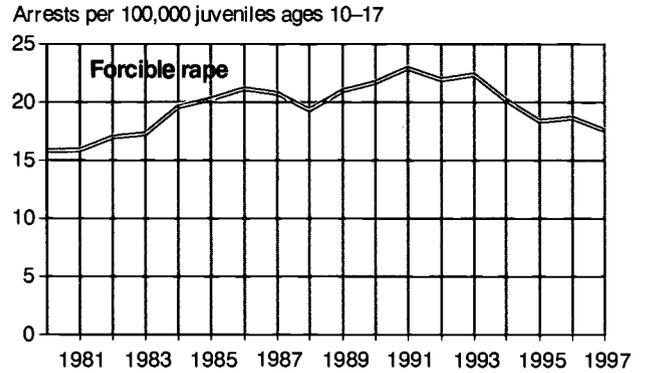
■ Nearly all of the increase that occurred between 1987 and 1993 was erased between 1994 and 1997. The 1997 juvenile murder arrest rate was the lowest in a decade: 3% below the 1988 rate.

**At the peak in 1994, juvenile arrests accounted for 17% of all murder arrests and 1 of every 10 murders cleared**



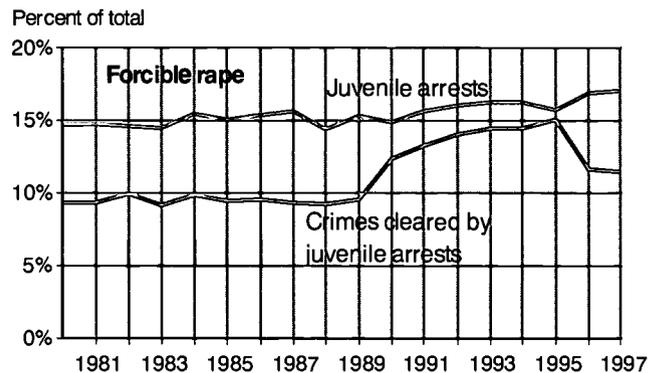
■ Although the drops were not as dramatic as that of the juvenile arrest rate for murder, the juvenile proportion of both murder arrests and murder clearances has also declined since 1994.

**In contrast to other violent crimes, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape did not show substantial growth between 1987 and 1994**



■ The juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape in 1997 was at its lowest level in more than a decade and was comparable to the rate in 1983.

**The juvenile proportion of forcible rape arrests was relatively consistent between 1980 and 1997**

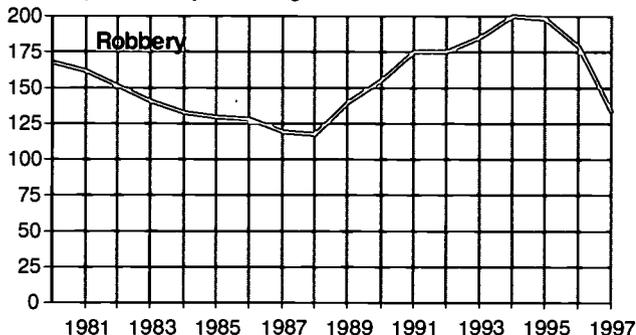


■ In contrast to the consistency of the arrest proportions, the juvenile proportion of forcible rape clearances increased between 1989 and 1995, then declined.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files]. Juvenile clearance proportions were adapted from the FBI's *Crime in the United States* series for the years 1980 through 1997.

**In 1997, the juvenile arrest rate for robbery was at the lowest level in the 1990's**

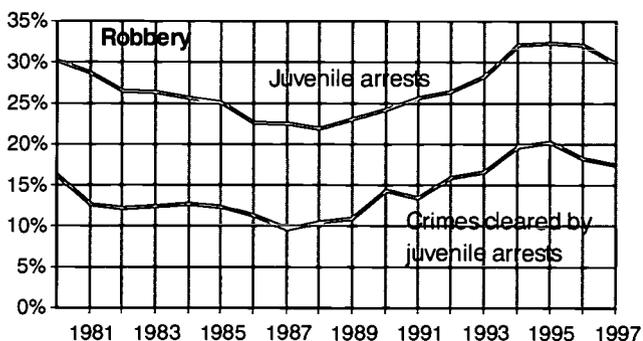
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



- The juvenile robbery arrest rate reached its peak in 1994. Within 3 years, however, it had fallen to near its lowest level in a generation.

**The juvenile proportions of arrests and clearances are higher for robbery than for any other Violent Crime Index offense**

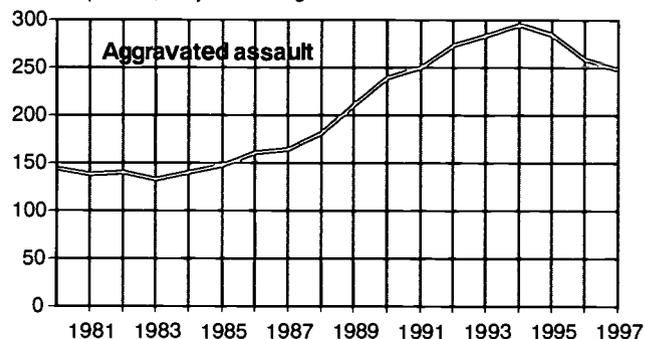
Percent of total



- In contrast to the relatively low level of the juvenile robbery arrest rate in 1997, the juvenile proportion of both robbery arrests and robbery clearances in 1997 was near its high point.

**The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault increased steadily between 1983 and 1994, up more than 120%**

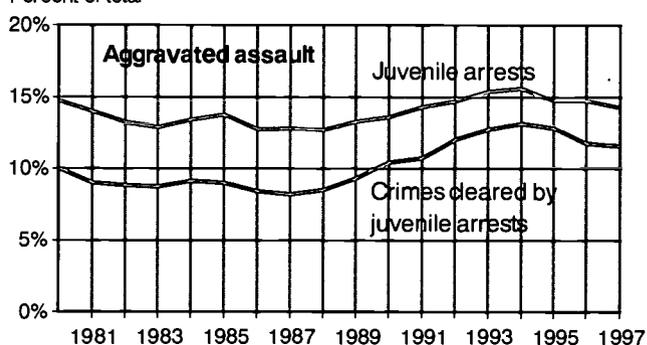
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



- The large increase in this arrest rate between the late 1980's and the early 1990's was the driving force in the overall growth of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests over this period.

**The juvenile proportion of aggravated assault arrests held relatively constant between 1980 and 1997**

Percent of total



- In contrast to arrest proportions, the juvenile proportion of aggravated assault clearances grew during 1980-1997. A constant arrest proportion and a growing clearance proportion imply either that fewer juveniles were being arrested in each incident or that more incidents were being cleared by a single arrest than in previous years.

# States with high juvenile property crime arrest rates in 1997 tend to have low violent crime arrest rates

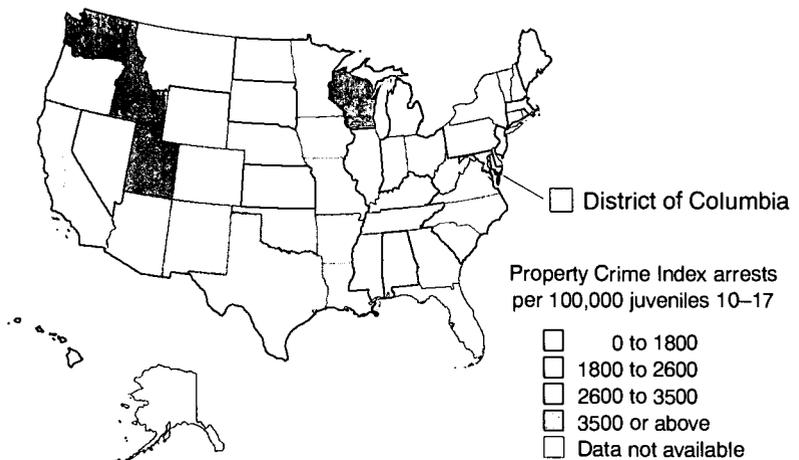
**The populous States of California, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia reported juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates below the national average in 1997**

State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17					State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17				
		Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson			Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Arson
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>2,338</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>1,653</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>33</b>	Missouri	60%	2,813	366	2,130	281	36
Alabama	94	1,385	225	1,082	74	5	Montana	39	1,608	240	1,210	150	9
Alaska	44	2,771	737	1,746	264	24	Nebraska	94	3,084	302	2,609	141	33
Arizona	85	3,274	543	2,374	316	41	Nevada	46	3,415	739	2,458	148	71
Arkansas	89	2,039	422	1,538	67	11	New Hampshire	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
California	99	2,096	580	1,197	283	37	New Jersey	96	1,943	347	1,434	117	45
Colorado	70	2,838	285	2,314	201	38	New Mexico	68	2,970	360	2,386	201	22
Connecticut	85	2,492	421	1,764	277	30	New York	46	1,935	426	1,339	135	35
Delaware	41	4,730	864	3,670	190	6	N. Carolina	99	1,875	494	1,259	95	28
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	N. Dakota	90	2,803	265	2,251	254	31
Florida	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Ohio	55	1,838	351	1,263	180	44
Georgia	33	2,390	444	1,646	264	35	Oklahoma	100	2,667	424	1,923	271	48
Hawaii	97	3,161	469	2,394	277	21	Oregon	87	3,491	496	2,628	293	74
Idaho	98	3,504	451	2,768	231	54	Pennsylvania	47	1,632	371	1,060	168	33
Illinois	23	2,964	372	1,706	859	26	Rhode Island	100	2,071	399	1,447	162	63
Indiana	57	2,283	252	1,768	239	25	S. Carolina	99	2,094	531	1,440	101	22
Iowa	82	2,282	299	1,810	148	25	S. Dakota	45	4,377	584	3,524	213	56
Kansas	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Tennessee	42	2,589	320	1,991	240	38
Kentucky	19	3,139	751	1,969	381	39	Texas	97	2,211	408	1,607	176	20
Louisiana	79	2,649	528	1,987	113	21	Utah	75	3,879	294	3,264	280	41
Maine	94	3,241	642	2,332	189	79	Vermont	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Maryland	100	2,792	560	1,714	479	38	Virginia	98	1,896	281	1,378	204	34
Massachusetts	83	963	223	615	111	14	Washington	61	4,259	608	3,333	265	53
Michigan	81	1,586	271	1,170	120	25	West Virginia	96	1,138	231	779	94	33
Minnesota	100	2,501	266	2,045	169	21	Wisconsin	76	4,429	552	3,372	459	45
Mississippi	37	2,445	588	1,669	171	17	Wyoming	98	2,675	261	2,237	146	31

NA = Arrest counts were not available for this State in *Crime in the United States 1997*.

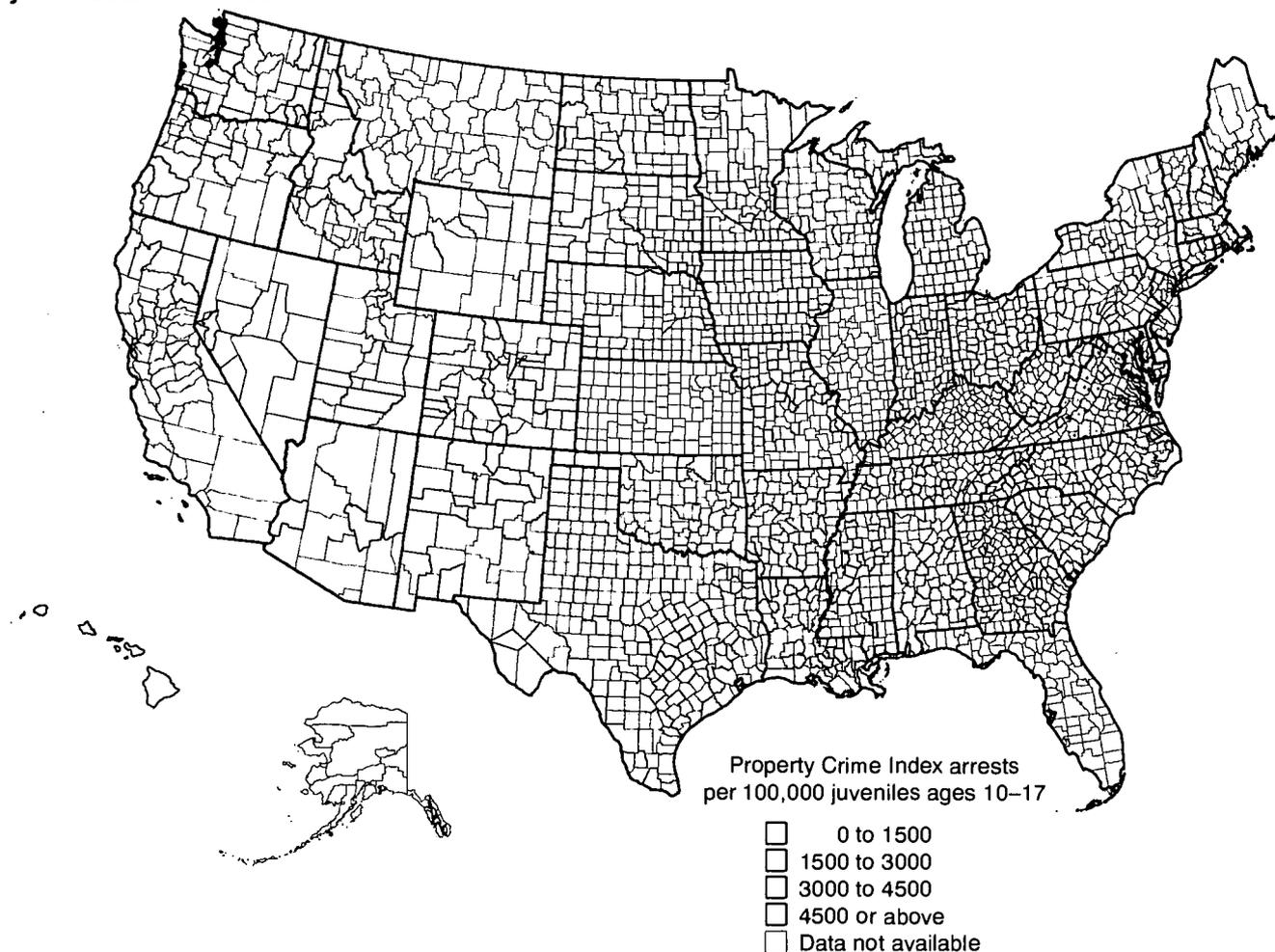
Notes: Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire State. In the map, rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their State's population did not report. Readers should consult the related technical note at the end of this chapter. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997* and population data from the Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1997* [machine-readable data file].



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**Property Crime Index arrest rates are good indicators of the relative flow of youth into the juvenile justice system in different counties**



Note: Rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of their county's population did not report.

Source: Authors' analysis of county-level arrest estimates from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research's *Uniform Crime Reporting Program data [United States]: County-level detailed arrest and offense data, 1996* [machine-readable data file] and population estimates from the Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of counties by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1996* [machine-readable data file].

**Property crime arrest rates are difficult to interpret**

The Property Crime Index is dominated by the high-volume crime category of larceny-theft offenses; for juveniles, shoplifting is the most common offense in this category. The Index also includes the crimes of home burglary, auto theft, and home arson—all very serious

crimes. Therefore, to assess the nature of juvenile property crimes within a jurisdiction, one must consider the components individually.

For example, in 1997, the overall juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate in California was 10% below the national average, while the State's juvenile arrest rate for burglary was 35% above the national average.

The low Property Crime Index arrest rate was tied to the State's relatively low larceny-theft arrest rate, which was 28% below the national average. In another example, the juvenile larceny-theft arrest rate in Maryland in 1997 was just 4% above the national average, while the State's juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft was more than double the national average.

## Juvenile property crime arrest rates changed little from 1980 to 1997, unlike violent crime arrest rates

**In 1997, the juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate was near its lowest level since the mid-1970's**

Property crime is a major portion of juvenile crime. About 1 in 3 juvenile arrests is for a property crime. Due to the sheer volume of property crime arrests, even small percent changes can translate into a large change in the actual number of cases entering the juvenile justice system.

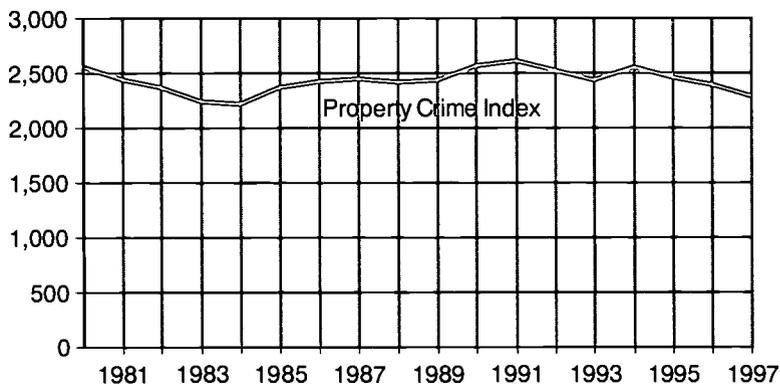
To monitor changes in juvenile property crime arrests, the FBI developed the Property Crime Index, four offenses that are commonly reported and commonly defined across the Nation. These crime groupings (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson) include both serious and nonserious offenses. For juveniles, about half of all Property Crime Index arrests are for shoplifting or minor thefts.

In recent years, violent and property crime arrest trends followed different paths. The juvenile property crime arrest rate held relatively constant, while juvenile violent crime arrest rates soared. In fact, in 1997, the juvenile property crime arrest rate was just 3% above the lowest level in the last 20 years.

If arrests parallel crime trends, then it appears that change in one aspect of delinquent behavior does not imply changes in other areas. That is, in a given community, juvenile violence can increase while other criminal behavior does not.

**The juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses varied within a limited range over the past two decades**

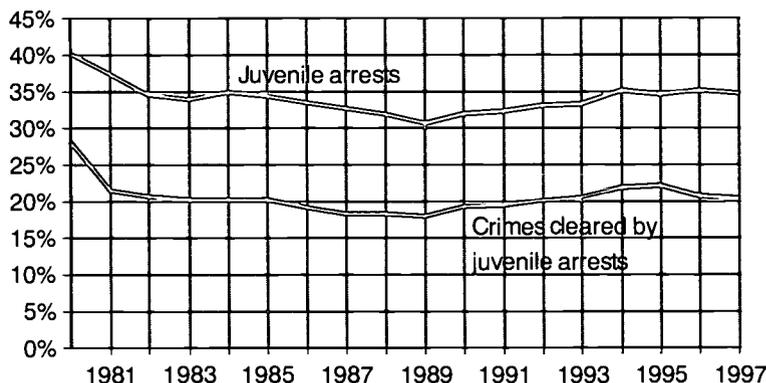
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- Controlling for the varying size of the juvenile population in the U.S., law enforcement agencies made fewer juvenile arrests for property crimes in 1997 than in any year since 1984.

**In 1997, juveniles were involved in 35% of all property crime arrests, a proportion comparable to that throughout the 1980's and 1990's**

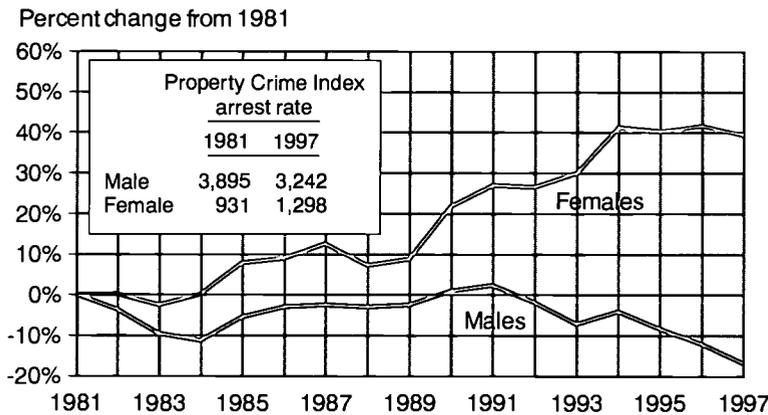
Percent of total



- Similar to the pattern for arrest proportions, the juvenile proportion of property crime clearances in 1997 (23%) was typical of the levels in the 1980's and the 1990's.

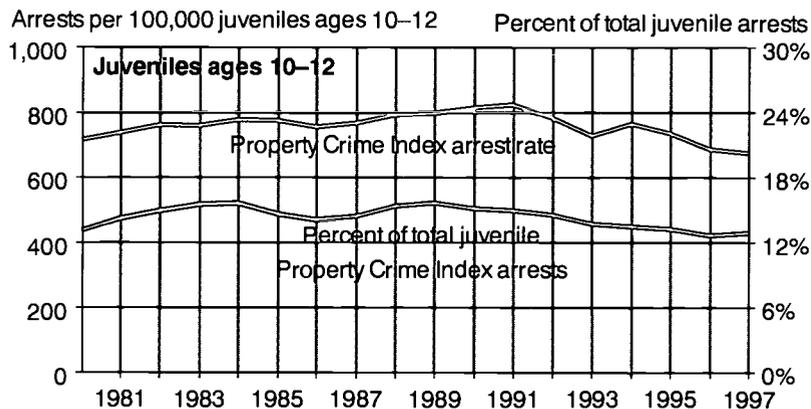
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

### While juvenile male arrest rates for Property Crime Index offenses declined during the 1990's, the female rate increased



- Between 1981 and 1997, male juvenile property crime rates declined 17%, while female rates increased 39%.

### Unlike the increasing arrest rate for violent crimes, the property crime arrest rate for very young juveniles remained relatively consistent from 1980 through 1997



- The Property Crime Index arrest rate for persons ages 10–12 was 8% lower in 1997 than in 1980. This decline paralleled the drop in the property crime arrest rate for older juveniles.
- In both 1980 and in 1997, 13% of all juveniles arrested for a Property Crime Index offense were under age 13.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

### The female proportion of juvenile property crime arrests increased during the 1990's

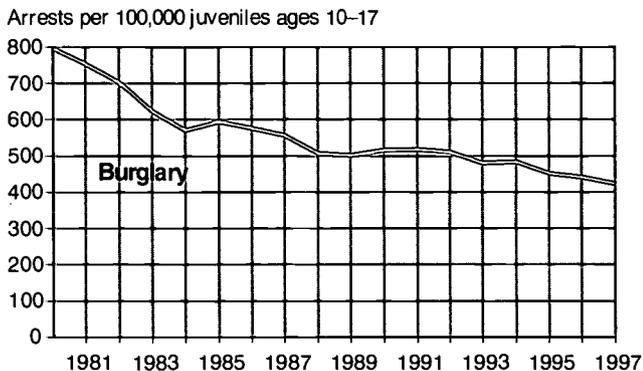
In 1997, property crime arrests accounted for about 1 in 3 female juvenile arrests. The bulk of these arrests (more than 3 in 4) was for larceny-theft, primarily shoplifting. In 1997, on average, over 600 females under age 18 were arrested daily for a property crime.

The female proportion of juvenile property crime arrests has increased over the past two decades. In 1981, the female Property Crime Index arrest rate was 24% of the male rate. Between 1981 and 1997, the female rate increased while the male rate declined. As a result, in 1997, the female Property Crime Index arrest rate was 40% of the male rate.

Many of the juveniles entering the justice system are charged with property offenses, and the disproportionate increase in female arrests for property offenses has changed the composition of this large group. Local juvenile justice systems have seen little change in demand for the types of services required by male property offenders. In contrast, the increase in female involvement in both property and violent offenses has increased the demand for intervention services and placement alternatives that address problems unique to young female offenders.

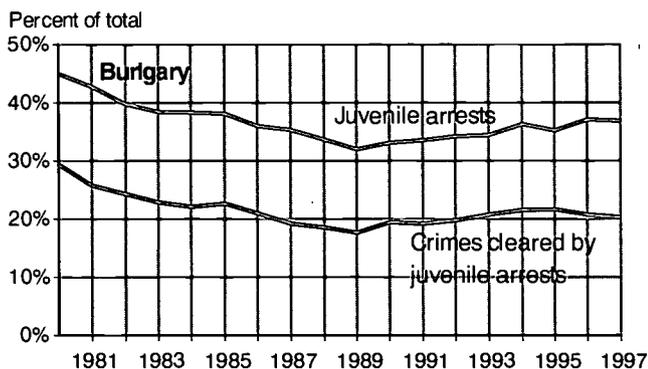
# As with violent offenses, juvenile arrest trends differed across property offense categories

**The juvenile arrest rate for burglary declined consistently between 1980 and 1997; the 1997 rate was about half the 1980 rate**



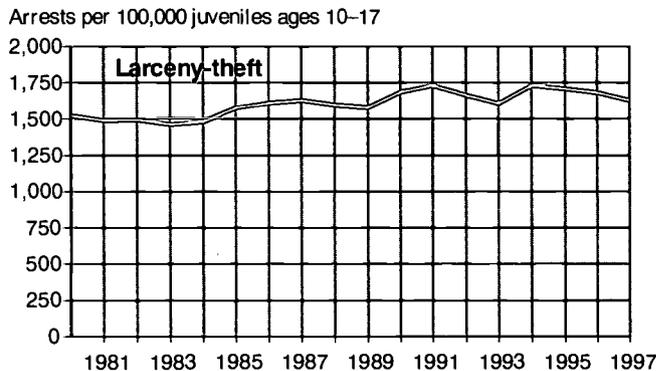
■ The burglary arrest rate declined 36% between 1980 and 1988, remained constant for a few years, and then dropped by another 17% between 1992 and 1997.

**The juvenile proportion of burglary arrests declined throughout the 1980's, then increased gradually during the 1990's**



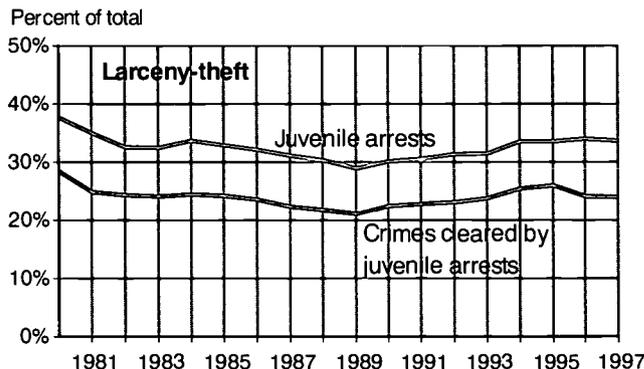
■ Even with recent increases, the juvenile proportion of burglary arrests in 1997 was still below the levels of the early 1980's.

**Compared with other offense categories, the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft remained constant through the 1980's and 1990's**



■ Larceny-theft offenses, which include shoplifting and thefts of bicycles and automotive accessories, are defined as the stealing of property without the use of force, violence, or fraud.

**The juvenile proportion of arrests for larceny-theft in 1997 was comparable to the levels of the early 1980's**

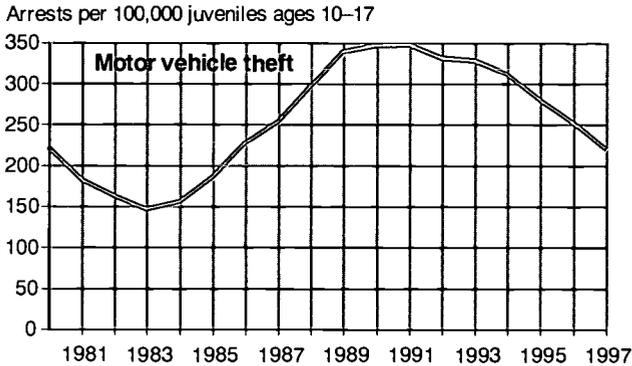


■ Between 1980 and 1997, about 1 in 3 persons arrested for larceny-theft was under age 18, and about 1 in 4 larceny-thefts cleared was cleared by the arrest of a juvenile.

Note: Arson clearance data were first reported in 1981.

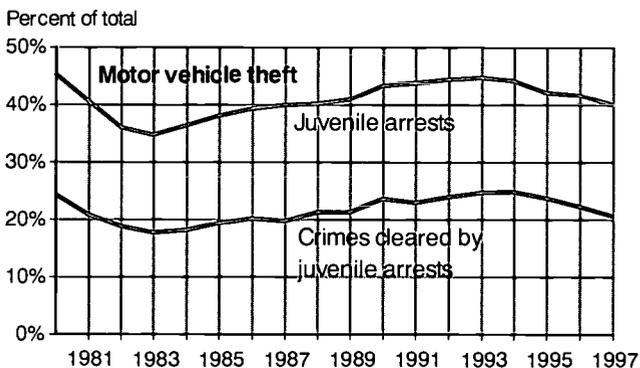
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files]. Juvenile clearance proportions were adapted from the FBI's *Crime in the United States* series for the years 1980 through 1997.

**Unlike larceny-theft, juvenile arrest rates for motor vehicle theft soared between 1984 and 1989, then decreased through the 1990's**



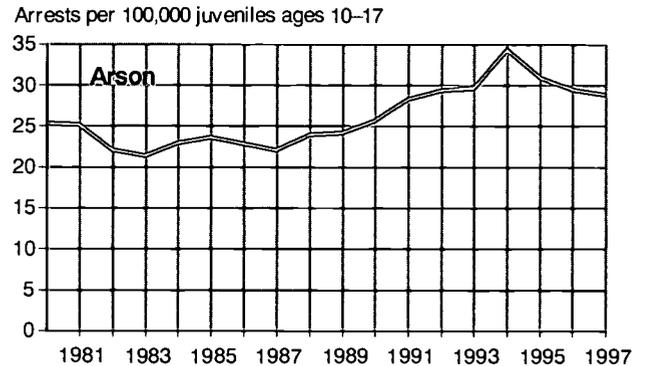
■ The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft increased 130% between 1983 and 1989. The decline in the 1990's resulted in a 1997 arrest rate that was 50% above the 1983 low point and equal to the 1980 rate.

**Between 1980 and 1997, the juvenile proportion of arrests for motor vehicle theft varied between 35% and 45%**



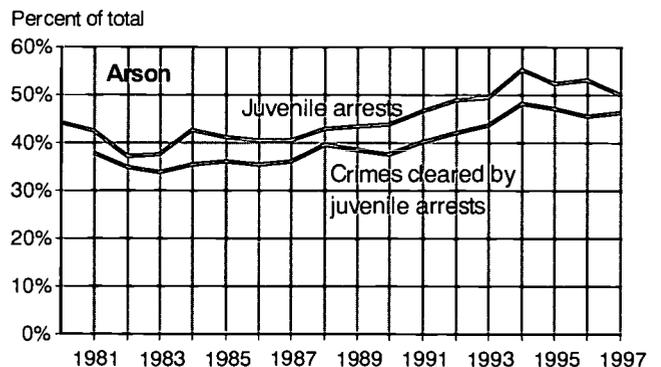
■ The juvenile proportion of clearances for motor vehicle theft fluctuated between 18% and 25% between 1980 and 1997, with the 1997 level nearing the average for the prior two decades.

**After remaining relatively constant in the 1980's, the juvenile arrest rate for arson increased more than 40% between 1989 and 1994**



■ By 1997, half of the increase in the juvenile arrest rate for arson between 1989 and 1994 had been erased.

**From the early 1980's through the mid-1990's, the juvenile proportion of arson arrests and arson clearances grew**



■ Juveniles are responsible for a greater proportion of arson offenses than of any other crime in the Property Crime Index. In 1997, juveniles accounted for 50% of all arson arrests and 46% of all arson clearances.

## Can future juvenile crime trends be predicted?

### In the early 1990's, there were predictions of a coming wave of "superpredators"

Juvenile violent crime trends of the late 1980's and the early 1990's led some to conclude that the nature of juvenile violence had changed and that a new breed of juveniles—the superpredator—was now a threat to U.S. society. These were juveniles for whom violence was a way of life—new delinquents unlike youth of past generations. Many accepted this concept. Nearly every State changed its laws to make it easier to handle more youth as adult criminals. The fear of a new breed of juvenile delinquent even led many to wonder if the juvenile justice system itself was obsolete. In the mid-1990's, this fear was heightened by the realization that the juvenile population would increase into the next decade. More juveniles meant more superpredators.

### What evidence do crime statistics offer for superpredators?

The most common crimes juveniles commit are property offenses. If there were a change in the nature of juvenile offending in the last decade, it should generate changes in juvenile property crime arrests. The juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses, however, changed little in the 1980's and 1990's.

There is evidence that juvenile violence did increase for a few years in the early 1990's. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) found that after years of stability the rate of juvenile serious violence did increase in the early 1990's—breaking out of its historic range to a level well above that of past generations.

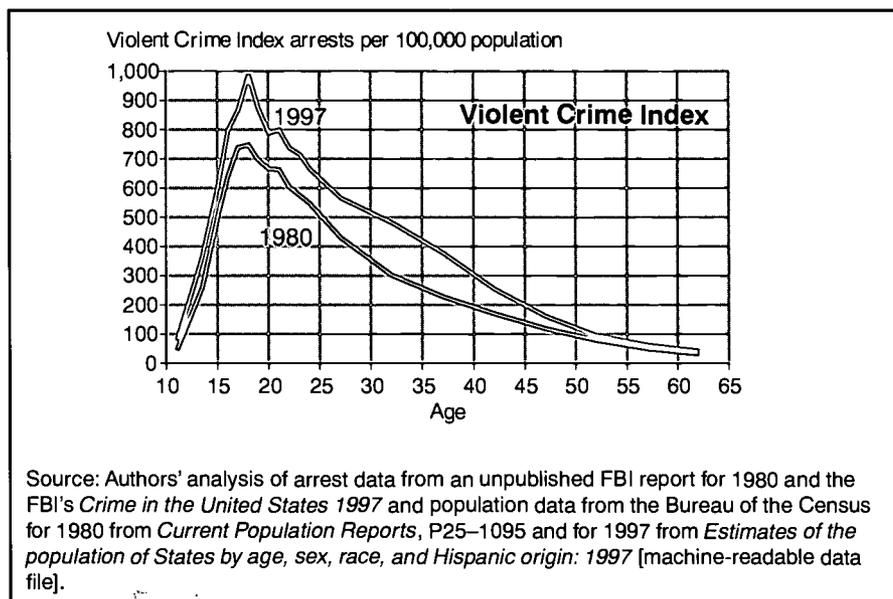
The NCVS data also show, however, that by 1995, the rate had returned to its traditional level. Rather than providing evidence for development of a juvenile superpredator, the NCVS data indicate that, despite a temporary increase, the rate of serious juvenile offending as of the mid-1990's was comparable to that of a generation ago.

The large increase in juvenile violent crime arrest rates reported by law enforcement agencies between 1988 and 1994 is the data most commonly cited as evidence for a new breed of violent superpredator. The increase in the juvenile violent crime arrest rate was much greater than the increase in serious juvenile offending documented by the NCVS. NCVS data indicate that serious juvenile offending returned to traditional levels by 1995, but the juvenile violent crime arrest rate did not follow this pattern. Even after a large decline that began in 1994, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate in 1997 was still far above levels of the early and middle 1980's.

### Violent crime arrest rates increased for all age groups

To understand disparities between NCVS data and arrest data, it is necessary to analyze arrest rate trends for all age groups, not just for juveniles. Age-based patterns for Violent Crime Index arrest rates are similar in 1980 and 1997. In both years, the rates reach their peak in the late teens and early twenties and decline consistently and substantially through the older age groups. For all age groups, however, the 1997 rate is higher than the 1980 rate. (See Violent Crime Index graph.)

The data show that, in the 1990's, the Nation experienced an overall increase in violent crime arrest rates among all age groups, not just juveniles. It is hard to use the superpredator argument to explain this broad-based increase in violent crime arrests. The age group with the greatest increase in violent crime arrest rates is persons in their thirties and forties. No one has argued that there is a new breed of middle-aged superpredator, but the



data provide more support for that conclusion than for the concept of a juvenile superpredator.

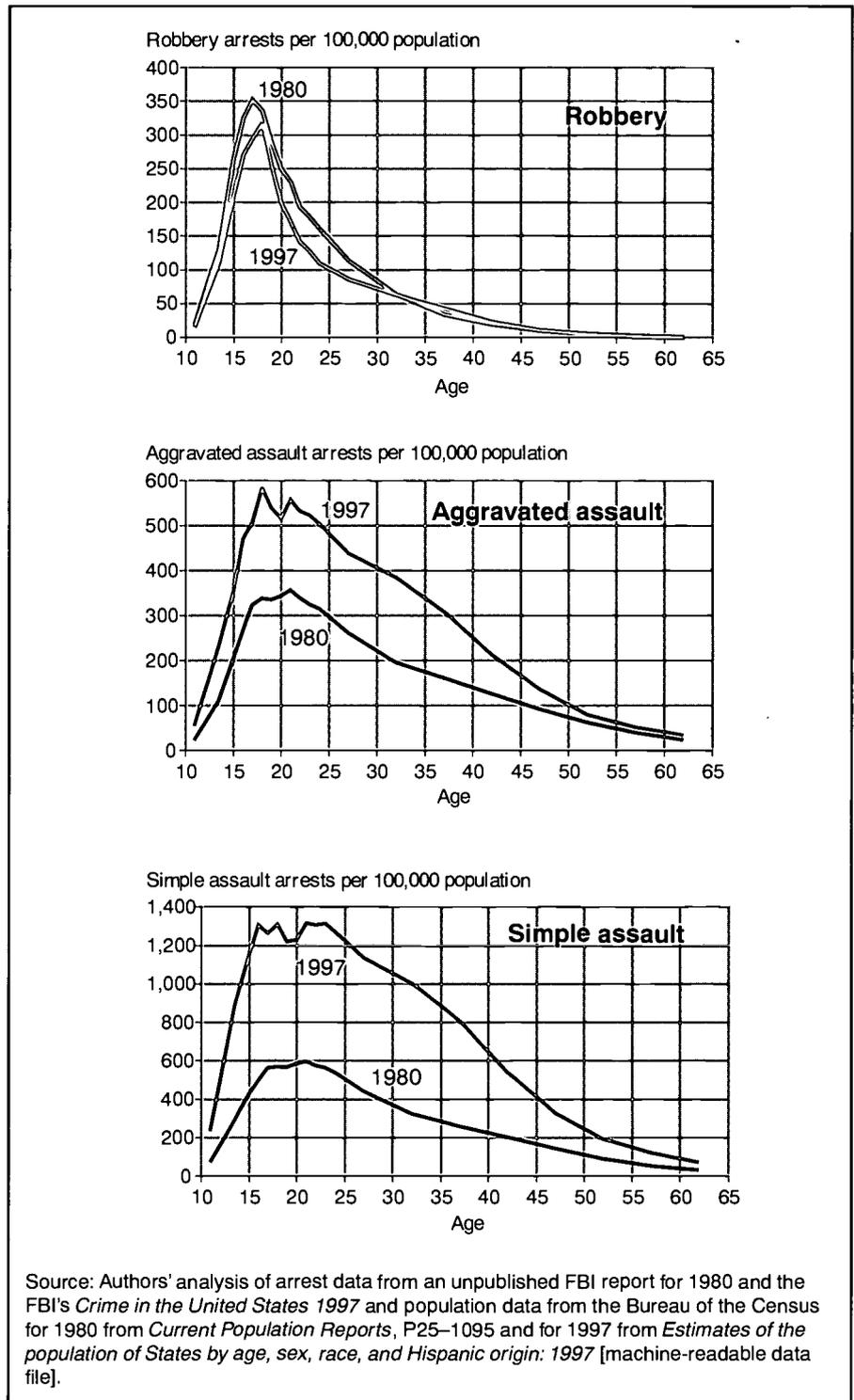
To explore further the disparities between NCVS data and arrest data, it is necessary to analyze age-specific arrest rate trends for the individual offenses that comprise the Violent Crime Index. Most arrests for violent crimes are for robberies and aggravated assaults. The arrest rates for these two offenses have different trends.

The 1997 robbery arrest rates are lower than the 1980 rates in nearly all age groups. Therefore, robberies are not responsible for the overall increase in violent crime arrest rates during 1980–1997. (See robbery graph.)

In contrast to robberies, aggravated assault arrest rates increased substantially between 1980 and 1997 for all age groups. (See aggravated assault graph.) Aggravated assault arrests clearly are the driving force for the overall increase in violent crime arrest rates.

Some have speculated that the increase in aggravated assault rates was due to law enforcement reclassification of simple assaults as aggravated assaults. This does not appear to be the case, because simple assault rates also increased substantially during 1980–1997 for all age groups. (See simple assault graph.)

As with the increase in the overall violent crime arrest rate, the increase for aggravated assault was found in all age groups and was, in fact, highest among persons in their thirties and forties. Again, the juvenile superpredator theory is not the most straightforward explanation for the pattern of increase.



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### **Arrest rate trends reflect changes in public attitudes and law enforcement policy**

Any explanation of the changes in violent crime arrests between 1980 and 1997 must accommodate certain facts. It must explain why:

- Juvenile violent crime arrest rates were higher in 1997 than in 1980 even though victims' reports of juvenile violent crime did not increase during this period.
- Aggravated and simple assault arrest rates increased, but robbery arrest rates did not.
- Assault arrest rates increased in all age groups.

Other arrest data point to some possible explanations.

After years of consistency, juvenile arrests for curfew law violations increased markedly from 1993 to 1996. It is unlikely that more youth were violating curfew in 1996 than in 1993. Some communities, however, decided that keeping youth off the streets would reduce juvenile violence. As a result, law enforcement began arresting more juveniles for curfew violations. The increase in juvenile arrests for curfew violations

reflects a change in public attitude and a resulting law enforcement response, not a change in juvenile behavior.

Another example of this process can be found in arrests for drug law violations. Juvenile drug abuse arrest rates nearly doubled between 1992 and 1996. Self-report studies do not indicate a large change in drug use among youth during this period. Since most of the increase in drug abuse arrests was attributable to arrests for marijuana possession, it seems clear that communities became more concerned about marijuana use among youth and that law enforcement, responding to this concern, arrested more juveniles for this offense.

There was a societal change during this period that arguably could have caused increases in assault arrest rates (particularly for middle-aged persons) without affecting robbery arrest rates. During this period, legislative and policy changes required a formal law enforcement response to domestic violence incidents. This change would have resulted in more aggravated and simple assault arrests, but no additional robbery arrests. It would have had its great-

est impact on the arrests for middle-age persons. It also would have caused arrests to increase without a change in victim-reported crime levels.

Therefore, one could explain the increase in violent crime arrest rates between 1980 and 1997 by an increase in law enforcement response to the crime of domestic violence. Society has become more sensitive to problems caused by domestic violence and has chosen to no longer ignore a crime that has been a part of American culture for generations. Juveniles are not immune to domestic violence arrests. Family problems, even some that in past years may have been classified as status offenses (e.g., incorrigibility), can now result in an assault arrest. This logic also explains why violent crime arrests over the past decade have increased proportionately more for juvenile females than males.

In summary, arrest increases are not always related to an increase in crime. They can reflect positive policy changes. Regardless, it is clear that national crime and arrest statistics provide no evidence for a new breed of juvenile superpredator.

### Growth in murders by juveniles is linked to weapon use

The large growth in juvenile arrests for murder between 1987 and 1993 was not due to changes in police response. There was an actual increase in homicides by juveniles. This increase, however, can be explained by factors other than the advent of juvenile superpredators.

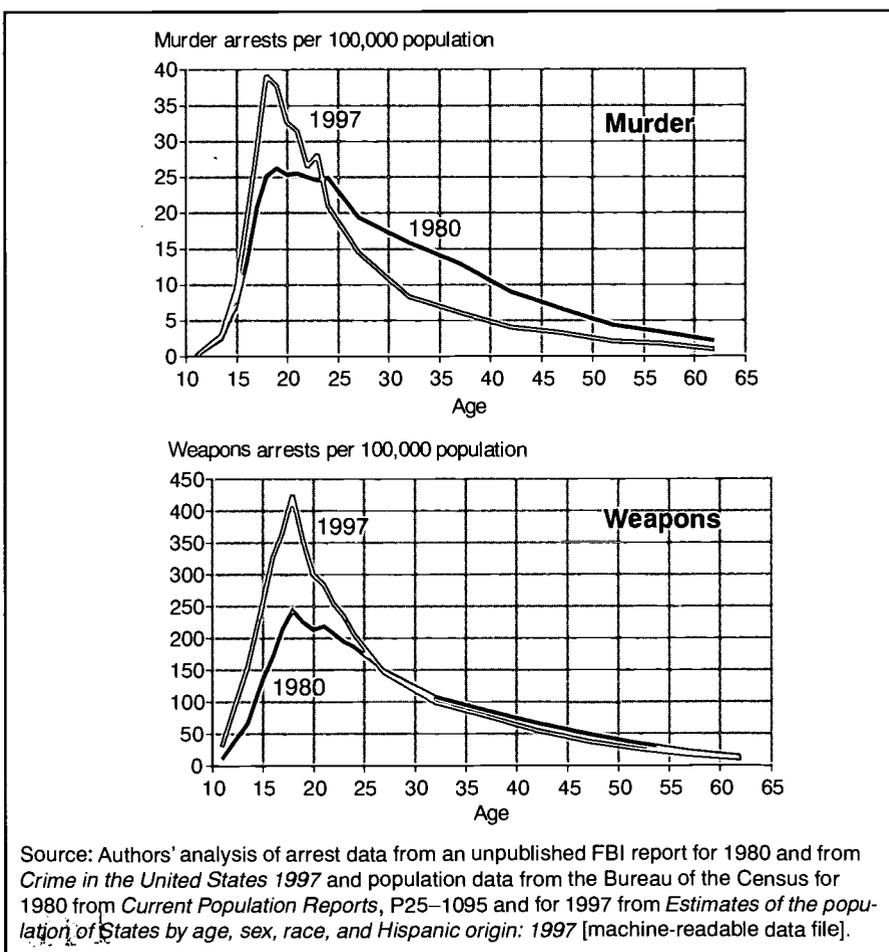
Nearly all of the increase in the juvenile arrest rate for murder that occurred between 1987 and 1993 was erased by 1997. In fact, the murder rate in the U.S. in 1997 was lower than it had been since the 1960's. This trend raises another question about the superpredator theory. If the increase in juvenile homicides between 1987 and 1993 is explained by the development of a new breed of juvenile superpredator, then what explains the substantial decline after 1994? Nothing in the superpredator notion would predict such a decline.

Relevant to an understanding of juvenile murder arrest trends is the link between murder rates and weapon use. The relationship of the murder age-arrest curves for 1980 and 1997 is very different from the relationship for assaults and more similar to that for weapons law violations. (See murder graph and weapons graph.) For assaults, rates were higher in 1997 than in 1980 for all age groups. For murders, the rates were lower in 1997 than in 1980 for all persons above age 25, but there were substantial increases in murder rates among juveniles and young adults. The age-specific arrest rate trend profile for weapons violations is comparable to that for murder, showing large increases for juveniles and young adults.

Further evidence concerning the link between juvenile murder arrest trends and weapons use can be found in the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Report data, which show that the overall trend in homicides by juveniles—the increase from the mid-1980's through 1993 and the subsequent decline through 1997—is entirely attributable to homicides committed with firearms. This finding also argues against the existence of juvenile superpredators. Superpredators probably would not be selective about how they kill. They would use any weapon available—guns, knives, clubs, fists, motor vehicles, explosive devices. If superpredators were responsible for the

increase in juvenile murder arrests, then there would be increases in murders in all weapons categories. But this is not the case: the increase was firearm-related, as was the subsequent decline. Trends in juvenile homicide arrests are linked to gun use (as reflected in trends in weapons-related arrests).

In summary, this analysis of juvenile homicide arrests also leads to the conclusion that juvenile superpredators are more myth than reality. In the early 1990's this myth caused a panic that changed the juvenile justice system and its response to the Nation's youth.



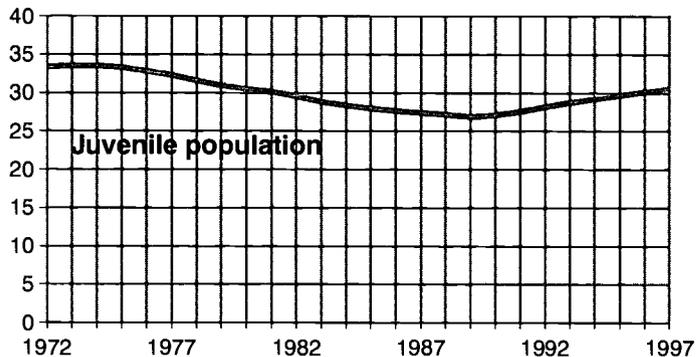
### Changes in juvenile violent crime arrests are not closely tied to changes in the juvenile population

History shows that it is a fool's errand to try to predict future crime trends. The first edition of this publication series, using 1992 data, speculated about future juvenile violence. Assuming that the arrest rate would continue to grow as it had in the previous 5 years or that the rate would hold constant, increased juvenile violence was anticipated. Some researchers even predicted a coming bloodbath. Since these predictions, murders by juveniles have declined remarkably, and the juvenile violent crime arrest rate in 1997 was at its lowest level in the 1990's.

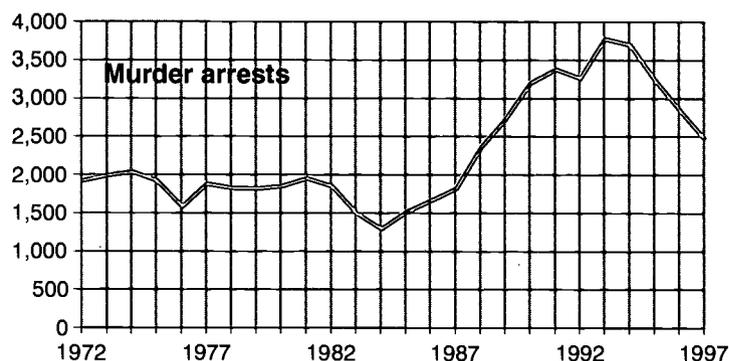
It would be simple to predict the future if juvenile violent crime trends were primarily related to changes in the size of the juvenile population. But as recent arrest trends clearly show, the number of juvenile arrests for violent crimes is unrelated to the size of the juvenile population. From 1987 to 1994, while the juvenile population grew slightly, juvenile arrests for violent crime soared. Then, as the juvenile population increased slightly from 1994 through 1997, juvenile arrests dropped precipitously. In fact, the magnitude of the decline in violent crime arrests in the 3-year period between 1994 and 1997 was greater than the projected growth in the juvenile population over the next 20 years.

No one has been able to predict juvenile violence trends accurately. It is clear, however, that the Nation is not doomed to high levels of juvenile violence simply because the juvenile population will increase. As Attorney General Janet Reno has often said, demography is not destiny. Most of the violent juvenile offenders in the year 2010 have not yet even entered grade school. Current and future social and policy changes will have more effect on juvenile violent crime and arrest trends than will population changes.

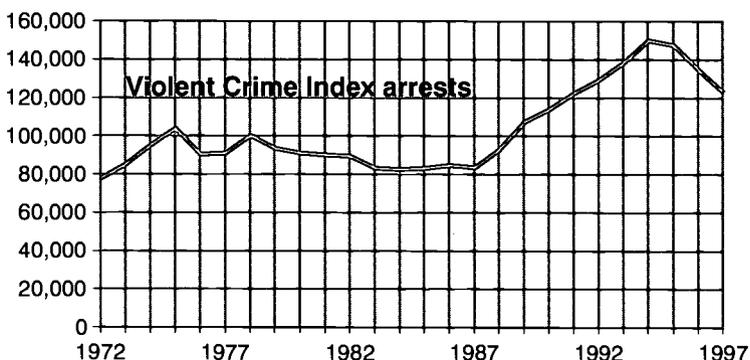
Population (in millions) of juveniles ages 10–17



Juvenile murder arrests



Juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests

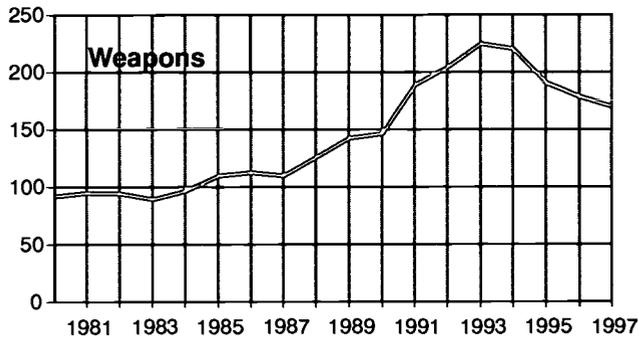


Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997; population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25-1095, and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

## What are the juvenile arrest rate trends for offenses other than Violent and Property Crime Index offenses?

**The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations doubled in the 6-year period between 1987 and 1993**

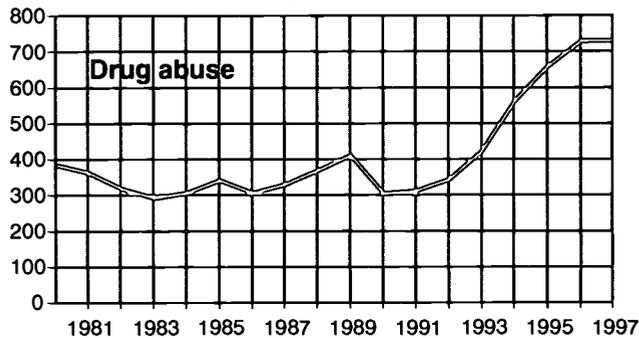
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- The decline between 1993 and 1997 brought the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations to its lowest level since 1990, but the rate was still 55% above the 1987 level.

**After more than a decade of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased more than 70% between 1993 and 1997**

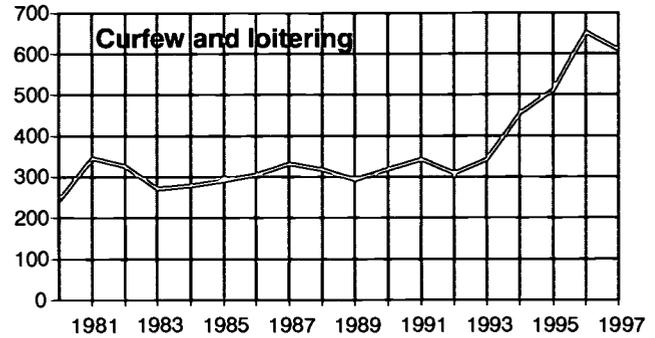
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- Of juveniles arrested for drug abuse violations, 64% were white, 16% were age 14 or younger, and 13% were female.
- The large increase in arrests occurred during a period when self-report data show only small changes in the use of drugs by juveniles.

**After years of stability, the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations nearly doubled between 1993 and 1996, and then fell in 1997**

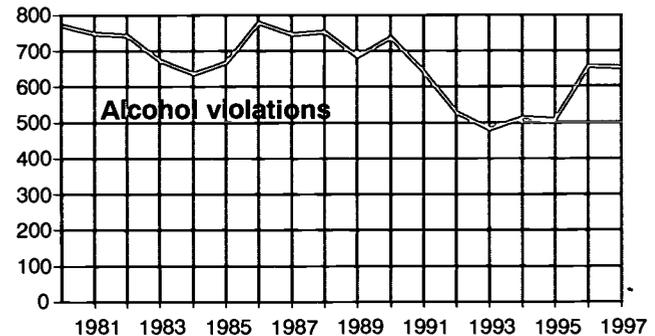
Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- Between 1993 and 1997, the increase in the juvenile arrest rate for curfew and loitering violations was greater for females (88%) than for males (66%).

**The 1996 increase in the juvenile arrest rate for alcohol-related offenses came after a general pattern of decline over the prior 10 years**

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10–17



- Alcohol-related crimes include liquor law violations, drunkenness, and driving under the influence.
- The juvenile arrest rate for alcohol-related crimes increased 29% between 1995 and 1996, then remained the same in 1997. The 1996–1997 rate was still 11% below the 1990 rate.

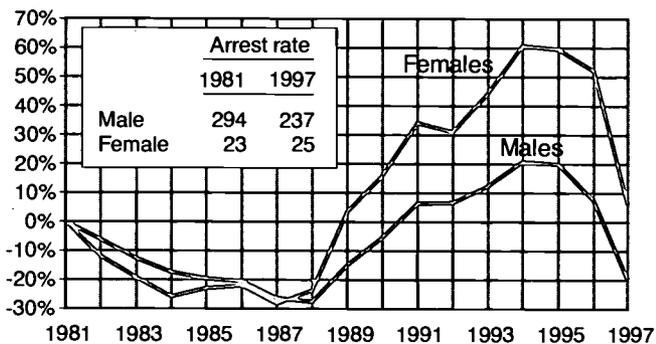
Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095 and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

# The increase in juvenile arrest rates since 1981 has been greater for females than for males

**Juvenile male arrest rates and female arrest rates for robbery peaked in 1994 and fell sharply thereafter**

## Robbery

Percent change from 1981

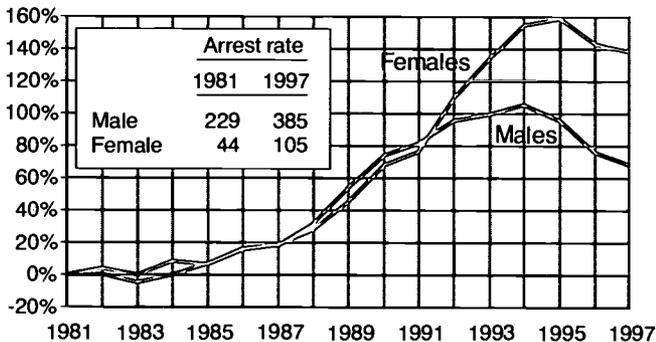


■ The male arrest rate in 1997 was 20% below the 1981 rate, while the female rate increased slightly.

**While male arrest rates for aggravated assault leveled off between 1992 and 1995, female arrest rates continued to increase**

## Aggravated assault

Percent change from 1981



- In 1997, male arrest rates for aggravated assault were nearly four times the female rates.
- Between 1981 and 1997, female arrest rates increased twice as much as male rates increased.

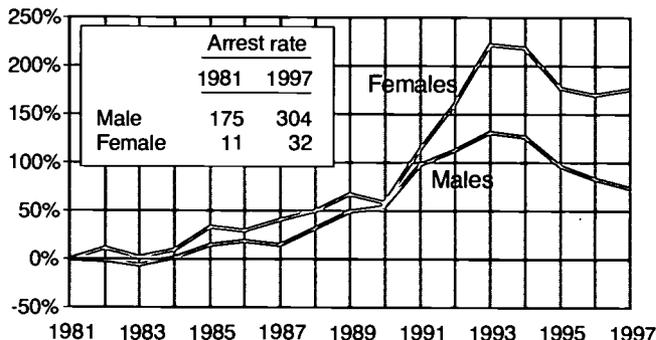
Note: Arrest rates are arrests per 100,000 males or females ages 10–17.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095 and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

**Female arrest rates for weapons law violations nearly tripled between 1981 and 1997, while the male rate nearly doubled**

## Weapons

Percent change from 1981

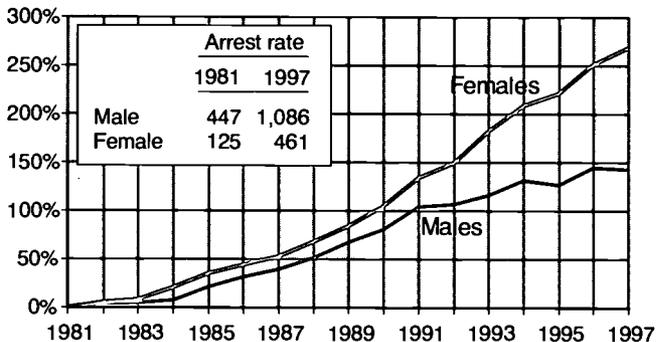


■ Even with its greater increase, the female rate in 1997 was only 10% of the male rate.

**Since 1981, the female arrest rate for simple assault has increased more sharply than the male rate**

## Simple assault

Percent change from 1981

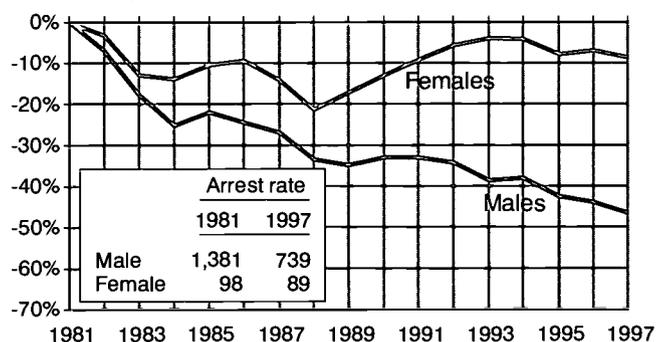


■ In 1997, the female arrest rate for simple assault was about 40% of the male rate, while in 1981 it was only 28% of the male rate.

**While juvenile male arrest rates for burglary declined substantially between 1981 and 1997, the female rate remained relatively constant**

### Burglary

Percent change from 1981

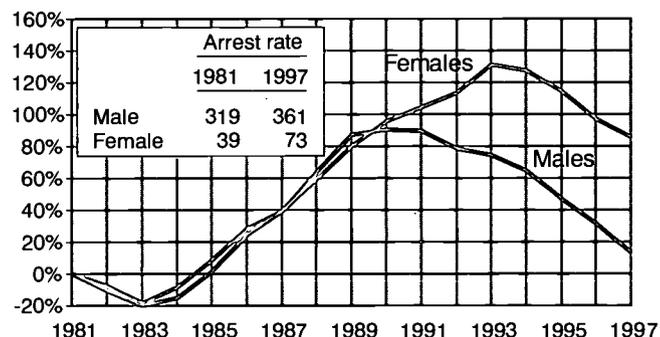


- Even after its large decline, the male rate was still more than eight times the female rate in 1997.

**Both the male and female arrest rates for motor vehicle theft increased during the 1980's and have decreased in the 1990's**

### Motor vehicle theft

Percent change from 1981

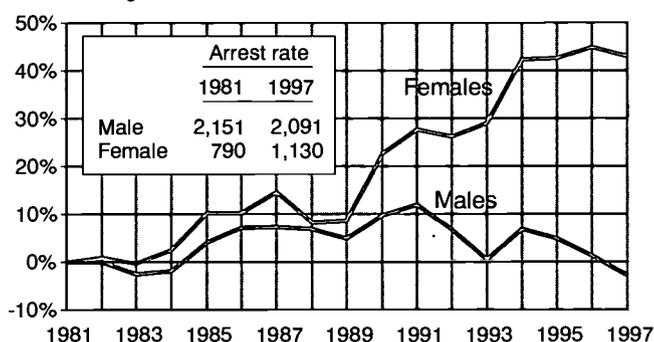


- While the male rate in 1997 was near its lowest level in two decades, the female rate in 1997 was twice its lowest level.

**While male arrest rates for larceny theft remained essentially constant between 1981 and 1997, the female rate grew by 40%**

### Larceny-theft

Percent change from 1981

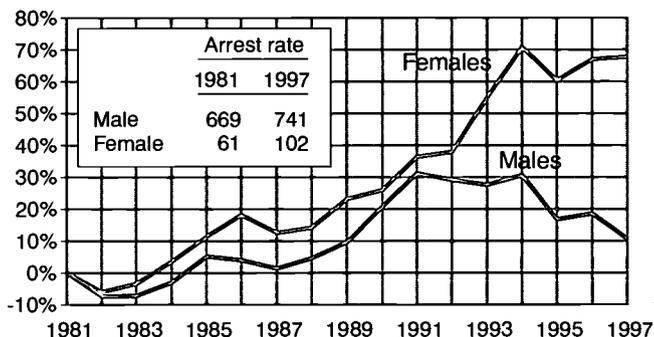


- In 1997, the male arrest rate for larceny-theft was less than twice the female rate.

**While male arrest rates for vandalism declined after 1991, female arrest rates continued to increase**

### Vandalism

Percent change from 1981



- Female arrests represent a small proportion of all vandalism arrests, but because of the much larger growth in female arrest rates than in male arrest rates between 1981 and 1997, that proportion grew from 9% to 14%.

Note: Arrest rates are arrests per 100,000 males or females ages 10–17.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from unpublished FBI reports for 1980 through 1994 and the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1995, 1996, and 1997 and population data from the Bureau of the Census for 1980 through 1989 from *Current Population Reports*, P25–1095 and for 1990 through 1997 from *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990–1997* [machine-readable data files].

## About 1 in 11 juveniles arrested in 1997 was under age 13

### The proportion of juvenile arrests involving very young juveniles has been relatively constant since 1980

Most serious offense	1997 arrest estimates	1997 percent female	Juveniles younger than age 13		
			Percent of total juvenile arrests		
			1980	1990	1997
<b>Total</b>	<b>253,100</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Violent Crime Index</b>	<b>10,700</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	<50	5	2	1	1
Forcible rape	700	3	4	10	12
Robbery	2,600	11	5	6	6
Aggravated assault	7,400	17	8	9	10
<b>Property Crime Index</b>	<b>91,200</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
Burglary	16,400	12	11	14	12
Larceny-theft	68,900	31	15	17	14
Motor vehicle theft	2,500	18	4	4	4
Arson	3,400	9	32	37	35
<b>Nonindex</b>					
Simple assault	30,600	23	12	14	13
Forgery and counterfeiting	200	32	3	5	2
Fraud	500	33	5	5	4
Embezzlement	<50	31	4	5	2
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	2,200	13	6	6	6
Vandalism	25,100	10	22	22	18
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	4,400	12	6	6	8
Prostitution and commercialized vice	<50	24	1	3	3
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	3,300	9	11	19	19
Drug abuse violations	4,500	22	2	2	2
Gambling	<50	4	2	4	2
Offenses against family and children	1,000	37	31	12	11
Driving under the influence	100	18	1	1	1
Liquor laws	2,000	39	1	1	1
Drunkenness	400	25	1	2	2
Disorderly conduct	20,700	24	8	10	9
Vagrancy	200	15	4	7	5
All other offenses (except traffic)	31,100	23	8	9	7
Suspicion	100	15	9	13	5
Curfew and loitering law violations	9,300	29	4	5	5
Runaway	15,700	48	9	9	8

- In 1997, 35% of all juveniles arrested for arson were under age 13.
- High-volume crimes with large proportions of very young arrestees were vandalism, larceny-theft, and simple assault.
- About half (48%) of the nearly 16,000 very young juveniles arrested in 1997 for running away were young girls.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of data presented in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 1997*. National estimates of juvenile arrests were developed using FBI estimates of total arrests and juvenile arrest proportions in reporting sample.

# What do police do with juveniles they arrest?

## Most large law enforcement agencies have specialized units that concentrate on juvenile justice issues

A national survey of law enforcement agencies conducted in 1997 asked large police departments and sheriffs' departments (those with 100 or more sworn officers) about the types of special units they operate. A large proportion reported that they had special units targeting juvenile justice concerns.

Special units	Type of agency	
	Local police	Sheriff
Drug education in schools	95%	79%
Juvenile crime	66	49
Gangs	55	50
Child abuse	48	53
Domestic violence	46	37
Missing children	33	28
Youth outreach	32	24

A large proportion of these agencies also reported that they had written policy directives for handling juveniles (97% of police and 95% of sheriffs' departments) and for handling domestic violence/spousal abuse events (97% of police and 92% of sheriffs' departments). Most agencies reported having full-time school resource officers (76% of police and 77% of sheriffs' departments).

## About 1 of every 10 juveniles arrested was held in a lockup in 1990

Lockups are the temporary holding facilities maintained by law enforcement agencies. Twenty-six percent of local police departments in 1993 operated a lockup facility separately from a jail. While the average capacity of these lockups was 10 inmates, the range was quite broad. The average capacity of lockups was only 4 in communities with populations under 10,000, but was more than 810 in communities with populations of more than 1 million.

A national survey asked departments that administered these facilities for the number of juveniles they had admitted on Friday, June 29, 1990. It was estimated that approximately 750, or 4% of persons admitted to lockups on this day, were classified by State law as juveniles. If it is assumed that, on average, about 6,000 juveniles were arrested per day in 1990, this means that roughly 1 in 10 was placed in a lockup. While most stays are short, this volume of admissions implies that a substantial portion of all juveniles in custody are held in police lockups.

## Most juveniles arrested in 1997 were referred to court for prosecution

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program asks law enforcement agencies to report their responses to the juveniles they take into custody. This is the only component of the UCR Program that is sensitive to State variations in the definition of a juvenile. Consequently, in New York,

law enforcement agencies report their responses to those persons arrested who were younger than age 16 at the time of arrest; in Illinois and Texas, the reports are for arrestees younger than age 17; and in most other States, the reports are for arrestees younger than age 18.

Twenty-five percent of juveniles taken into custody by law enforcement in 1997 were handled within the department and released. These juveniles were warned by police and then released, usually to parents, other relatives, or friends. In some jurisdictions, the law enforcement agency may operate its own diversion programs that may provide some intervention services to juveniles. Another 1% of arrested juveniles were referred either to another law enforcement agency or to a welfare agency.

The remaining juveniles, more than 2 in 3 arrested, were referred to court intake, the next step in the justice system. Most of these juveniles (91%) were referred to a juvenile court or a juvenile probation department. The other 9% were referred to criminal courts for prosecution as an adult.

Juveniles arrested in small cities and in rural areas were more likely than those in large urban centers to be referred to a criminal court. For example, in 1997, only 6.1% of juveniles referred for prosecution in cities with populations of more than 250,000 were sent to criminal courts, compared with 9.3% in suburban counties and 9.8% in cities with populations of less than 10,000.

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### Technical Note

While juvenile arrest rates may largely reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the magnitude of these rates.

Arrest rates are calculated by dividing the number of youth arrests made in the year by the number of youth living in the jurisdiction. Therefore, jurisdictions that arrest a relatively large number of nonresident juveniles would have a higher arrest rate than jurisdictions where resident youth behave similarly.

Jurisdictions (especially small ones) that are vacation destinations or that are centers for economic activity in a region may have arrest rates that reflect the behavior of nonresident youth more than that of resident youth.

Other factors that influence arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of citizens toward crime, the policies of local law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system.

In most areas, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for such areas are necessarily based on partial information. Reported rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be accurate.

Comparisons of juvenile arrest rates across jurisdictions can be informative. But because of the factors noted above, such comparisons should be done with caution.

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# Chapter 6

## Juvenile courts and juvenile crime

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Law enforcement agencies refer approximately two-thirds of all youth arrested to a court with juvenile jurisdiction for further processing. As with law enforcement, the court may decide to divert some juveniles away from the formal justice system to other agencies for service. Prosecutors may file some juvenile cases directly in criminal (adult) court. The net result is that juvenile courts formally process over 1 million delinquency and status offense cases annually. Juvenile courts adjudicate these cases and may order probation or residential placement, or they may waive jurisdiction and transfer certain cases from juvenile court to criminal court. While their cases are being processed, juveniles may be held in secure detention.

This chapter quantifies the flow of cases through the juvenile court system. It documents the nature of, and trends in, cases received and the court's response, and examines

race and gender differences. The chapter also presents data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) quantifying and describing juvenile involvement with State criminal courts, including offense, disposition, and sentencing characteristics. The chapter also describes studies funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) that explore the characteristics and outcomes of cases transferred to criminal court in Florida, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Utah.

The case processing information presented in this chapter is drawn from the National Juvenile Court Data Archive's primary publication *Juvenile Court Statistics*, which is funded by OJJDP. Data on cases involving juveniles transferred to criminal court are from BJS's State Court Processing Statistics, National Judicial Reporting Program, and National Survey of Prosecutors.

## What the Juvenile Court Statistics series can tell us about the activities of juvenile courts in the U.S.

### Juvenile courts have contributed data to a national reporting program since the late 1920's

The *Juvenile Court Statistics* series is the primary source of information on the activities of the Nation's juvenile courts. The first *Juvenile Court Statistics* report, published in 1929 by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, described cases handled in 1927 by 42 courts. In the 1950's, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare took over the work, and in 1974, the newly established Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) took on the project. Since 1975, the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) has been responsible for this OJJDP project.

Throughout its history, the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series has depended on the voluntary support of courts with juvenile jurisdiction. Courts contribute data originally compiled to meet their own information needs. The data received are not uniform, but reflect the natural variation that exists across court information systems. To develop the national estimates, NCJJ restructures compatible data into a common reporting format. In 1996, juvenile courts with jurisdiction over 96% of the U.S. juvenile population contributed data to the national reporting program. Because not all contributed data can support the national reporting requirements, the national estimates for 1996 were based on data from more than 1,770 jurisdictions containing 67% of the Nation's juvenile population (i.e., youth age 10 through the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction in each State).

### The Juvenile Court Statistics series documents the number of cases handled by courts

Just as the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program counts each arrest made by law enforcement (i.e., a workload measure, not a crime measure), the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series counts delinquency and status offense cases handled by courts with juvenile jurisdiction during the year. Each case represents a new referral to juvenile court for one or more offenses. A youth may be involved in more than one case in a year. Therefore, the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series does not provide a count of individual juveniles brought before juvenile courts.

### Cases involving multiple charges are categorized by their most serious offense

In a single case where a juvenile is charged with robbery, simple assault, and a weapons law violation, the case is counted as a robbery case (a classification approach paralleling the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program's hierarchy rule). Thus, the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series does not provide a count of the number of crimes committed by juveniles. In addition, given that only the most serious offense is reported, counts of—and trends for—less serious offenses must be interpreted cautiously.

Similarly, cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive disposition. For example, a case in which the judge orders the youth to a training school and to pay restitution to the victim would be characterized as a case in which the juvenile was placed in a residential facility.

### Juvenile Court Statistics reports the volume and characteristics of delinquency and status offense caseloads

The *Juvenile Court Statistics* series provides annual estimates of the number of delinquency and formally processed status offense cases handled by juvenile courts. The reports provide demographic profiles of the youth referred and the reasons for the referrals (offenses). The series documents the juvenile courts' petition, detention, adjudication, and disposition decisions. The series is also able to identify trends in the volume and characteristics of court activity.

The series does not provide national estimates of the number of youth referred to court, their prior court histories, or their future recidivism. The series was designed to produce national estimates of court activity, not to describe the law-violating careers of juveniles.

Nevertheless, given the diversity in the data files contributed to the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series, different subsets of contributed data can be created to study many issues, such as the court careers of juvenile offenders, racial disparity in system processing, and jurisdictional variations in case processing. Care should be exercised, however, when interpreting gender, age, or racial differences in the analysis of juvenile delinquency cases, because reported statistics do not control for the seriousness of the behavior leading to each charge or the extent of a youth's court history.

## The majority of law violation cases handled in juvenile court are referred by law enforcement

### Most, but not all, delinquency cases seen in the juvenile court are referred by law enforcement

Delinquency cases are referred to juvenile courts from a number of different sources, including law enforcement, social service agencies, schools, parents, probation officers, and victims. In 1996, the large majority (86%) of delinquency cases were referred to court intake by law enforcement agencies. This proportion has changed little over the past decade.

Percent of delinquency cases referred to juvenile court by law enforcement agencies in 1996:

Total delinquency	86%
Murder	96
Burglary	95
Robbery	95
Motor vehicle theft	94
Drugs	93
Shoplifting	92
Aggravated assault	91
Weapons	91
Vandalism	90
Forcible rape	90
Disorderly conduct	87
Simple assault	83
Escape	67
Obstruction of justice	36
Probation violation	13

Nonpolice sources referred nearly 2 out of 10 simple assault cases. Youth charged with escape, obstruction of justice, and probation violation are generally under the jurisdiction of the court when the offense occurs, so these matters are often brought to the court's attention by court personnel.

### Status offense cases are often referred by sources other than law enforcement

In sharp contrast to delinquency cases, law enforcement agencies referred fewer than half of the formally processed status offense (non-criminal) cases in 1996. Although law enforcement agencies remain the most common referral source overall, there were substantial variations among offenses. Truancy cases most often were brought to the attention of the courts by school personnel, while a large proportion of ungovernability cases were referred by parents. Although status liquor law violations (underage drinking, illegal purchase of alcohol) are considered status offenses, they have many of the processing characteristics of delinquency offenses, including referral source.

Percent of formally processed status offense cases referred to juvenile court by law enforcement agencies in 1996:

Total status offense	48%
Running away	37
Truancy	10
Ungovernability	12
Status liquor violation	93

### Juvenile criminal history records are often used by prosecutors

A juvenile's record of law enforcement and juvenile justice system contacts routinely follows the juvenile into the criminal justice system. The 1994 National Prosecutors Survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 82% of prosecutor offices in the U.S. reported using juvenile delinquency or court history records in felony prosecutions.

Of these offices, 90% had used disposition records, 76% had used arrest records, and 69% had used probation reports. Prosecutors used juvenile records during pretrial negotiations (82%) and at the sentencing stage of felony prosecutions (86%). Juvenile delinquency or court history records were also used when filing charges (55%), at bail hearings (46%), and during trial (53%). Delinquency records were often used when transferring a juvenile to criminal court (80%).

Most prosecutor offices acquired the juvenile history information from their own office (72%). A high proportion also used information maintained by local police agencies (69%) and the courts (68%). Fewer offices accessed State criminal history repositories (57%) or records maintained by the FBI (42%).

Prosecutors noted difficulties in using these records. Half of the prosecutor offices using juvenile history records criticized their lack of completeness. The confidentiality restrictions often placed on a juvenile's records were viewed as a problem by 46% of offices. Lack of accuracy and timeliness were mentioned as problems by fewer offices (34% and 28%, respectively).

## Juvenile courts handled 1.8 million delinquency cases in 1996—1,600 more cases each day than in 1987

### U.S. juvenile courts handle 4,800 delinquency cases each day

In 1996, U.S. courts with juvenile jurisdiction handled an estimated 1.8 million cases in which the juvenile was charged with a delinquency offense—an offense for which an adult could be prosecuted in criminal court.

An individual juvenile may be involved in more than one case during the year. The annual ratio of cases to juveniles is about 3 to 2. Therefore, juvenile courts handled about 1.2 million individual juveniles charged with delinquency offenses in 1996.

### Juvenile court workloads have grown and changed

Changes in the juvenile court delinquency caseload in recent years have strained the court's resources and programs. The 49% increase between 1987 and 1996 in the volume of cases handled by juvenile courts placed stress on the system. The courts were asked to respond not only to more cases, but also to a different type of caseload.

From 1987 through 1996, the juvenile courts saw a disproportionate increase in violent and other person offense, weapons, and drug offense cases. Person offenses rose from 16% to 22% of delinquency cases, aggravated assault rose from 3% to 5%, simple assault rose from 9% to 12%, and drug cases rose from 6% to 10%. Other offenses' share of the delinquency caseload declined: property crimes (60% to 50%), burglary (11% to 8%), and larceny-theft (28% to 24%). Courts have had to adapt their program resources accordingly.

### Youth were charged with a property offense in half of the delinquency cases handled by juvenile courts in 1996

Most serious offense	Number of cases	Percent of total cases	Percent change 1987–1996
<b>Total delinquency</b>	<b>1,757,600</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>49%</b>
<b>Person offenses</b>	<b>381,500</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>
Criminal homicide	2,400	<1	74
Forcible rape	6,900	<1	60
Robbery	37,300	2	67
Aggravated assault	89,900	5	135
Simple assault	216,600	12	106
Other violent sex offenses	8,900	1	39
Other person offenses	19,400	1	51
<b>Property offenses</b>	<b>874,400</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>23</b>
Burglary	141,100	8	6
Larceny-theft	421,600	24	27
Motor vehicle theft	51,600	3	7
Arson	8,900	1	49
Vandalism	119,800	7	39
Trespassing	65,000	4	18
Stolen property offenses	32,900	2	6
Other property offenses	33,400	2	57
<b>Drug law violations</b>	<b>176,300</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Public order offenses</b>	<b>325,400</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>58</b>
Obstruction of justice	125,800	7	70
Disorderly conduct	90,200	5	95
Weapons offenses	41,200	2	109
Liquor law violations	10,300	1	-44
Nonviolent sex offenses	10,600	1	-17
Other public order offenses	47,300	3	40
<b>Violent Crime Index*</b>	<b>136,600</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Property Crime Index**</b>	<b>623,300</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>20</b>

- Juvenile court caseloads increased 49% between 1987 and 1996. The juvenile population increased only 11% in that time.
- Although a substantial portion of the growth in court referrals is related to arrests, changes in juvenile court caseloads are also dependent on other forces. Between 1987 and 1996, the overall growth in juvenile court cases (49%) was greater than the growth in arrests of persons under age 18 (35%). During the same period, Violent Crime Index arrests rose 60%, arrests for Property Crime Index offenses rose 8%, and drug arrests rose 133%.

\*Includes criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

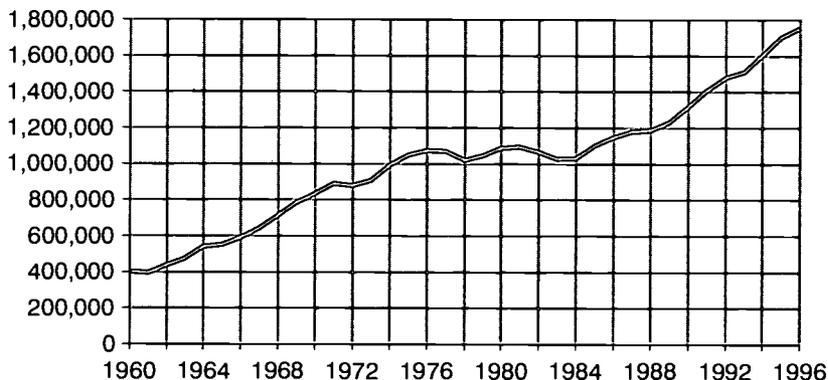
\*\*Includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

### Juvenile courts handled more than four times as many delinquency cases in 1996 as in 1960

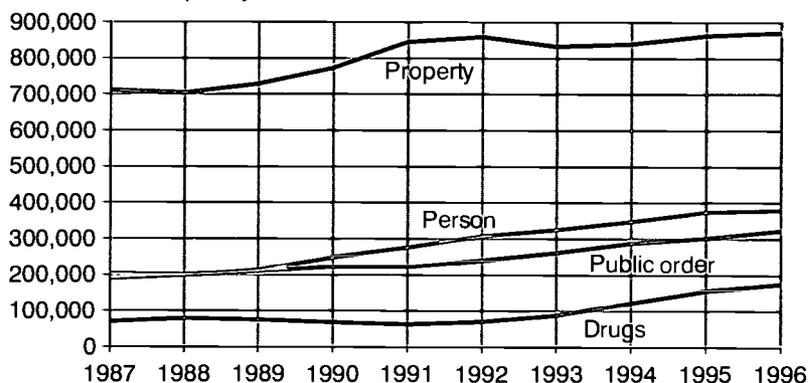
Number of delinquency cases



Source: Authors' analyses of *Juvenile court statistics* for the years 1960 through 1984 and Snyder et al.'s *Easy access to juvenile courts statistics* [data presentation and analysis package] for the years 1985–1994, 1986–1995, and 1987–1996.

### Caseloads steadily increased between 1987 and 1996 across all four general offense categories

Number of delinquency cases



Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

### Within "aggravated assault" and "robbery," there is a range of offense seriousness

**Aggravated assault**—Unlawful intentional infliction of serious bodily injury or unlawful threat or attempt to inflict bodily injury or death by means of a deadly or dangerous weapon with or without actual infliction of any injury. Aggravated assault includes the following situations:

- A gang attempts to kill a rival gang member in a drive-by shooting, but he survives the attack.
- A son fights with his father, causing injuries that require treatment at a hospital.
- A student raises a chair and threatens to throw it at a teacher, but does not.

**Robbery**—Unlawful taking or attempted taking of property that is in the immediate possession of another person by force or threat of force. Robbery includes the following situations:

- Masked gunmen with automatic weapons demand cash from a bank.
- A gang of young men beat up a tourist and steal his wallet and valuables.
- A school bully says to another student, "Give me your lunch money, or I'll punch you."

## Juveniles in all age groups contributed to increases in delinquency caseloads between 1987 and 1996

### Delinquency case rates rose substantially between 1987 and 1996 for most age groups

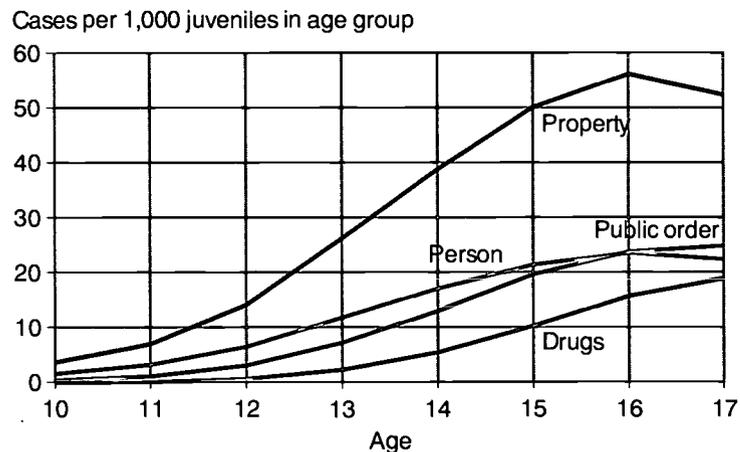
In 1996, juvenile courts handled 61.8 delinquency cases for every 1,000 juveniles (youth subject to original juvenile court jurisdiction) in the U.S. population. The 1996 delinquency case rate was 34% greater than the 1987 rate. For all but the youngest age groups, delinquency case rates showed similar increases. The greatest increase was found for 15-year-olds.

Age at referral	Delinquency cases per 1,000 juveniles in age group		Percent change
	1987	1996	
All ages	46.2	61.8	34%
10	5.7	6.0	6
11	9.7	11.6	19
12	18.0	24.8	38
13	33.9	47.8	41
14	53.7	74.8	39
15	70.4	101.9	45
16	84.0	119.8	43
17	89.1	119.0	34

### Juveniles age 15 and older accounted for more than 6 in 10 delinquency cases in 1996

Juveniles age 15 and older made up 63% of the delinquency caseload in 1996. Juveniles ages 13 and 14 were involved in 27% of delinquency cases, while younger juveniles (age 12 and younger) accounted for 10%. There was some variation in age profiles across offense. Juveniles age 12 and younger accounted for greater proportions of person (13%) and property (12%) cases than of drug (2%) or public order (6%) cases. These proportions were not substantially different from those in 1987.

### Across all ages in 1996, property offense case rates were highest, but drug offense case rates had the sharpest increase with age



- In general, delinquency case rates increase with age, although there are some variations across offenses.
- While case rates for 17-year-olds for person and property offenses were about one-third greater than the rates for 14-year-olds, the drug offense case rate for 17-year-olds was more than three times the rate for 14-year-olds.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

### Why do juvenile courts handle more 16- than 17-year-olds?

Although comparable numbers of 17-year-olds and 16-year-olds were arrested in 1996, the number of juvenile court cases involving 17-year-olds (270,200) was lower than the number involving 16-year-olds (411,300). The explanation lies primarily in the fact that, in 13 States, 17-year-olds are excluded from the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court. In these States, all 17-year-olds are legally adults and are referred to criminal court rather than to juvenile court. Thus, far fewer 17-year-olds than 16-year-olds are

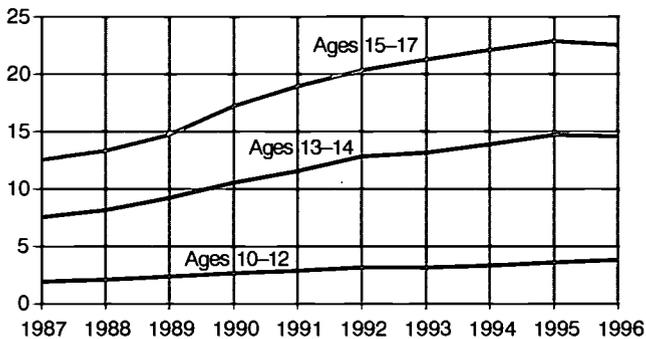
subject to original juvenile court jurisdiction in the U.S.

Even after controlling for their differential representation in the juvenile population, the case rates for 16-year-olds were still slightly greater than the rates for 17-year-olds. One reason may be State legislation that targets certain older juveniles for processing directly in criminal courts (via either statutory exclusion or concurrent jurisdiction provisions). In these situations, when a youth of juvenile age is arrested, the matter goes before a criminal court rather than before a juvenile court.

**Overall, delinquency case rates increased less between 1987 and 1996 among youth ages 10–12 than among youth in older age groups, but the pattern of change varied across offenses**

**Person offense case rates**

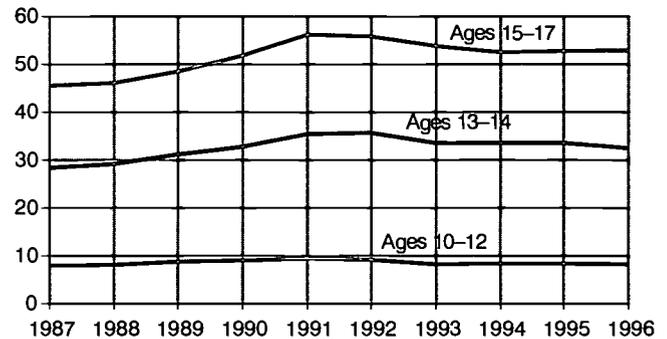
Cases per 1,000 juveniles in age group



- Person offense case rates increased steadily from 1987 through 1995 across age groups. Among youth in older age groups, the 1996 rates were slightly lower than the 1995 rates; this was not true for youth ages 10–12.

**Property offense case rates**

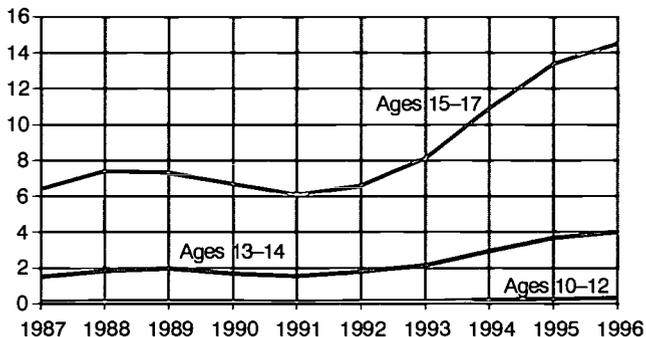
Cases per 1,000 juveniles in age group



- After increasing steadily from 1987 through the early 1990's, the property offense case rate for youth ages 15–17 declined and then leveled off. The same general pattern was found for youth in younger age groups.

**Drug offense case rates**

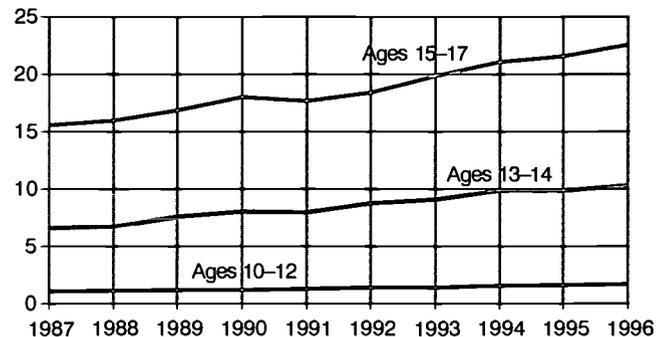
Cases per 1,000 juveniles in age group



- Between 1991 and 1996, drug offense case rates increased substantially, especially in older age groups.
- In 1996, drug case rates for youth ages 15–17 were 46 times the rate for youth ages 10–12 and 4 times the rate for youth ages 13–14.

**Public order offense case rates**

Cases per 1,000 juveniles in age group



- The public order offense case rate increased among all age groups between 1987 and 1996.
- Across all years the public order case rate among youth ages 15–17 was more than double the rate among youth ages 13–14 and more than 13 times the rate among youth ages 10–12.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

# Both male and female delinquency caseloads have increased in recent years, females more sharply

## Males are involved in 8 in 10 delinquency cases each year

Although they constitute only half of the juvenile population, males were involved in about three-quarters of person, property, and public order offense cases handled by the courts in 1996 and in 86% of drug law violation cases. With the exception of drug cases, the male proportions were slightly higher in 1987.

Most serious offense	Percent of cases involving males	
	1987	1996
Delinquency	81%	77%
Person	80	75
Property	81	77
Drugs	84	86
Public order	79	77

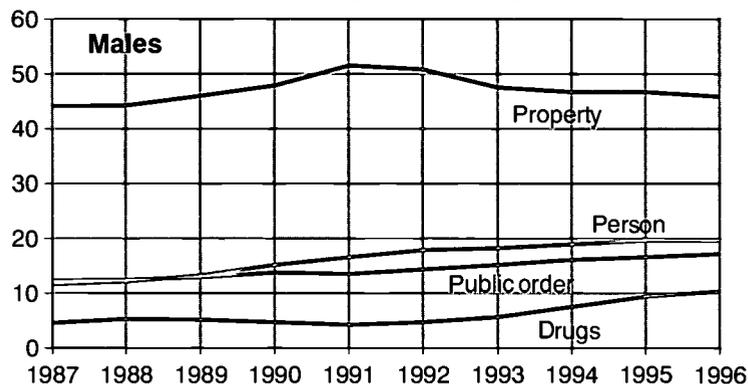
## Compared with males, female delinquency caseloads grew at a faster pace

The number of delinquency cases involving females rose 76% between 1987 and 1996, compared with 42% for males. The growth in cases involving females outpaced the growth for males for all but drug offense cases.

Most serious offense	Percent change 1987-1996	
	Males	Females
Delinquency	42%	76%
Person	87	152
Property	16	52
Drugs	149	123
Public order	55	72

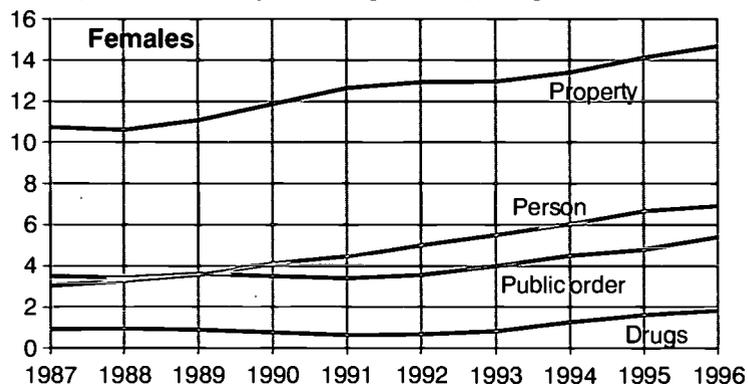
## Case rates for females are much lower than those for males, but female rate increases have been sharper for all but drug cases

Cases per 1,000 male juveniles ages 10-upper age



- In 1996, for every 1,000 males between the ages of 10 and 17 (who were under juvenile court jurisdiction), the court handled 93 delinquency cases involving males. The delinquency case rate for females (29 cases per 1,000 females) was one-third the rate for males.
- Among males, drug offense case rates showed the greatest percent change between 1987 and 1996 (123%). The drug offense case rate for females rose 100%.

Cases per 1,000 female juveniles ages 10-upper age

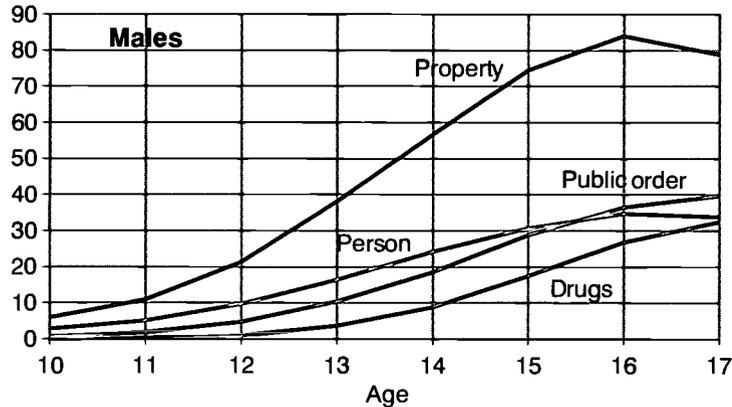


- Among females, person offense case rates showed the greatest percent change (127%). In comparison, the person offense case rate for males grew 68%.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

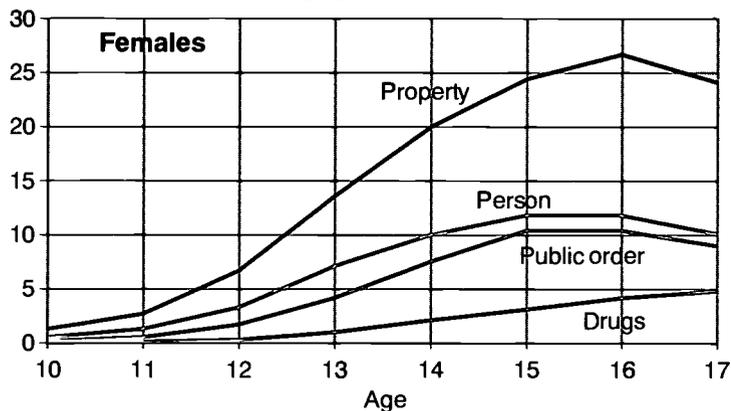
**For both males and females, 1996 case rates for property offenses were higher than case rates for other offenses across all ages**

Cases per 1,000 males in age group



- In 1996, age-specific case rates for males increased continuously with age through age 17 for public order and drug offenses. For property and person offense cases, rates peaked at age 16 and dropped off at age 17.
- Among males ages 16 and 17, case rates were lower for person offense cases than for public order cases. Rather than indicating a lower offending rate for person offenses, this may reflect the effect of transfer statutes that target person offense cases for direct filing in criminal court.

Cases per 1,000 females in age group



- In 1996, age-specific case rates for females dropped off at age 17 for all offense categories except drugs.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

## In 1996, black juveniles were referred to juvenile court at a rate more than double that for whites

### The offense profiles of white caseloads and black caseloads differ

Caseloads of black juveniles contained a greater proportion of person offenses than did caseloads of white juveniles and those of other races. Property offense cases accounted for the largest proportion of cases for all racial groups, although among black juveniles, property cases accounted for fewer than half of the cases processed in 1996. For all races, drug offense cases accounted for the smallest proportion of the 1996 caseload.

Most serious offense	White	Black	Other races
<b>1996</b>			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Person	19	27	20
Property	53	42	57
Drugs	10	11	6
Public order	18	20	17
<b>1987</b>			
Total	100%	100%	100%
Person	13	24	14
Property	63	53	66
Drugs	6	7	5
Public order	18	15	16

Caseload offense profiles for 1996 differed from offense profiles for 1987 for all racial groups. Regardless of race, the proportion of cases involving person offenses was greater in 1996 than in 1987. Among black juveniles, person offenses increased 3 percentage points. Among white juveniles and those of other races, person offenses increased 6 percentage points.

### Black juveniles were involved in a disproportionate number of delinquency cases in 1996

Most serious offense	White	Black	Other races	Total
<b>Total</b>				
Delinquency cases	66%	30%	4%	100%
Person	59	38	4	100
Property	70	26	4	100
Drugs	65	33	3	100
Public order	64	32	4	100
<b>Male</b>				
Delinquency cases	66	31	4	100
Person	60	37	4	100
Property	70	26	4	100
Drugs	62	36	2	100
Public order	64	32	3	100
<b>Female</b>				
Delinquency cases	67	29	4	100
Person	57	39	4	100
Property	71	24	5	100
Drugs	81	15	3	100
Public order	64	33	4	100
Juvenile population	80%	15%	5%	100%

- Overall, the level of racial disparity did not change substantially between the stages of arrest and juvenile court intake.
- Although two-thirds of delinquency cases involve white youth, black youth were overrepresented in the delinquency caseload, given their proportion of the juvenile population (age 10 through upper age).
- The overrepresentation of black juveniles was greatest for cases involving person offenses.
- Among females, the racial distribution of drug cases was similar to the racial distribution of the juvenile population.
- Overrepresentation of blacks was somewhat greater in 1996 than in 1987. In 1987, black youth accounted for 27% of delinquency cases overall, 40% of person offense cases, 24% of property offense cases, 31% of drug offense cases, and 24% of public order offense cases.

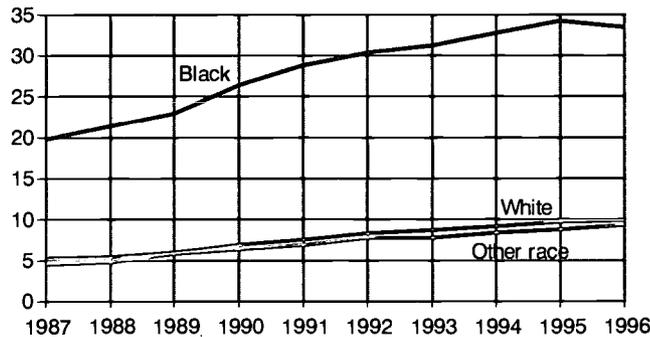
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding. Nearly all juveniles of Hispanic ethnicity are included in the white racial category.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

**From 1987 through 1996, case rates increased for all racial groups in all offense categories; rates for black juveniles remain well above those for whites and for those of other races**

### Person offense case rates

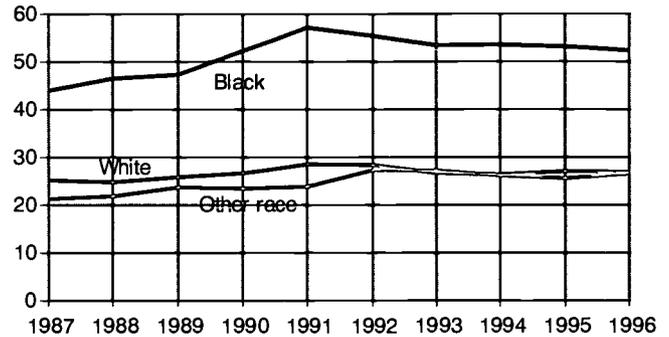
Cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10–upper age



- Each year between 1987 and 1996, the person offense case rate for black juveniles was more than three times the rates for white juveniles and those of other races, although the gap narrowed over the years.
- The rate for black juveniles increased 69%, compared with 86% for white juveniles and 107% for those of other races.

### Property offense case rates

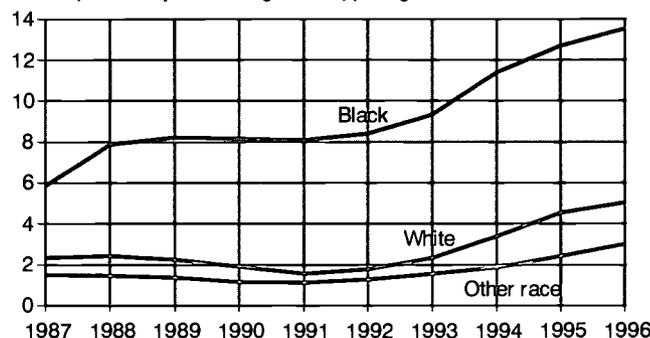
Cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10–upper age



- From 1987 through 1996, the property offense case rates for whites and other races were about half the rates for blacks.
- For all racial groups, property offense case rates were at their peak in the early 1990's. The subsequent decline for black juveniles (8%) and white juveniles (6%) was similar.

### Drug offense case rates

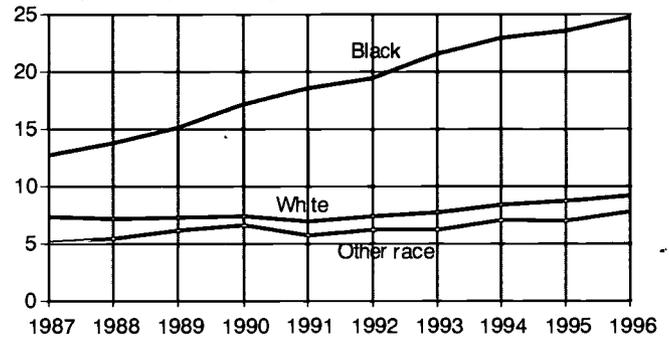
Cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10–upper age



- Between 1988 and 1991, the drug case rate remained virtually unchanged for black juveniles, but dropped 36% for white juveniles and 23% for those of other races.
- All racial groups had large increases in drug case rates between 1991 and 1996: 116% for whites, 132% for blacks, and 167% for youth of other races.

### Public order offense case rates

Cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10–upper age



- Between 1987 and 1996, the public order case rates for whites and other races were less than half the rates for blacks.
- The increase in the public order case rate between 1987 and 1996 was substantially greater for black juveniles (94%) than for white juveniles (26%) or juveniles of other races (52%).

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

## Most delinquency cases do not involve detention between referral to court and case disposition

### When is secure detention used?

A youth may be placed in a secure juvenile detention facility at various points during the processing of a case through the juvenile justice system. Although detention practices vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, a general model of detention practices is useful.

When a case is referred to juvenile court, intake staff may decide to hold the youth in a detention facility while the case is being processed. In general, the youth will be detained if there is reason to believe the youth is a threat to the community, will be at risk if returned to the community, or may fail to appear at an upcoming hearing.

The youth may also be detained for diagnostic evaluation purposes. In all States, legislation requires that a detention hearing be held within a few days (generally within 24 to 48 hours). At that time, a judge reviews the decision to detain the youth and either orders the youth released or continues the detention.

National juvenile court statistics count the number of cases that involve the use of detention during a calendar year. A youth may be detained and released more than once between case referral and disposition as the case is processed. A youth may also have more than one case involving detention during the year. Juvenile court data do not count "detentions" nor do they count the number of youth detained. In addition, although in a few States juveniles may be committed to a detention facility as part of a disposition order, the court data do not include such placements in the count of cases involving detention.

### 89,000 more delinquency cases involved detention in 1996 than in 1987—person offense cases accounted for 48% of the increase

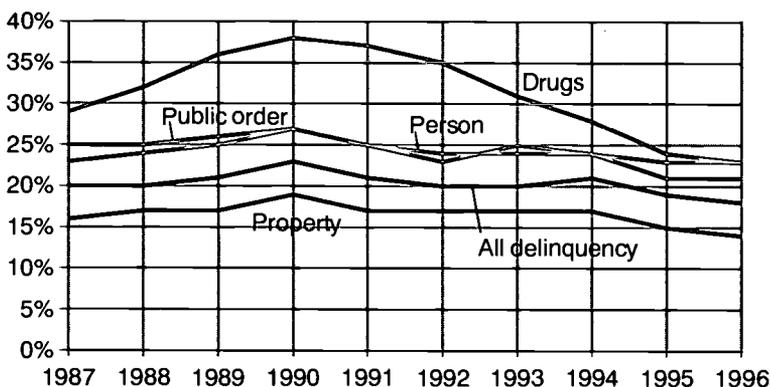
	Number of delinquency cases that involved detention				
	Delinquency	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
1987	231,900	44,300	115,900	21,000	50,600
1988	241,400	47,800	117,200	26,200	50,200
1989	262,400	54,900	124,500	28,200	54,800
1990	302,600	67,700	146,800	26,900	61,200
1991	293,900	69,800	145,300	23,900	54,800
1992	299,700	73,900	144,100	25,100	56,700
1993	309,900	76,900	140,200	27,800	65,000
1994	329,600	83,700	140,500	35,100	70,300
1995	318,900	84,400	131,400	38,500	64,600
1996	320,900	87,200	125,800	39,700	68,300

- The number of property cases involving detention dropped 14% from 1990 to 1996. Nevertheless, property cases account for the largest volume of cases involving detention, although they are less likely to involve detention than other offenses.

Source: Authors' analysis of data from NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

### In 1996, juveniles were detained between referral and disposition in 18% of all delinquency cases processed during the year

Percent of cases detained



- For all offenses, the likelihood of detention was lower in 1996 than in 1990. The decline was greatest for drug offense cases.
- Between 1987 and 1995, the likelihood of detention was consistently greater for drug cases than for cases involving other offenses. In 1996, 23% of both drug and person offense cases involved detention.
- Property offense cases have the lowest likelihood of detention.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

**The offense profile of detained delinquency cases has changed**

Property cases continue to account for the largest volume of delinquency cases involving detention, but their share of total detained cases has diminished. The proportion of person offense cases in the detention caseload was greater in 1996 than in 1987.

Most serious offense	Percent of detained cases	
	1987	1996
Delinquency	100%	100%
Person	19	27
Property	50	39
Drugs	9	12
Public order	22	21

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

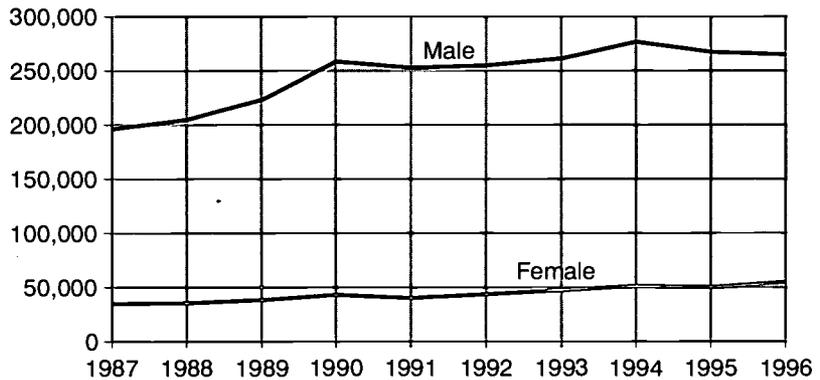
**Growth in the number of cases detained was less than the growth in overall caseloads**

Compared with the increase in the overall delinquency caseload, the relative growth in the number of cases involving detention was smaller. Growth in the use of detention may have been limited by facility crowding. For person offenses, detention growth kept pace with overall caseload growth, but for other offense categories, detention growth was not as great as overall caseload growth.

Most serious offense	Percent change 1987-1996	
	All cases	Detained cases
Delinquency	49%	38%
Person	100	97
Property	23	8
Drugs	144	89
Public order	58	35

**The number of cases involving detention increased 35% among males and 57% among females**

Delinquency cases that involved detention



■ Despite the fact that there was a greater percent increase in the number of cases involving detention among females than among males, males still far outnumbered females among detained cases. In 1996, males accounted for 83% of cases involving detention.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

**Regardless of offense, males were more likely to be detained than females in 1996**

Most serious offense	Percent of cases that involved detention in 1996	
	Males	Females
Delinquency	20%	14%
Person	24	19
Property	16	9
Drugs	24	15
Public order	21	19

For males, person and drug offense cases had the greatest likelihood of detention. For females, detention was most likely for person and public order offense cases. In fact, public order cases involving females were nearly as likely to involve detention as those involving males.

Because the probability of detention was greater for males than for females in 1996, males were overrepresented in the detention caseload, compared with their proportions in the overall delinquency caseload.

Most serious offense	Percent of cases that involved males in 1996	
	All cases	Detained cases
Delinquency	77%	83%
Person	75	79
Property	77	85
Drugs	86	90
Public order	77	79

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# White juveniles were less likely to be detained than black juveniles and juveniles of other races

## White youth were least likely to be detained

Secure detention was nearly twice as likely in 1996 for cases involving black youth as for cases involving whites, even after controlling for offense. Detention was least likely for cases involving white youth charged with property crimes. Detention was most likely for cases involving black youth charged with drug offenses.

Most serious offense	Percent of cases that involved detention in 1996		
	White	Black	Other races
Delinquency	14%	27%	18%
Person	19	28	26
Property	11	22	15
Drugs	14	40	19
Public order	17	29	17

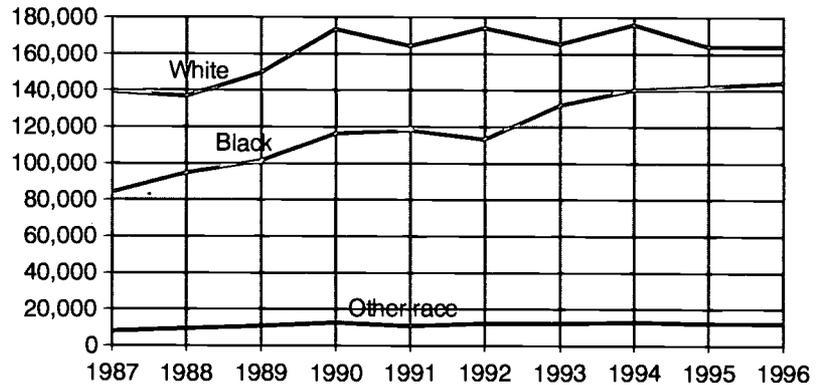
## For blacks, growth in detained cases outpaced growth in delinquency cases overall

For black youth, the relative increase in the number of delinquency cases involving detention was greater than the relative increase in delinquency cases overall. For white juveniles and juveniles of other races, growth in the overall delinquency caseload was greater than growth in the detention caseload.

Race	Percent change 1987-1996	
	All cases	Detained cases
All races	49%	38%
White	39	18
Black	68	71
Other races	103	50

## For black juveniles, the relative increase in the number of cases involving detention was nearly four times the increase for whites

Delinquency cases that involved detention

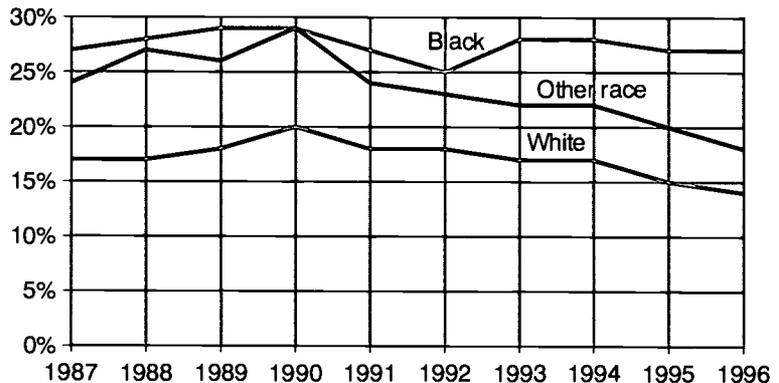


■ For white juveniles, the number of delinquency cases involving detention increased 18% from 1987 to 1996. For black juveniles, the increase was 71%. For youth of other races, the increase was 50%.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

## Compared with 1987, the use of detention in delinquency cases in 1996 remained about the same for black juveniles but declined for white juveniles and juveniles of other races

Percent of delinquency cases that involved detention



Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

### Black youth were over-represented in detention caseloads in 1996

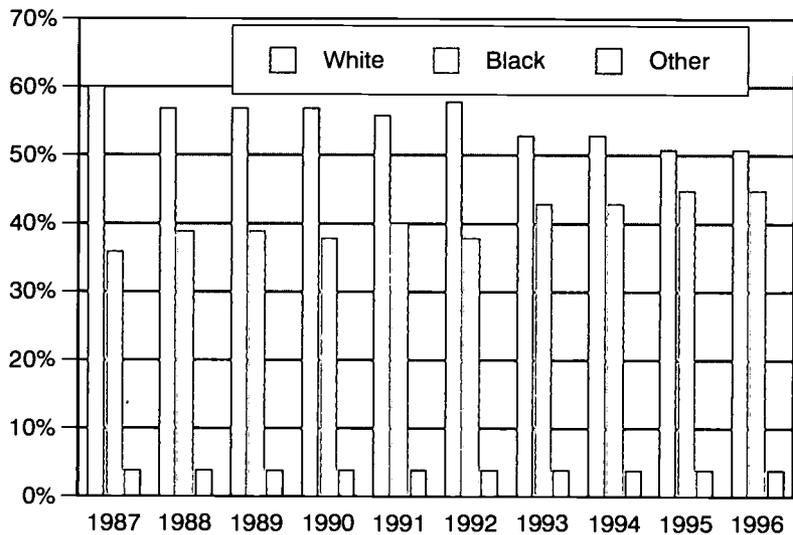
As a result of their greater probability of detention in 1996, black youth were overrepresented in the detention caseload, compared with their proportions in the overall delinquency caseload. While black youth made up 30% of all delinquency cases processed in 1996, they were involved in 45% of detained cases. This overrepresentation was greatest for drug offenses: blacks accounted for 33% of all drug cases processed, but 59% of drug cases detained.

Most serious offense	Percent of cases that involved black juveniles in 1996	
	All cases	Detained cases
Delinquency	30%	45%
Person	38	46
Property	26	40
Drugs	33	59
Public order	32	45

In all offense categories, youth of other races made up less than 5% of all cases processed and of those involving detention.

### Black juveniles accounted for a greater share of delinquency cases involving detention in 1996 than in 1987

Race proportion of delinquency cases that involved detention



- In 1987, blacks accounted for 36% of the detention caseload; by 1995, their proportion had increased to 45%, where it remained in 1996. Juveniles of other races remained at 4% of the detention caseload throughout the period from 1987 through 1996.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

### Older youth are more likely than younger youth to be detained

Most serious offense	Percent of cases that involved detention in 1996, by age at referral							
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Delinquency	7%	10%	13%	16%	18%	20%	20%	20%
Person	9	14	16	20	23	25	26	26
Property	5	7	10	13	15	16	16	16
Drugs	*	10	16	21	21	24	24	22
Public order	9	14	17	21	22	23	22	20

- The likelihood of detention was twice as great for cases involving 15-, 16-, and 17-year-olds as it was for 11-year-olds.

\* Too few cases to obtain a reliable percentage.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

### The age profile of delinquency cases involving detention did not change substantially between 1987 and 1996

Age at referral	1987	1996
Total	100%	100%
10 or younger	1	1
11 years	1	1
12 years	3	4
13 years	8	9
14 years	15	17
15 years	24	24
16 years	28	26
17 or older	20	18

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

## A smaller proportion of delinquency cases was handled informally by juvenile courts in 1996 than in 1987

### Informal processing involves the voluntary acceptance of sanctions and interventions

Soon after a case is referred to juvenile court, an intake officer or prosecutor decides whether to handle the case formally or informally. Informal processing is considered when the decisionmakers (police, probation officers, intake workers, prosecutors, or other screening officers) believe that accountability and rehabilitation can be achieved without the use of formal court intervention.

Informal sanctions are voluntary; the court cannot force a juvenile to comply with an informal disposition. If the court decides to handle the matter informally (in lieu of formal prosecution), an offender agrees to comply with one or more sanctions such as community service, victim restitution, or voluntary probation supervision. In many jurisdictions, before juveniles are offered informal sanctions, they must admit they committed the alleged act.

When informally handled, the case is generally held open pending the successful completion of the informal disposition. Upon successful completion of these arrangements, the charges against the offender are dismissed. If, however, the offender does not fulfill the court's conditions for informal handling, the case is likely to be reopened and formally prosecuted.

### The juvenile justice system makes broad use of informal processing

Informal handling is less common than in the past but is still used in a large number of cases. According to *Juvenile Court Statistics 1996*, 44% of delinquency cases disposed by juvenile courts in 1996 were handled informally, compared with more than half in 1987. The decline in the use of informal processing was seen in all four general offense categories. With the exception of drug cases, this decline was constant over the time period. Among drug cases, the proportion of cases handled informally dropped sharply between 1987 and 1991 from 46% to 33% and then rose to 38% in 1996.

Most serious offense	Percent of cases handled informally	
	1987	1996
Delinquency	53%	44%
Person	47	41
Property	55	48
Drugs	46	38
Public order	54	40

### Males, blacks, and older juveniles are less likely to have their cases handled informally

Case characteristics	Percent of cases handled informally	
	1987	1996
Sex		
Male	51%	41%
Female	64	54
Race		
White	57	46
Black	42	38
Other race	53	47
Age at referral		
15 or younger	56	47
16 or older	49	40

### A substantial proportion of informal cases involves some sort of voluntary sanction

In 1996, juvenile courts dismissed nearly half of all informally handled cases (45%). In the informally handled cases that were not dismissed, the juvenile voluntarily agreed to some sort of intervention services and/or sanctions. In more than half (57%) of the informally processed cases that were not dismissed, the youth agreed to a term of voluntary probation supervision, and 41% agreed to other sanctions such as voluntary restitution, community service, or referral to another agency. In a small number of the informal cases that were not dismissed, the youth and the youth's family agreed to a period of out-of-home placement as a sanction (2%).

The handling of informal cases in 1996 was similar to their handling in 1987. In 1987, juvenile courts dismissed 47% of informal cases. The majority of informal cases that were not dismissed in 1987 involved informal probation supervision (58%) or other voluntary sanctions (41%), while in less than 1% the youth was placed out of home.

Most serious offense	Percent change in informal cases 1987-1996	
	Dismissed	Informal sanctions
Delinquency	17%	27%
Person	74	72
Property	-4	22
Drugs	67	104
Public order	19	-4

Although the volume of informal cases grew, the growth was less than the increase in overall delinquency caseloads. This pattern indicates formal caseload "net-widening" at the intake decision point.

## Juvenile courts handled more than half of delinquency cases formally in 1996

### Petitioners ask the court to order sanctions in formally processed cases

Formal case handling involves the filing of a petition requesting that the court hold an adjudicatory or waiver hearing. Compared with cases that are handled informally, formally processed delinquency cases tend to involve more serious offenses, older juveniles, and those who have longer court histories. In 1996, juvenile courts formally processed 59% of cases involving juveniles age 14 or older, compared with 44% of cases involving younger juveniles.

### There were large increases in the juvenile court's formal caseloads from 1987 to 1996

Most serious offense	Percent change in formal cases 1987-1996
Male	70%
Person	105
Property	36
Drugs	186
Public order	100
Female	126
Person	209
Property	93
Drugs	161
Public order	120
White	75
Person	141
Property	43
Drugs	187
Public order	92
Black	79
Person	94
Property	39
Drugs	172
Public order	126
Other race	129
Person	199
Property	89
Drugs	314
Public order	165

### In 1996, juvenile courts formally processed more than 980,000 delinquency cases

Most serious offense	Delinquency cases formally processed in 1996		Percent change 1987-1996
	Number	Percent of total	
<b>Total delinquency</b>	<b>983,100</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>Person offenses</b>	<b>223,600</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>121</b>
Criminal homicide	2,200	91	93
Forcible rape	5,600	79	64
Robbery	32,700	87	79
Aggravated assault	53,800	61	125
Simple assault	110,400	51	153
Other violent sex offenses	6,700	75	45
Other person offenses	12,200	63	95
<b>Property offenses</b>	<b>455,800</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>44</b>
Burglary	107,500	76	19
Larceny-theft	173,000	41	51
Motor vehicle theft	38,000	73	22
Arson	5,000	56	60
Vandalism	59,500	50	87
Trespassing	26,500	41	52
Stolen property offenses	22,400	68	33
Other property offenses	23,900	71	106
<b>Drug law violations</b>	<b>109,500</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Public order offenses</b>	<b>194,200</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>104</b>
Obstruction of justice	97,500	77	88
Disorderly conduct	34,400	38	164
Weapons offenses	26,300	64	188
Liquor law violations	5,000	49	0
Nonviolent sex offenses	5,400	51	-18
Other public order offenses	25,500	54	166
<b>Violent Crime Index *</b>	<b>94,300</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Property Crime Index **</b>	<b>323,500</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>35</b>

- As a general rule, the more serious the offense, the more likely the case was to be brought before a judge for formal (court-ordered) sanctioning. For example, 41% of all larceny-theft cases were formally processed in 1996, compared with 76% of all burglary cases.
- The juvenile was charged with an offense against a person in fewer than one-quarter of the delinquency cases formally processed in 1996.

\*Includes criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

\*\*Includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Percent change calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

## Juvenile courts adjudicated youth delinquent in 3 in 5 formally handled delinquency cases in 1996

### Juveniles were adjudicated in 567,200 formally processed delinquency cases in 1996

A youth referred to juvenile court for a delinquency offense may be adjudicated (judged to be) a delinquent after admitting to the charges in the case, or after the court finds sufficient evidence to conclude, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the youth committed the acts alleged in the petition.

Proportion of formally processed cases in 1996 that was adjudicated:

Total delinquency	58%
Person offenses	54
Criminal homicide	36
Forcible rape	59
Robbery	58
Aggravated assault	57
Simple assault	51
Other violent sex offenses	56
Other person offenses	51
Property offenses	59
Burglary	64
Larceny-theft	56
Motor vehicle theft	66
Arson	62
Vandalism	54
Trespassing	49
Stolen property offenses	62
Other property offenses	59
Drug law violations	58
Public order offenses	58
Obstruction of justice	64
Disorderly conduct	45
Weapons offenses	61
Liquor law violations	46
Nonviolent sex offenses	64
Other public order offenses	48
Violent Crime Index*	57
Property Crime Index**	60

\*Includes criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

\*\*Includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

### Delinquency adjudications grew 64% between 1987 and 1996

Most serious offense	All cases	Percent change 1987-1996			
		Total	Waived	Formal cases Adjudicated	Not adjudicated
Delinquency	49%	78%	47%	64%	104%
Person	100	121	125	112	133
Property	23	44	-2	33	65
Drugs	144	183	124	161	224
Public order	58	104	22	81	148

- Across all four general offense categories, the relative growth in adjudications was greater than the increase in the overall caseload, but less than the growth in formally processed cases. Therefore, the growth in formally processed cases resulted in a greater proportion of court activity devoted to cases in which the court was not able to find that the youth committed the offense charged (i.e., not adjudicated).

Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder et al.'s *Easy access to juvenile courts statistics: 1987-1996* [data presentation and analysis package].

In 1996, 58% of all formally processed delinquency cases resulted in an adjudication. Youth were adjudicated delinquent in 54% of person offense cases. This was less than any of the other major categories of offenses: youth were adjudicated delinquent in 59% of property offense cases, 58% of drug law violation cases, and 58% of public order offense cases.

The lower rate of adjudication in person offense cases may reflect, in part, reluctance to divert person offense cases from the formal juvenile justice system until a judge has had the opportunity to review the case. In addition, person offense cases are more likely than other cases to be judicially waived to criminal court.

### The likelihood of adjudication varied by demographic group

In 1996, 58% of all formally processed cases involving males were

adjudicated, compared with 53% of cases involving females, a pattern that held even after controlling for referral offense.

Proportion of formally processed cases in 1996 that was adjudicated:

Most serious offense	Males	Females
Delinquency	59%	53%
Person	56	51
Property	60	52
Drugs	59	54
Public order	59	56

The proportion of formal cases adjudicated in 1996 varied by race and age:

- By race: 55% for blacks, 59% for whites, and 66% for those of other races.
- By age: 55% for youth below age 14, 60% for 14- to 15-year-olds, 58% for 16-year-olds, and 55% for 17-year-olds.

## In 1996, residential placement or probation was ordered in 82% of adjudicated delinquency cases

### Most adjudicated delinquency cases result in residential placement or formal probation

In 28% of adjudicated delinquency cases, the court ordered the youth to residential placement such as a training school, camp, ranch, drug treatment or private placement facility, or group home. Generally, if adjudicated delinquents were not placed out of home, they were placed on formal probation. In 54% of adjudicated delinquency cases, probation was the most severe sanction ordered. Overall, 82% of adjudicated delinquency cases resulted in either placement or formal probation.

Once adjudicated, white juveniles were less likely to be ordered to residential placement than were blacks and youth of other races. Females were less likely to be placed out of home than were males.

Case characteristics	Percent of adjudicated delinquency cases in 1996	
	Residential placement	Formal probation
All cases	28%	54%
Age		
13 or younger	23	60
14	29	56
15	30	55
16	30	52
17	27	50
Sex		
Male	29	59
Female	22	54
Race		
White	26	55
Black	32	52
Other	32	48

These demographic patterns in the use of placement and probation do not control for criminal histories that are related to increased severity of sanctions.

### Homicide cases had the greatest likelihood of court-ordered residential placement in 1996, followed by robbery, rape, obstruction of justice, and motor vehicle theft cases

Most serious offense	Percent of adjudicated delinquency cases			
	Residential placement		Formal probation	
	1987	1996	1987	1996
<b>Total delinquency</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Person offenses</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>53</b>
Criminal homicide	60	59	33	30
Forcible rape	42	43	52	43
Robbery	46	46	48	41
Aggravated assault	32	31	58	53
Simple assault	27	26	57	57
Other violent sex offenses	31	32	61	55
Other person offenses	25	28	59	59
<b>Property offenses</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>56</b>
Burglary	33	33	58	55
Larceny-theft	24	23	59	58
Motor vehicle theft	37	41	53	48
Arson	29	27	59	59
Vandalism	18	17	62	60
Trespassing	22	21	52	54
Stolen property offenses	28	28	58	49
Other property offenses	28	17	55	60
<b>Drug law violations</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Public order offenses</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>
Obstruction of justice	47	42	46	45
Disorderly conduct	18	16	56	57
Weapons offenses	27	28	60	56
Liquor law violations	16	14	52	64
Nonviolent sex offenses	38	39	54	53
Other public order offenses	21	15	49	44
<b>Violent Crime Index *</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Property Crime Index **</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>56</b>

- Cases involving youth adjudicated for serious person offenses, such as homicide, rape, or robbery, were most likely to result in residential placement.
- Cases involving youth adjudicated for minor offenses, such as vandalism or disorderly conduct, were least likely to result in residential placement.
- The relatively high residential placement rate for public order offense cases stems from the inclusion of certain obstruction of justice offenses that have a high likelihood of placement (e.g., escapes from confinement and probation and parole violations).

\* Includes criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

\*\*Includes burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data file].

### Juvenile courts assign probation supervision to a wide range of youthful offenders

Probation is the oldest and most widely used community-based corrections program. Probation may be used at either the "front end" or the "back end" of the juvenile justice system: for first-time, low-risk offenders or as an alternative to institutional confinement for more serious offenders. During a period of probation, a juvenile offender remains in the community and can continue normal activities such as school and work. In exchange for this freedom, the juvenile must comply with a number of conditions.

This compliance may be voluntary: the youth agrees to comply with a period of informal probation in lieu of formal adjudication. Or compliance may be mandatory: once adjudicated and formally ordered to a term of probation, the juvenile must comply with the probation conditions established by the court. More than half (52%) of juvenile probation dispositions in 1996 were informal (i.e., enacted without a formal adjudication or court order).

### Probation conditions typically incorporate items meant to control as well as rehabilitate

A juvenile may be required to meet regularly with a probation supervisor, adhere to a strict curfew, and complete a specified period of community service. The conditions of probation may also include provisions for the revocation of probation should the juvenile violate the conditions. If probation is revoked, the court may reconsider its disposition and impose stricter sanctions.

### The characteristics of adjudicated cases ordered to probation changed between 1987 and 1996 as did the profile of those ordered to residential placement

Case characteristics	Percent of residential placement cases		Percent of formal probation cases	
	1987	1996	1987	1996
Most serious offense	100%	100%	100%	100%
Person	18	24	16	21
Property	53	44	60	49
Drugs	7	10	7	11
Public order	22	23	16	18
Sex	100%	100%	100%	100%
Male	88	87	86	81
Female	12	13	14	19
Race	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	63	59	66	66
Black	34	36	31	30
Other	3	5	3	4
Age at referral	100%	100%	100%	100%
13 or younger	12	13	16	17
14	16	17	16	17
15	25	26	24	24
16	28	26	26	24
17 or older	19	18	19	17

- Compared with 1987, profiles of cases ordered to probation and cases ordered to residential placement showed greater proportions of person offenses, females, and younger juveniles in 1996.
- Compared with adjudicated cases that resulted in residential placement in 1996, adjudicated delinquency cases that resulted in probation involved a higher percentage of whites (66% vs. 59%), females (19% vs. 13%), and youth charged with a property offense (49% vs. 44%).

Note: Detail may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder et al.'s *Easy access to juvenile court statistics: 1987-1996* [data presentation and analysis package].

### Probation caseloads increased between 1987 and 1996

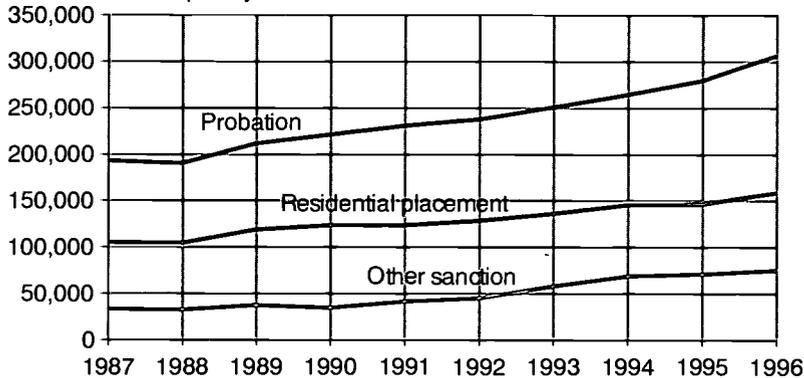
The total number of delinquency cases receiving probation (either formal or informal) as the most severe initial disposition climbed 46% between 1987 and 1996, from 435,200 to 634,100. The number of

adjudicated delinquency cases placed on formal probation increased 58% over this period, from 193,800 to 306,900. The growth in probation caseloads was related to the general growth in juvenile court delinquency caseloads at referral (49%) and adjudication (64%).

**Between 1987 and 1996, the volume of adjudicated cases ordered to formal probation rose 58%, and court-ordered residential placements rose 51%; although other sanctions are imposed less often, cases resulting in other sanctions rose 125%**

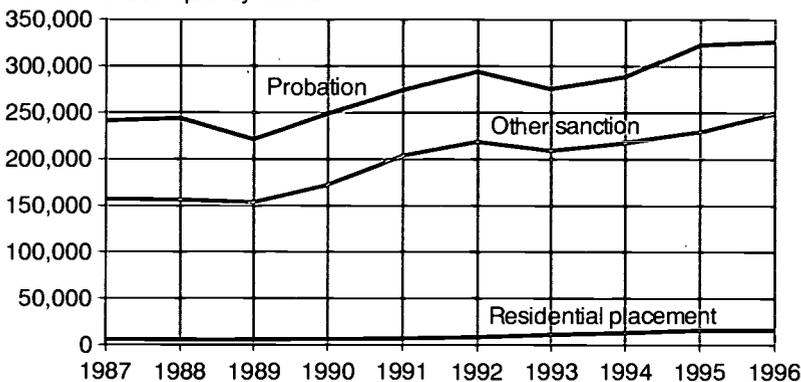
### Adjudicated delinquency cases

Number of delinquency cases



### Delinquency cases not adjudicated

Number of delinquency cases

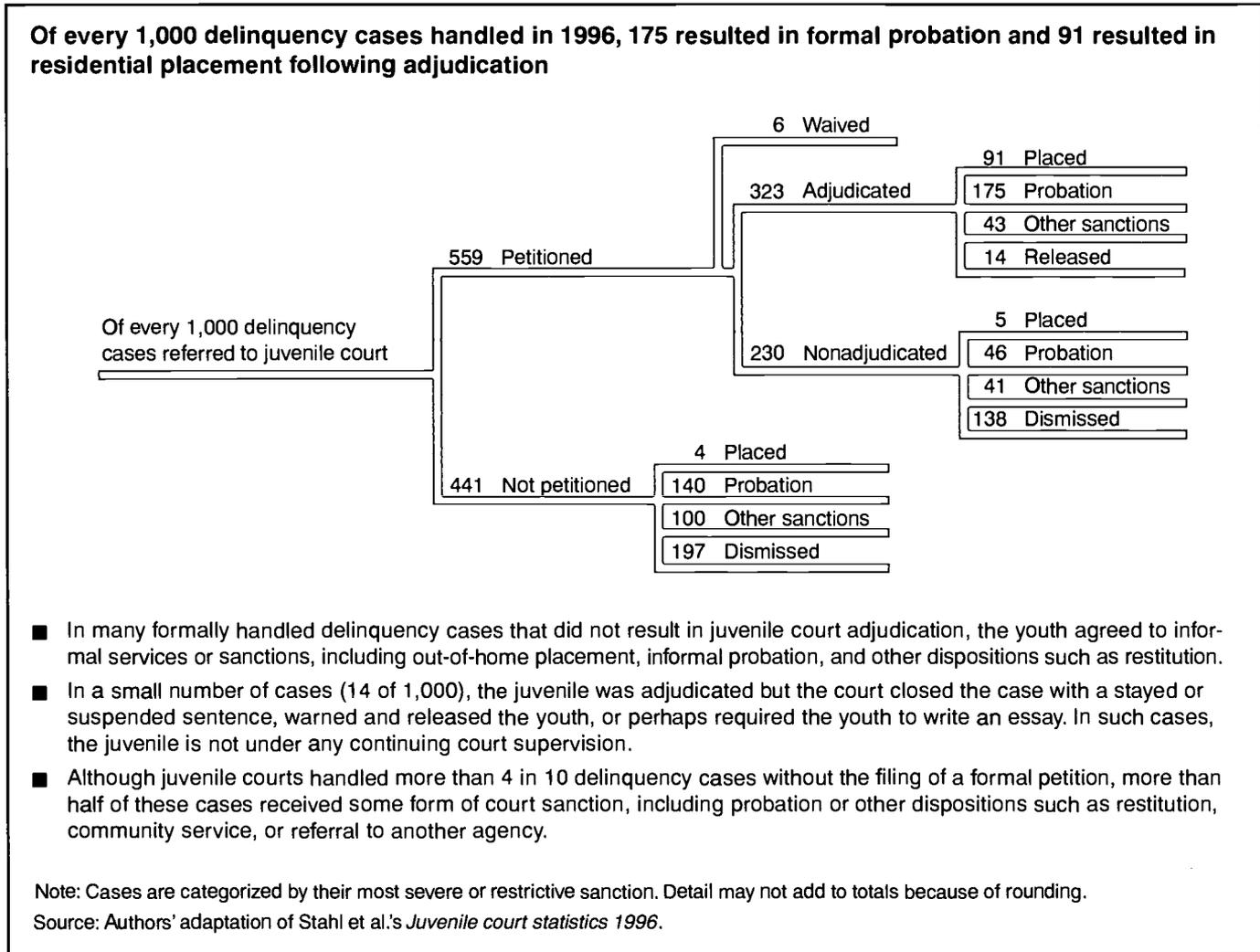


Note: Delinquency cases not adjudicated include cases both formally and informally processed.

Source: Authors' analysis of Snyder et al.'s *Easy access to juvenile court statistics: 1987-1996* [data presentation and analysis package].

- Although the number of adjudicated cases receiving sanctions (residential placement, probation, or other sanctions) rose 63% from 1987 to 1996, their proportion of all adjudicated cases was virtually the same in 1996 (95%) as in 1987 (97%).
- Overall, youth were placed on probation in 56% of the more than 1 million cases that received some sort of formal or informal juvenile court sanction in 1996 (i.e., those that were not waived to criminal court, dismissed, or otherwise released).
- In 1996, juvenile courts ordered youth to residential placement in 159,400 adjudicated delinquency cases. Youth voluntarily agreed to out-of-home placement in 16,400 nonadjudicated delinquency cases.
- Growth was greater for adjudicated cases ordered to formal probation (58%) than for nonadjudicated cases placed on informal probation (35%).
- Residential placements rose more among nonadjudicated than adjudicated cases (162% vs. 51%).
- More nonadjudicated (249,600) than adjudicated (75,800) cases were given other sanctions (such as community service, restitution, or referral to another agency).

# How were delinquency cases processed in juvenile court in 1996?



## For defendants of all ages, criminal court conviction rates are higher for murder than for other offenses

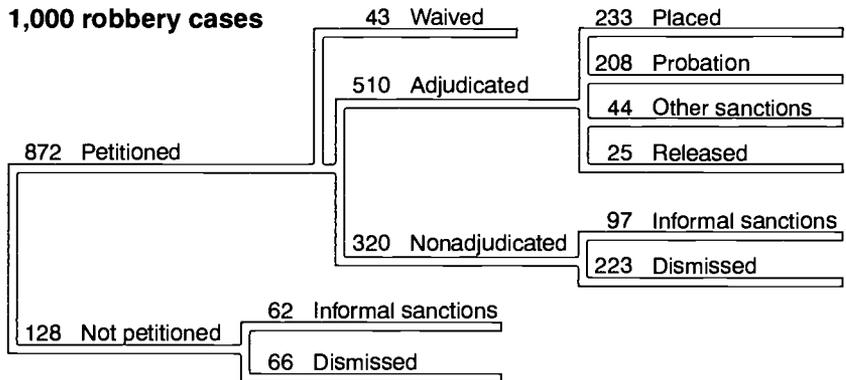
The Bureau of Justice Statistics has estimated the likelihood of an arrest leading to a conviction. The likelihood of conviction was calculated by dividing the number of adult felony convictions in a year by the number of adult felony arrests that year. Because the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrest data do not distinguish felonies from

nonfelonies, conviction rates were estimated only for offenses that are always or nearly always defined in State law as felonies. For murder, it was estimated that 65% of arrests in 1994 resulted in a felony conviction. For aggravated assault, just 14% of arrests resulted in a felony conviction.

Most serious convicted offense	Estimated percent of felony arrests leading to felony conviction		
	1990	1992	1994
Murder	55%	65%	65%
Drug trafficking	53	55	52
Robbery	37	41	39
Burglary	38	41	39
Aggravated assault	13	14	14

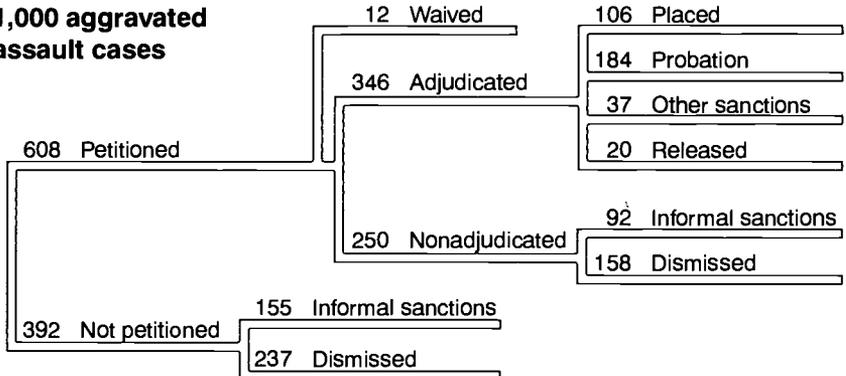
**Compared with delinquency cases overall, robbery and aggravated assault cases handled in juvenile court were more likely to be petitioned, adjudicated delinquent, and sanctioned**

**1,000 robbery cases**



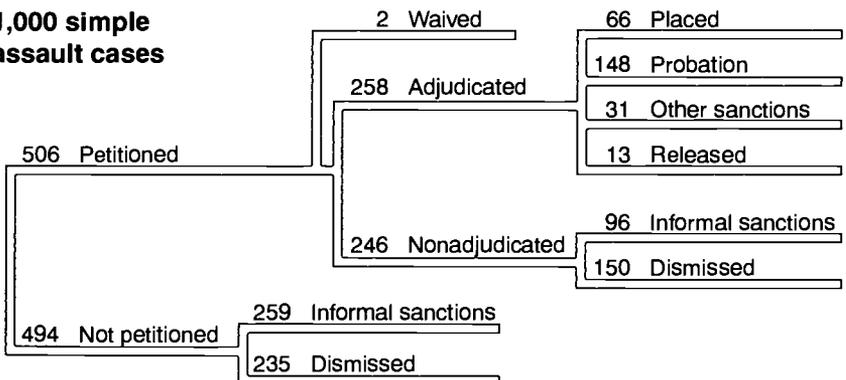
- Juvenile courts waived more than 40 in 1,000 robbery cases to criminal court in 1996.
- Juvenile courts ordered formal sanctions or waived jurisdiction in more than half of robbery cases.
- Even cases in which the juvenile was not adjudicated delinquent may result in informal sanctions. Thus, juvenile courts imposed some sort of sanction in more than two-thirds of the robbery cases handled in 1996.

**1,000 aggravated assault cases**



- Juvenile courts waived more than 10 in 1,000 aggravated assault cases to criminal court in 1996.
- Juvenile courts ordered formal sanctions or waived about one-third of aggravated assault cases.
- Juveniles agreed to informal sanctions in one-quarter of aggravated assault cases.
- More than 60% of aggravated assault cases resulted in some sort of sanction or waiver to criminal court.

**1,000 simple assault cases**

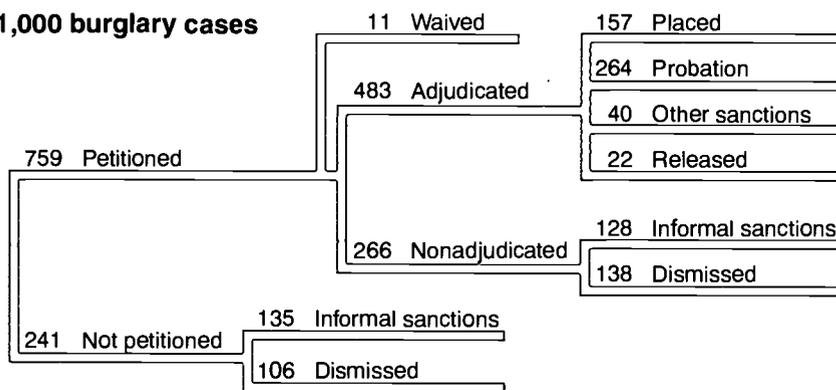


- Compared with aggravated assault cases, simple assault cases were less likely to result in court-ordered sanctions or waiver to criminal court.
- Of every 1,000 simple assault cases handled in 1996, more than 300 resulted in the youth agreeing to informal sanctions.

Note: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.  
 Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

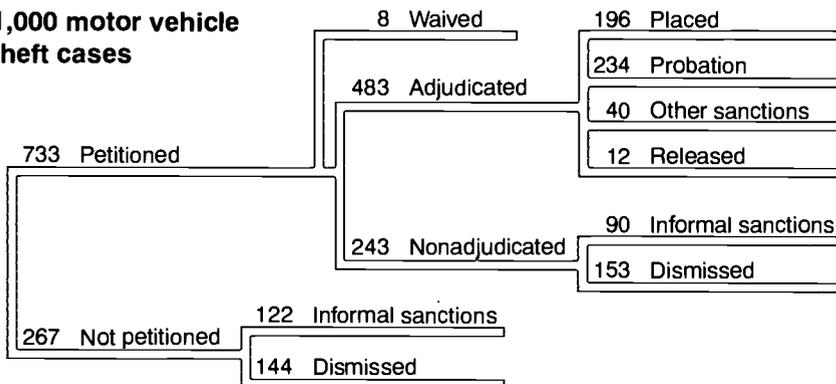
**Property offenses showed substantial variation in juvenile court handling: vandalism cases were much less likely than burglary or motor vehicle theft cases to result in court-ordered residential placement**

**1,000 burglary cases**



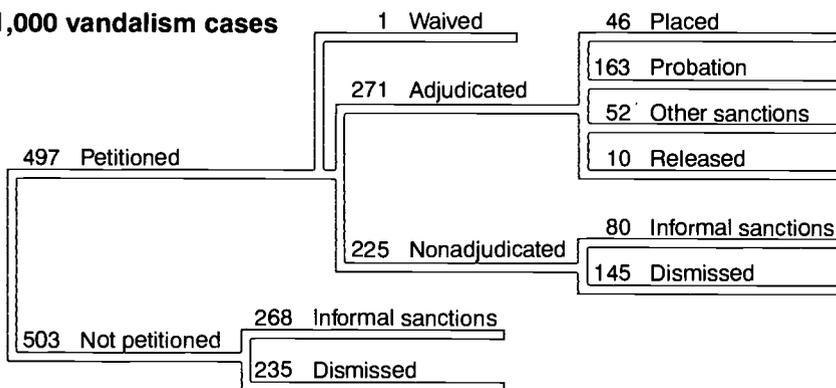
- The general property offense category contains a wide variety of offenses, some very serious (burglary) and some relatively minor (shoplifting or vandalism).
- Juvenile courts waived more than 10 out of 1,000 burglary cases to criminal court.

**1,000 motor vehicle theft cases**



- In nearly 200 out of 1,000 cases involving charges of motor vehicle theft, the youth was ordered to a period of residential placement.

**1,000 vandalism cases**



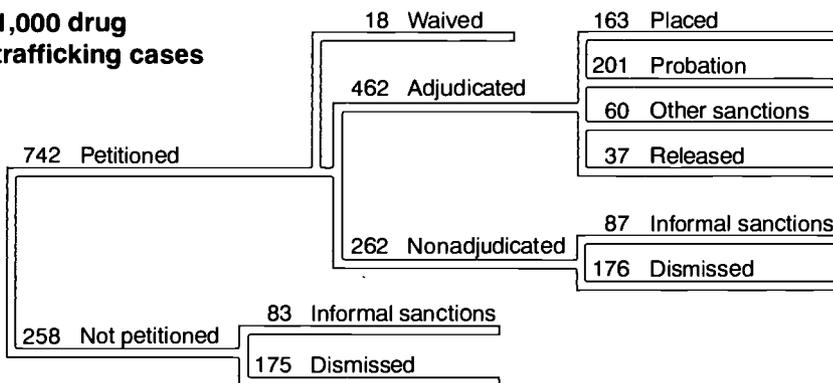
- Juvenile courts handled about 500 out of 1,000 vandalism cases informally (i.e., without a petition). Youth agreed to informal sanctions in 268 of these informal cases.
- Juvenile courts ordered sanctions such as community service and restitution in 52 out of 1,000 vandalism cases, compared with 40 out of 1,000 burglary or motor vehicle theft cases.

Note: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

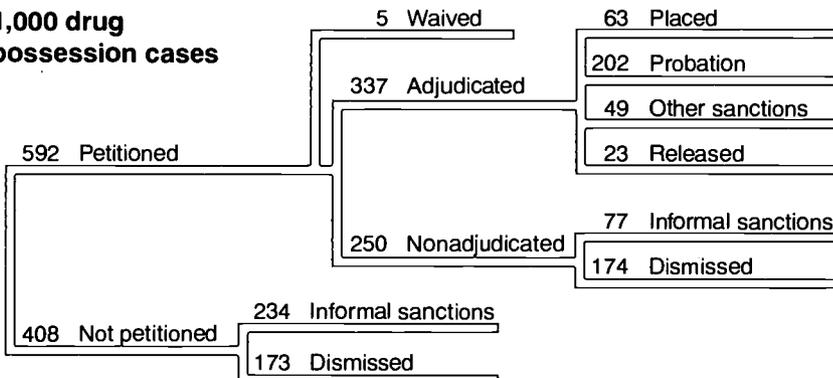
Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

**Drug trafficking cases were much more likely than drug possession cases to result in court-ordered residential placement**

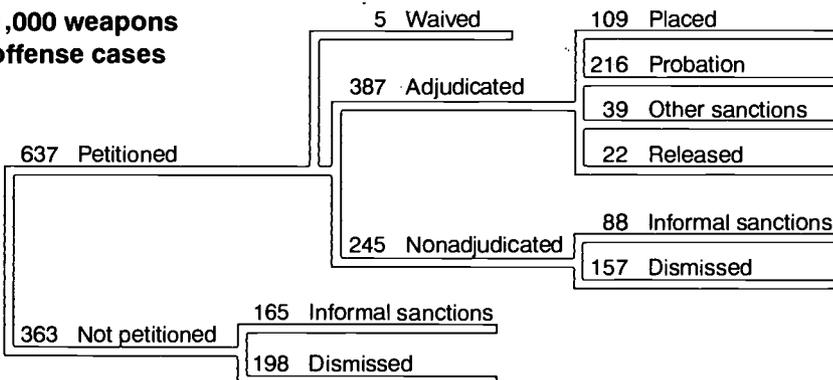
**1,000 drug trafficking cases**



**1,000 drug possession cases**



**1,000 weapons offense cases**



- Juvenile courts waived jurisdiction in 18 out of 1,000 drug trafficking cases in 1996.
- Juvenile courts ordered formal sanctions or waived jurisdiction in more than 4 out of 10 drug trafficking cases.

- Juvenile courts handled nearly two drug possession cases for every drug trafficking case in 1996.
- Juvenile courts waived jurisdiction in 5 out of 1,000 drug possession cases.
- In more than 300 of 1,000 drug possession cases, youth agreed to informal sanctions. In many of these cases, the court referred the youth to other agencies for drug abuse counseling or other treatment services.

- Juvenile courts waived jurisdiction in 5 out of a typical 1,000 cases in which the most serious offense charged was a weapons law violation.
- Juvenile courts ordered formal sanctions or waived jurisdiction in nearly 4 in 10 weapons cases.

Note: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

## Between 1987 and 1996, the juvenile court's formal status offense caseload more than doubled

### What are status offenses?

Traditionally, status offenses were those behaviors that were law violations only if committed by a person of juvenile status. Such behaviors included running away from home, ungovernability (being beyond the control of parents or guardians), truancy, curfew violations, and underage drinking (which also applies to young adults up to age 20).

Some States have *decriminalized* some of these behaviors. In these States, the behaviors are no longer law violations. Juveniles who engage in the behaviors may be classified as dependent children, which gives child protective service agencies rather than juvenile courts the primary responsibility for responding to this population.

### States vary in how they respond to status-offending behavior

The official processing of status offenders varies from State to State. In some States, for example, a runaway's entry into the official system may be through juvenile court intake, while in other States the matter may enter through the child welfare agency. This mixture of approaches to case processing has made it difficult to monitor the volume and characteristics of status offense cases nationally.

In all States, however, when informal efforts to resolve the status-offending behavior fail or when formal intervention is needed, the matter is referred to a juvenile court. In 1996, roughly 1 in 5 status offense cases that came to the attention of juvenile court intake or child welfare agencies was formally processed by the courts.

### Compared with delinquency caseloads, status offense caseloads are small

Juvenile courts in the U.S. formally processed an estimated 162,000 status offense cases in 1996. These cases accounted for about 14% of the court's formal delinquency and status offense caseload in 1996. In 1996, juvenile courts formally processed approximately —

- 25,800 runaway cases.
- 39,300 truancy cases.
- 20,100 ungovernability cases.
- 44,800 status liquor law violation cases.
- 32,000 other status offense cases (e.g., curfew violations, smoking tobacco, and violations of a valid court order).

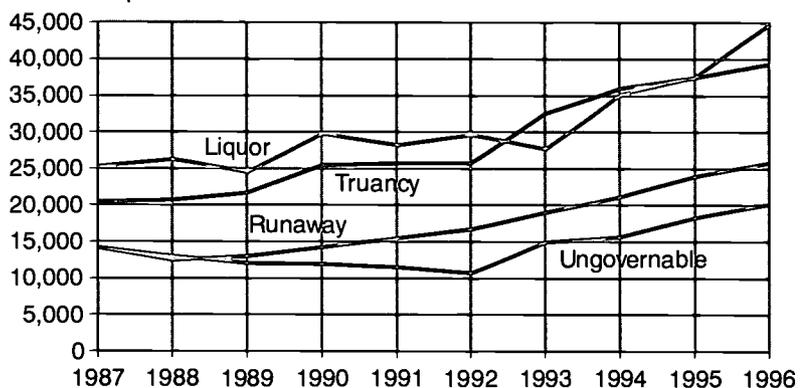
### Compared with delinquency cases, status offense cases are less often referred by police

Law enforcement agencies referred 48% of the petitioned status offense cases processed in juvenile courts in 1996, compared with 86% of delinquency cases. Law enforcement agencies were more likely to be the referral source for status liquor law violation cases than for other status offense cases.

Most serious offense	Percent of cases referred by law enforcement	
	1987	1996
Status Offense	42%	48%
Running away	35	37
Truancy	17	10
Ungovernability	12	12
Liquor	88	93

### The number of status offense cases formally processed by juvenile courts increased 101% from 1987 through 1996

Number of petitioned status offense cases



- The degree of growth in formally processed status offense cases from 1987 through 1996 varied across the major offense categories: truancy (92%), running away (83%), status liquor (77%), and ungovernability (42%).
- In 1996, juvenile courts formally processed 5.7 status offense cases for every 1,000 juveniles age 10 through the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

### Females were involved in 4 in 10 status offense cases formally processed in 1996

Another major difference between delinquency and status offense cases is the proportion of cases that involve females. Although females were charged in only 23% of the delinquency cases formally processed in 1996, they were involved in 41% of status offense cases.

Most serious offense	Males	Females
Status offense	59%	41%
Running away	40	60
Truancy	53	47
Ungovernability	57	43
Liquor	69	31

The proportion of cases involving females varied substantially by offense. In fact, the majority of juveniles brought to court for running away from home in 1996 were female (60%).

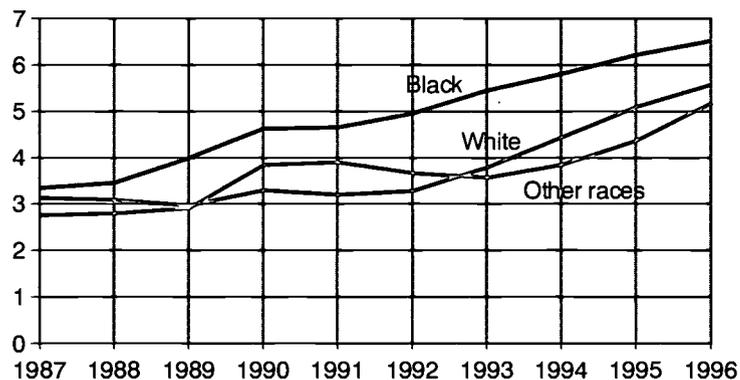
### In 1996, youth were placed out of the home in 14% of all status offense cases adjudicated

Youth were adjudicated as status offenders in 52% of formally processed status offense cases in 1996. Of these cases, 14% resulted in out-of-home placement and 59% in formal probation. Another 24%, largely liquor law violation cases, resulted in other sanctions, such as fines, community service, restitution, or referrals to other agencies for services. The remaining 3% were released with no additional sanction.

Among status offense cases not adjudicated, 62% were dismissed, 26% resulted in informal sanctions other than probation or out-of-home placement, 11% resulted in informal probation, and less than 1% resulted in out-of-home placement.

### Compared with delinquency case rates, there was less racial variation in formal status offense case rates

Petitioned cases per 1,000 juveniles ages 10–upper age

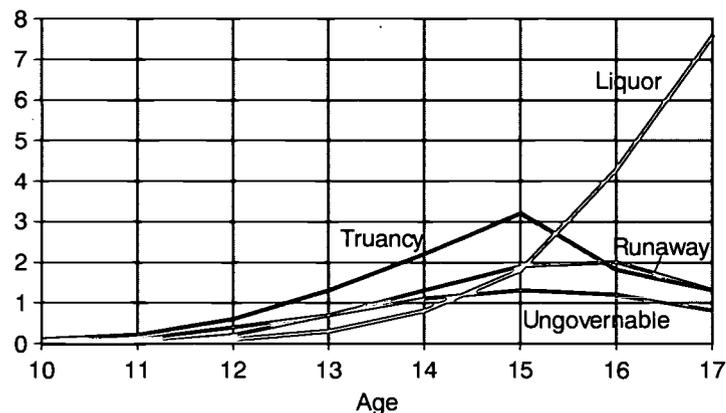


- Between 1987 and 1996, the overall case rate for petitioned status offense cases increased 78% for whites, 95% for blacks, and 87% for juveniles of other races.
- In 1996, the overall case rate for petitioned status offense cases was 6.5 for blacks, 5.6 for whites, and 5.2 for juveniles of other races.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

### Case rates for most status offenses decline in the older age groups; liquor law violation case rates, however, increase substantially throughout the juvenile years

Petitioned cases per 1,000 juveniles in age group

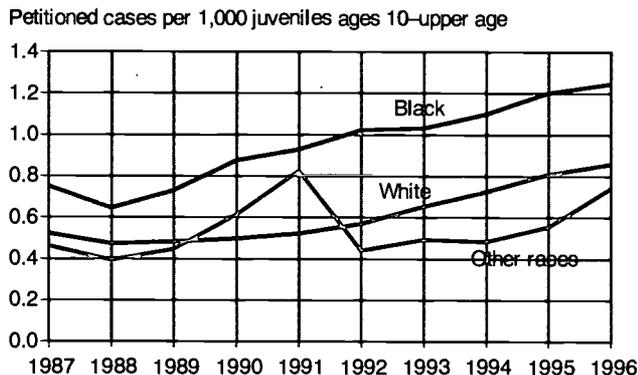


- In 1996, 15 was the peak age for truancy and ungovernability case rates. For runaway cases, case rates dropped off at age 17. The age-specific case rate patterns were not substantially different for males and females.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

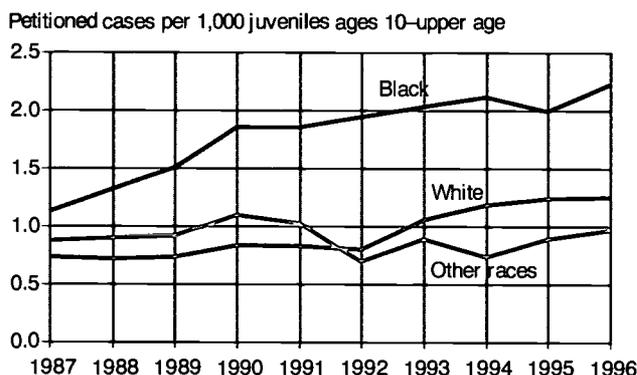
**From 1987 to 1996, case rates for black juveniles were consistently higher than case rates for whites or juveniles of other races for all status offense categories except liquor law violations**

**Runaway case rates**



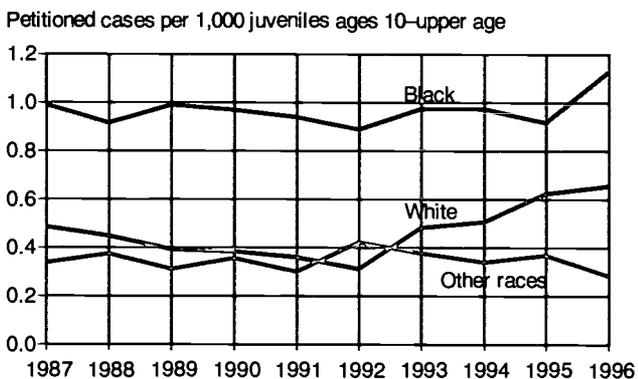
- Runaway case rates increased more than 60% for each racial group between 1987 and 1996.
- In 1996, the runaway case rate for black juveniles was nearly 50% greater than the rate for whites.

**Truancy case rates**



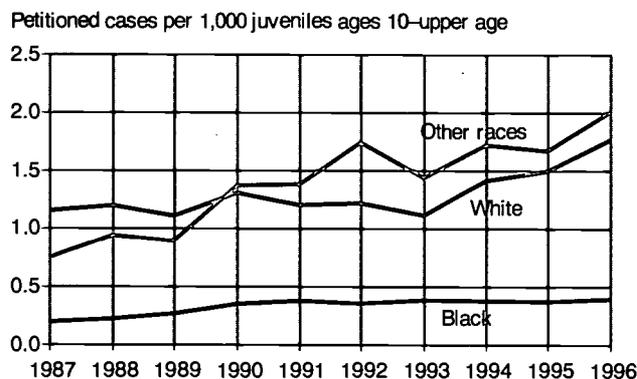
- Truancy case rates increased substantially for whites (70%) and for blacks (97%) between 1987 and 1996. For juveniles of other races, the 1996 truancy rate was 11% greater than the 1987 rate.

**Ungovernability case rates**



- Among whites, the rate for ungovernability cases rose 36% between 1987 and 1996, compared with 14% among blacks. Among juveniles of other races, the rate dropped 16%.
- In 1996, both the truancy and ungovernability case rates for black juveniles were about 75% greater than those for whites.

**Liquor law violation case rates**

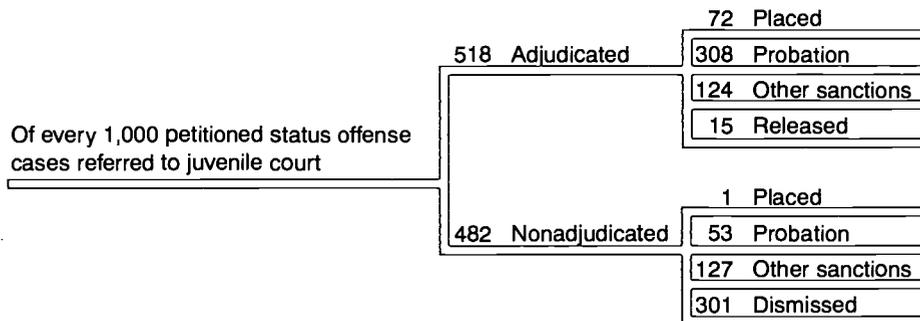


- There were increases among all races in the rate at which juveniles were formally processed for status liquor law violations.
- The liquor case rate rose 54% among whites and more than doubled among nonwhites.
- The case rate for status liquor law violations for whites was more than three times the rate for blacks in 1996.

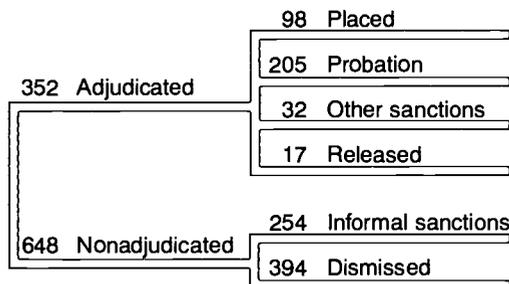
Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987–1996* [machine-readable data files].

# How were petitioned status offense cases processed in juvenile court in 1996?

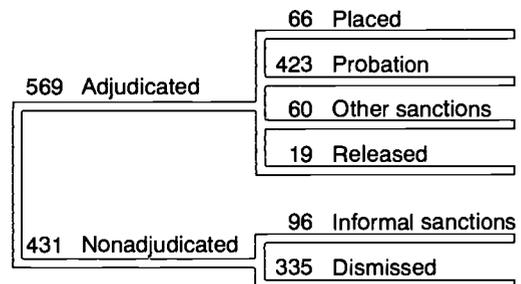
Of every 1,000 petitioned status offense cases handled in 1996, 308 resulted in formal probation and 72 resulted in residential placement following adjudication



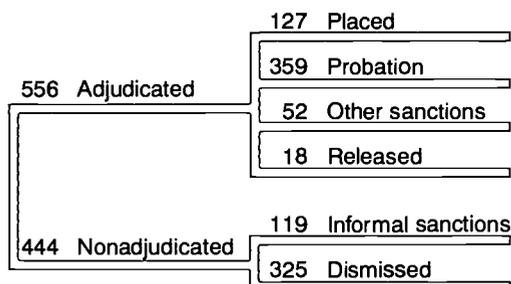
## 1,000 petitioned runaway cases



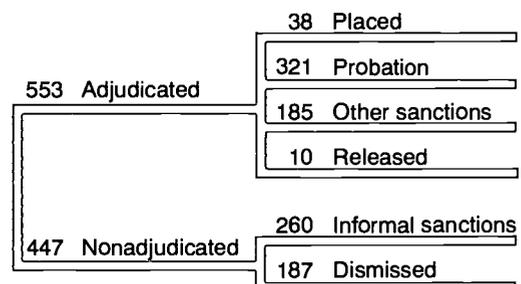
## 1,000 petitioned truancy cases



## 1,000 petitioned ungovernability cases



## 1,000 petitioned liquor law violation cases



Note: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl et al.'s *Juvenile court statistics 1996*.

## The juvenile court's use of judicial waiver has changed over the past decade

### In certain cases, juveniles may be tried in criminal court

Certain juveniles—those charged with serious offenses, those with lengthy records of prior offenses, or those who are unreceptive to treatment in the juvenile justice system—are sometimes transferred to criminal court. Most States have modified their laws in recent years to enable the transfer of more young offenders into the criminal justice system.

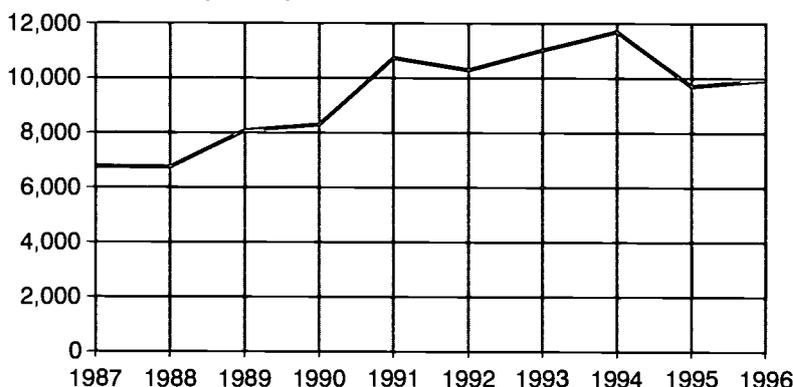
In a growing number of States, cases that meet certain age and offense criteria are excluded by statute from juvenile court jurisdiction and may be filed directly in criminal court. In some States, prosecutors have discretion to file certain juvenile cases directly in criminal court. In most States, laws also allow juvenile court judges to waive jurisdiction over cases meeting certain criteria. The criminal court then has responsibility to prosecute such cases. There are no national trend data on the number of young offenders moved into the criminal justice system directly via statutory exclusion or prosecutor decision (rather than by juvenile court waiver), but recent legislative trends suggest that the number must be growing.

### The offense profile of waived cases has changed

In 1987, property offense cases accounted for 55% of judicially waived delinquency cases and person offense cases accounted for 28%. By 1995, the offense profile of waived cases had changed, with person offense cases accounting for 47% and property offense cases for 34% of waived cases. In 1996, however, waived property cases increased and waived person cases declined; as a result, person cases dropped to

### Juvenile courts waived 47% more delinquency cases to criminal court in 1996 than in 1987

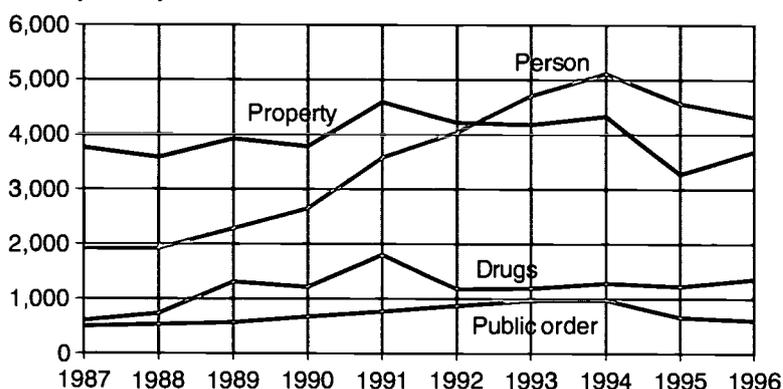
Delinquency cases judicially waived to criminal court



- Between 1987 and 1994, the number of delinquency cases judicially waived to criminal court grew 73% (from 6,800 to 11,700). By 1996, the number of cases was down to 10,000, a drop of 15%.
- One reason for the decline after 1994 was that a larger number of serious cases bypassed the juvenile justice system under newly enacted statutory exclusion and prosecutor discretion provisions.

### Person offenses outnumbered property offenses among waived cases after 1992

Cases judicially waived to criminal court



- Waived person offense cases increased 167% between 1987 and 1994, then dropped 16% by 1996 for an overall increase of 125%.
- The number of waived drug cases peaked in 1991, 198% above the 1987 number. After 1991, waived drug cases declined 25%.
- The number of waived property and public order cases did not show much change between 1987 and 1996.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl's *Delinquency cases waived to criminal court, 1987-1996*.

43% of waived cases and property cases increased to 37%. In comparison, drug and public order cases were a small proportion of waived cases in 1996 (14% and 6%, respectively).

### Waived cases generally involve males age 16 or older

The demographic characteristics of judicially waived cases have changed somewhat over the past decade. The proportion of younger juveniles has increased. Despite this change, the vast majority of waivers involve males age 16 or older, although their proportion has diminished some. These older males accounted for 88% of all waived cases in 1987 and 81% in 1996.

Case characteristics	Percent of waived cases	
	1987	1996
Waived cases	6,800	10,000
Sex	100%	100%
Male	95	95
Female	5	5
Age at referral	100%	100%
15 or younger	7	12
16 or older	93	88
Race	100%	100%
White	57	51
Black	41	46
Other race	2	3

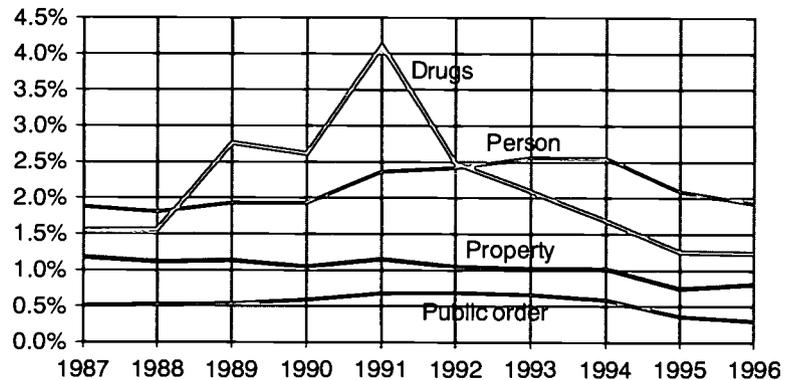
Judicially waived cases included a greater proportion of blacks in 1996 than in 1987. In 1987, black males accounted for 39% of waivers; by 1996, they accounted for 44%.

### Waiver trends are related to trends in transfer provisions

Changes in the juvenile court's use of waiver, the characteristics of waived cases, and the volume of cases waived reflect changes in transfer provisions. For example, as

### About 1% of formally processed delinquency cases are waived, but trends in the use of waiver vary by the most serious offense

Percent of petitioned cases judicially waived to criminal court



- The proportion of formal delinquency cases waived was 1.2% in 1987, peaked at over 1.5% in 1991, and dropped back down to 1.0% by 1996.
- From 1989 through 1992, drug offenses were more likely to be waived than were cases involving other offenses. The proportion of formally handled drug cases waived was over 4% in 1991.
- Person offense cases were more likely to be waived in 1996 than were other types of cases.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Stahl's *Delinquency cases waived to criminal court, 1987–1996*.

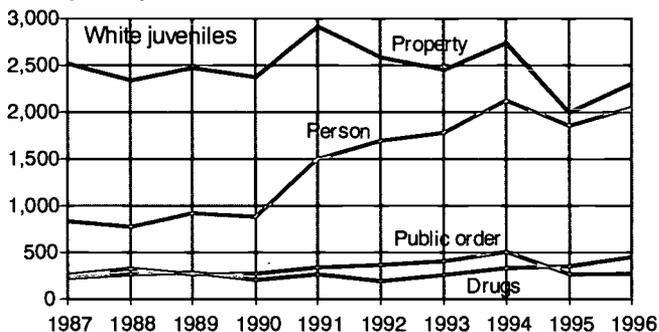
presumptive waiver for certain serious offenses has become more common across the country, such cases have had an increased likelihood of waiver. In addition, the recent decline in the volume of waived cases can be at least partially attributed to the proliferation of statutory exclusion provisions—many of the very serious cases that in the past came to juvenile court and were waived are now filed directly in criminal court.

Changes in the waiver caseload also result from changes in the delinquency caseload. For example, the growth in the total volume of the juvenile court's person offense caseload accounts for nearly all of the growth in waived person offense cases.

In addition, changes in the waiver caseload result from changes in the system's response to certain types of crimes. This explains the growth in waived person offense cases not accounted for by the growth in the person offense caseload. This effect is also seen in the use of waiver in drug cases. Following the introduction of crack cocaine and the subsequent "war on drugs," there was a change in the perceived seriousness of drug offenses (particularly drug trafficking). The likelihood of waiver among formally processed drug cases rose from 1.6% in 1987 to 4.1% in 1991. In 1991, the number of waived drug cases peaked at more than 1,800 despite the fact that the total number of formal drug cases was at a 4-year low.

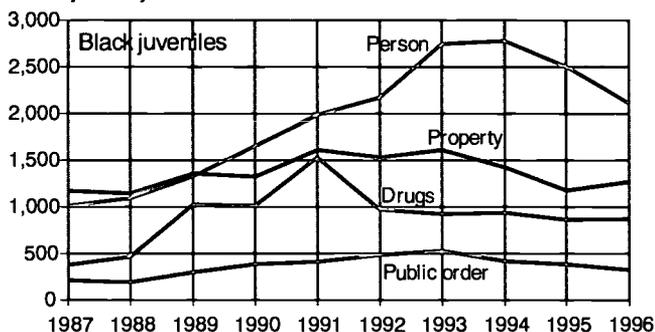
**Both whites and blacks experienced a sharp increase in the number of person offense cases judicially waived to criminal court between 1987 and 1994**

Cases judicially waived to criminal court



- Among whites, the number of property cases waived exceeded the number of person offense cases waived despite the 145% increase in waived person cases from 1987 to 1996. In comparison, among blacks, there were 66% more waived person cases than property cases in 1996.
- Among whites, there was little change in drug or public order cases waived over the past decade.

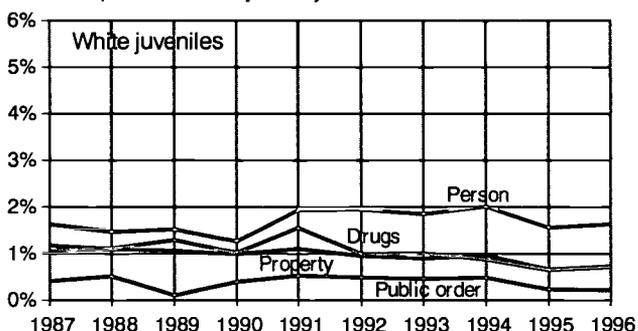
Cases judicially waived to criminal court



- Among blacks, the number of person offense cases waived rose 174% between 1987 and 1994. This increase in waived person cases was followed by a 24% drop through 1996.
- Among blacks, there was a steep increase in waived drug cases between 1987 and 1991. Waived drug cases dropped off after 1991, but have yet to return to the 1987 level.

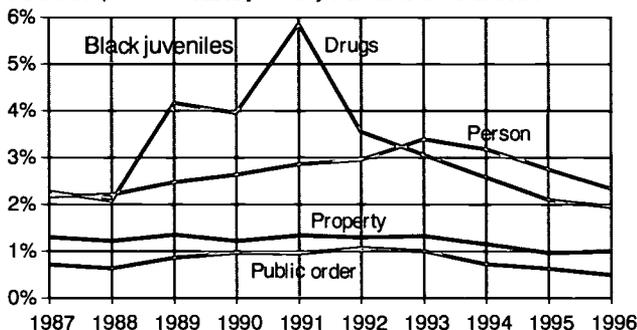
**Racial differences in the likelihood of waiver stem primarily from differences in the use of waiver for person and drug offense cases**

Percent of petitioned cases judicially waived to criminal court



- The likelihood of waiver is greater for black than for white juveniles across all four general offense categories. These data, however, do not control for racial differences in offense severity or in juveniles' offense histories.
- There has been little change in the proportion of cases waived for property or public order cases for either whites or blacks.

Percent of petitioned cases judicially waived to criminal court



- For blacks, the likelihood of waiver for person offense cases rose through 1993. This increase in the use of waiver was followed by a decline that left the likelihood of waiver in 1996 near the 1987 level.
- The use of waiver in drug cases involving black youth increased sharply after 1988, approaching 6% in 1991. By 1996, however, the likelihood of waiver had dropped below the 1987 level.

Source: Authors' analysis of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1987-1996* [machine-readable data files].

## In the Nation's 75 largest counties, juvenile transfers to criminal court were 1% of all felony defendants

### Bureau of Justice Statistics' State Court Processing Statistics show how criminal courts handle transferred juveniles

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) State Court Processing Statistics (SCPS) compiles information on the processing of felony defendants in the State courts of the 75 largest counties in the U.S. Data are collected every other year on all felony cases filed on selected days during the month of May. The data represent cases processed in the 75 most populous counties. To obtain a large enough sample of juvenile transfers, 1990, 1992, and 1994 SCPS data were combined.

The SCPS includes only cases that involve offenses defined as felonies in State penal codes. Although the term "felony" is not uniformly defined or used across the country, it often is defined as a crime for which a convicted offender can be sentenced to more than 1 year in prison.

### Juvenile transfers were inferred from offender and case characteristics

Juveniles transferred to criminal court were not specifically identified in the data collection but were inferred by BJS from case and offender characteristics. Transfer cases included the following:

- Offenders age 15 or younger at arrest in Connecticut, New York, and North Carolina, where the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction is 15 and all youth age 16 or older were considered adults.
- Offenders age 16 or younger at arrest in Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, South Carolina, and

Texas, where the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction is 16 and all youth age 17 or older were considered adults.

- Offenders age 17 or younger at arrest in the remaining 39 States and the District of Columbia, where the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction is 17 and all youth age 18 or older were considered adults.

Based on these age criteria, 1 in 4 defendants under age 18 was considered a juvenile by State law. These juvenile transfers represented about 1% of felony filings in the 75 largest counties.

### 7 in 10 female transfers were charged with person offenses

Females were 8% of all juvenile transfers. Over 70% of female transfers were charged with person offenses; 55% were charged with robbery. Given their proportion of transfers, females were overrepresented among robbery cases (13%) and underrepresented among assault cases (3%) and burglary cases (0%).

### Black male transfers dominated many offense categories

Black males accounted for 7 in 10 transfers charged with person offenses. The percentage of black males varied across offenses:

- 65% of murder cases.
- 72% of rape cases.
- 78% of robbery cases.
- 61% of assault cases.
- 75% of drug cases.
- 66% of public order cases.

White males, however, accounted for the majority of burglary transfers (82%).

### Most juveniles tried as adults in criminal court were black male person offenders

Offender characteristics	Percent of juvenile transfer felony defendants in criminal court
Age	100%
14 or younger	8
15	24
16	27
17	40
Sex	100%
Male	92
Female	8
Race	100%
White	31
Black	67
Other race	2
Offenses	100%
Person	66
Murder	11
Rape	3
Robbery	34
Assault	15
Property	17
Burglary	6
Theft	8
Drug	14
Public order	3

- About two-thirds of juveniles prosecuted in criminal courts in the Nation's 75 largest counties were charged with a felony person offense.

Note: General offense categories include offenses other than those displayed. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Strom, Smith, and Snyder's State Court Processing Statistics, 1990-94: Juvenile felony defendants in criminal courts.

**Half of transfers were released prior to disposition of their case**

Just over half of juveniles prosecuted in criminal court made bail or were otherwise released from detention prior to the final disposition of their case (51%). Public order defendants were the least likely to be released, and property defendants were the most likely.

Most serious offense	Percent released before case disposition
All offenses	51%
Person	44
Murder	13
Rape	47
Robbery	55
Assault	47
Property	74
Burglary	66
Theft	75
Drug	63
Public order	19

**Charges were dismissed in most transfers that were not convicted**

In most cases where the transferred juvenile was not convicted in criminal court, it was because the charges against the defendant were dismissed: the prosecutor or the court dismissed charges in 1 in 4 transfers. Juveniles were acquitted in 2% of transfer cases, including 7% of murder cases and 11% of burglary cases. There were also a small number of cases in which the adjudication was deferred or the matter diverted. About 9% of transfers resulted in diversion or a deferred adjudication.

**More than 6 in 10 transfers to criminal court were convicted**

Most serious offense	Percent of juvenile transfer felony defendants convicted in criminal court				
	Total	Felony			Misdemeanor
		Total	Plea	Trial	
All offenses	64%	59%	51%	8%	5%
Person	59	56	47	9	4
Murder	58	56	37	19	3
Rape	54	54	54	0	0
Robbery	58	56	48	8	2
Assault	63	53	46	7	9
Property	74	61	59	3	13
Burglary	77	64	64	0	13
Theft	76	59	54	6	16
Drug	70	68	56	12	2
Public order	91	91	91	0	0

- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of juvenile transfers to criminal court in the 75 largest counties were convicted. The conviction rate was 66% for adults age 18 and older and 57% for adults younger than 18. In comparison, 58% of formal delinquency cases were adjudicated.
- Nearly all of the transfer convictions were for felonies. Conviction rates were highest for public order offenses (91%) and lowest for person offenses (59%).

Note: General offense categories include offenses other than those displayed. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Sources: Authors' adaptation of Strom, Smith, and Snyder's State Court Processing Statistics, 1990-94: Juvenile felony defendants in criminal courts.

**More than half of juveniles transferred to criminal court pleaded guilty**

Defendants pleaded guilty to a felony in 51% of transfers. An additional 5% pleaded guilty to misdemeanors. A bench or jury trial was held in 10% of transfer cases adjudicated within 1 year; 4 in 5 of these trials ended in guilty verdicts, and the others ended in acquittal.

Most convicted defendants were convicted of the original arrest charge, regardless of the adjudication method. This was especially true for person offenders: for example, 87% of those charged with robbery and later convicted were convicted of the original charge.

## Most transferred juveniles convicted of felonies in the 75 largest counties were sentenced to prison

### In the 75 largest counties, nearly 7 in 10 convicted transfers were sentenced to incarceration

Most serious adjudication or conviction offense	Total	Percent of convicted transfers incarcerated			Percent of convicted transfers not incarcerated		
		Total	Prison	Jail	Total	Probation	Fine
All offenses	100%	68%	49%	19%	32%	31%	1%
All felonies	100	69	52	16	31	30	1
Person	100	79	68	11	21	21	0
Murder	100	100	100	0	0	0	0
Rape	100	100	25	75	0	0	0
Robbery	100	75	69	6	25	25	0
Assault	100	73	61	12	27	27	0
Property	100	57	32	25	43	40	3
Burglary	100	24	24	0	76	76	0
Theft	100	74	38	36	26	26	0
Drug	100	50	34	16	50	46	3
Public order	100	60	27	33	40	40	0
Misdemeanors	100	62	5	57	38	32	6

- Transfers convicted in criminal court of person offenses were more likely to be sentenced to some sort of incarceration and less likely to be ordered to a period of probation supervision than transfers convicted of other offenses.
- Criminal courts rarely imposed alternative sanctions (i.e., dispositions other than incarceration or probation).

Note: General offense categories include offenses other than those displayed.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Strom, Smith, and Snyder's State Court Processing Statistics, 1990-94: Juvenile felony defendants in criminal courts.

### Technical note

The information on case processing of juveniles transferred to criminal court is drawn from two Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) data collection programs: State Court Processing Statistics and the National Judicial Reporting Program. Because the number of transfers is small relative to the volume of cases handled in criminal court, and because the handling of such cases varies significantly from State to State, developing national information on this population is extremely difficult.

Neither BJS data collection program was designed to provide information

on juveniles transferred to criminal court. Transfers have, therefore, been identified in these data sets by inference processes that used defendant age and State upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction.

Although these data sets overlap to some degree, each provides unique information. Because there are important differences between the two data sets in collection methods and in inferences made to identify transfers, readers are cautioned against directly combining data from these two data sets.

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# Convicted transfers were not always more likely to receive harsher sanctions than under-age-18 adults

## Transferred juveniles accounted for 1% of convicted felons in 1994

The National Judicial Reporting Program (NJRP) compiles information on sentences that felons receive in State courts nationwide and on the felons' characteristics. Data are collected on a sample basis every other year. The 1994 data were collected on felony cases from a nationally representative sample of 300 counties. The term "felony" although not uniformly defined or used across the country, is often defined as crimes for which a convicted offender can be sentenced to more than 1 year in prison. As with the SCPS data, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) inferred transferred juveniles in NJRP data from case and offender characteristics.

According to BJS, 21,000 youth younger than 18 were prosecuted and convicted as adults for felonies in State courts in 1994. These under-18 convicted felons accounted for just over 2% of the more than

872,200 felons convicted in State courts in 1994.

About half of the convicted felons under age 18 were juveniles transferred to criminal court by statutory exclusion, prosecutor discretion, or judicial waiver. The other half were youth under 18 who were adults by State definition. After adjusting for cases where age at arrest was unknown, BJS estimated that nationwide 11,800 felony convictions resulted from transferred cases.

## Offense profiles of under-18 felons differed from those of older felons

Person offenses were the conviction offense for a greater proportion of under-18 felons (40%) than of those age 18 or older (19%). This difference was attributable primarily to the robbery category: robbery was the conviction offense for 22% of under-18 felons, compared with 5% for felons 18 or older.

Drug offenses were the conviction offense for a greater proportion of felons age 18 or older (32%) than of those under 18 (19%). Among felons 18 or older, 3 were convicted of drug trafficking for every 2 convicted of drug possession. Among felons under 18, trafficking convictions outnumbered possession convictions nearly 3 to 1.

## Half of convicted felons who were transferred juveniles were convicted of person offenses

In most States, provisions for transferring juveniles to criminal court target the most serious offenses and offenders. The result is that, compared with youth under 18 who were adults by State definition, transferred juveniles had a greater proportion of person offense convictions and smaller proportions of property and drug convictions.

Most serious conviction offense	Percent of convicted	
	Transferred juveniles	Under age 18 adults
All felonies	100%	100%
Person offenses	53	28
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	7	3
Rape	2	2
Robbery	28	17
Aggravated assault	16	12
Other person	1	1
Property offenses	24	31
Burglary	15	18
Larceny and motor vehicle theft	8	12
Fraud	1	1
Drug offenses	13	24
Possession	3	7
Trafficking	10	17
Weapons offenses	4	8
Other offenses*	6	9

\*Includes nonviolent offenses such as receiving stolen property and vandalism.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

## An estimated 27,000 juveniles were proceeded against in criminal court by prosecutors' offices nationwide in 1996

The 1996 National Survey of Prosecutors sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that three-quarters of prosecutors' offices reported proceeding against juveniles in criminal court that year. This was an increase over 1994, when 59% of offices reported handling juvenile cases transferred to criminal court.

Overall, an estimated 27,000 juveniles were proceeded against in criminal court in 1996. Half of all offices said they proceeded against five or more juveniles in criminal court.

About a third of all offices reported having a specialized unit or design-

ated attorney(s) to handle juvenile transfer cases. Specialized units were more common for full-time, medium-sized offices (60%) than for large (50%), small (34%), or part-time (29%) offices.

Fewer than 12% of all offices reported having written guidelines about proceeding against juveniles in criminal court. Full-time large offices were more likely than other types of offices to have such written guidelines (56%). About 4 in 10 full-time medium offices, 1 in 10 small offices, and 1 in 17 part-time offices reported guidelines.

**Transferred juveniles convicted of felonies were not necessarily more likely to be sentenced to prison than similarly charged under-18 felons who were adults under their State's definitions**

Most serious conviction offense	Percent of convicted transferred juveniles					Percent of convicted felons under-age-18 adult (by State definition)				
	Total	Incarceration			Probation	Total	Incarceration			Probation
		Total	Prison	Jail			Total	Prison	Jail	
All felonies	100%	80%	63%	16%	21%	100%	66%	54%	11%	34%
Person offenses	100	88	78	10	12	100	77	73	5	23
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	100	99	97	2	1	100	99	97	1	1
Rape	100	90	84	6	10	100	96	85	11	5
Robbery	100	84	75	9	16	100	75	70	2	26
Aggravated assault	100	90	74	16	10	100	76	68	8	24
Other person offenses	100	86	71	14	14	100	36	36	<1	64
Property offenses	100	65	42	23	36	100	62	47	14	39
Burglary	100	65	46	18	36	100	70	65	6	30
Larceny and motor vehicle theft	100	64	36	28	36	100	50	21	29	50
Fraud	100	70	21	49	30	100	30	22	9	70
Drug offenses	100	70	45	25	30	100	56	47	9	44
Possession	100	65	37	28	35	100	40	31	9	60
Trafficking	100	71	47	24	29	100	63	54	9	37
Weapons offenses	100	69	49	20	31	100	72	47	25	28
Other offenses*	100	91	67	24	9	100	64	47	16	36

- Transferred juveniles convicted of robbery, aggravated assault, other person offenses, larceny and motor vehicle theft, drug possession, or "other offenses" were more likely to be sentenced to prison than were under-18 adults with the same conviction offenses. For half of these offenses (robbery, other person offenses, and drug possession), prison sentences were longer for transferred juveniles than for under-18 adults.
- For other offense categories (murder, rape, burglary, fraud, drug trafficking, and weapons offenses), however, under-18 adults were as likely as or more likely than transferred juveniles to receive prison sentences.

\*Includes nonviolent offenses such as receiving stolen property and vandalism.

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Brown and Langan's *State court sentencing of convicted felons, 1994*.

## Juvenile transfers who "do the adult crime" may do more than the "adult time"

### The average maximum prison sentence for transferred juveniles convicted of felonies was 9<sup>7</sup> years

Most serious conviction offense	Mean maximum sentence length for convicted felons sentenced to prison (in months)		
	Transferred juveniles	Adults under age 18	Adults age 18 or older
All felonies	111	87	69
Person offenses	139	128	115
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	287	279	258
Rape	200	117	149
Robbery	139	107	112
Aggravated assault	75	102	81
Other person offenses	130	124	70
Property offenses	50	67	56
Burglary	52	68	67
Larceny and motor vehicle theft	45	62	45
Fraud	44	57	51
Drug offenses	80	58	60
Possession	66	42	48
Trafficking	83	62	66
Weapons offenses	66	62	46
Other offenses*	61	68	40

- Average maximum prison sentences for transferred juveniles were sometimes substantially longer than maximum sentences imposed on felons under 18 who were adults in their State or for adults age 18 or older. Overall, transferred juveniles convicted of felonies and sentenced to prison were sentenced to an average maximum of 9<sup>7</sup> years. In comparison, under-18 adults had an average maximum of 7<sup>7</sup> years, and adults 18 or older an average maximum of 5<sup>7</sup> years.

\* Includes nonviolent offenses such as receiving stolen property and vandalism.

Note: Means exclude sentences to death or life in prison. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Brown and Langan's *State court sentencing of convicted felons, 1994*.

### Criminal courts sentenced juvenile transfers convicted of murder to longer prison terms than other convicted murderers

The average maximum prison sentences imposed for felony murder and nonnegligent manslaughter convictions were longer than sentences for other types of offenses. For those not sentenced to death or life in prison, juvenile transfers convicted of murder received longer sentences than their adult counterparts. On average, the maximum prison sentence imposed on transferred juveniles convicted of murder in 1994 was 23 years 11 months. This was 2 years and 5 months longer than the average maximum prison sentence for adults age 18 or older, and 8 months longer than the average maximum sentence for under-18 adults convicted of murder.

BJS did not estimate the number of juvenile transfers convicted of murder who were sentenced to death or life in prison. Across all age groups, however, 25% of all felons convicted of murder or nonnegligent manslaughter received life sentences, and 2% received death sentences. (For more information on death sentences imposed for crimes committed before age 18, see chapter 7.)

# Juveniles who have long court histories or who injure victims are most likely to be waived to criminal court

## Has the use of judicial waiver changed independently of changes in transfer laws?

Recent legislative changes have enabled prosecutors and juvenile court judges to send more youth into the criminal justice system. New research finds, however, that the volume and nature of juvenile waivers were changing prior to these legislative changes.

For example, a comparison of juvenile waivers in Pennsylvania in 1986 and 1994 found that, with no change in legislation and a 32% increase in juvenile violent crime arrests, the number of waivers doubled. Similarly, a study of cases considered for judicial waiver in South Carolina between 1985 and 1994 identified large changes in the use of waiver during a period when there were no changes to the transfer law. This study found that the number of waivers requested by prosecutors was relatively static from 1984 through 1990, tripled from 1990 to 1992, and by 1994 had nearly returned to the pre-1990 level.

Media reports on juvenile violence trends often characterize the juvenile court as lenient in its treatment of violent juveniles, and juvenile court judges as resistant to sending youth into the criminal justice system. New research, however, finds this not to be the case. The South Carolina transfer study found that juvenile court judges approved 8 in 10 transfer requests made from 1985 through 1994. A similar study of waiver in Utah from 1988 through 1995 found that judges there also approved 8 in 10 transfer requests.

## The types of cases waived have changed since the mid-1980's

A comparison of cases judicially transferred to criminal court in Pennsylvania in 1986 and in 1994 (under the same statutory provisions) found differences in the nature of the offenses and in the court histories of the transferred youth.

Most serious offense	Offense profile of cases waived	
	1986	1994
Total	100%	100%
Robbery	26	16
Aggravated assault	14	31
Violent sex offense	6	2
Burglary	31	9
Theft	14	16
Drugs	6	22
Other	3	4

In addition to doubling in number since 1986, the 1994 transferred cases had a greater share of aggravated assault and drug cases and relatively fewer robbery and burglary cases. A smaller proportion of the cases in 1994 came from the State's largest urban center, Philadelphia. Compared with 1986, the cases waived in 1994 had a greater proportion of juveniles under age 17 (24% vs. 13%) and a greater proportion of juveniles with no prior formal probations (49% vs. 35%). Cases waived in 1986 and 1994 had similar proportions of youth with no prior adjudications (16% vs. 14%). Cases waived in 1994 were more likely to result in prison sentences than were 1986 waivers (43% vs. 27%). Thus, in Pennsylvania, both the type of youth waived and the case outcomes have evolved since the mid-1980's independently of changes in waiver provisions.

## What effect do new exclusion laws have on case outcomes?

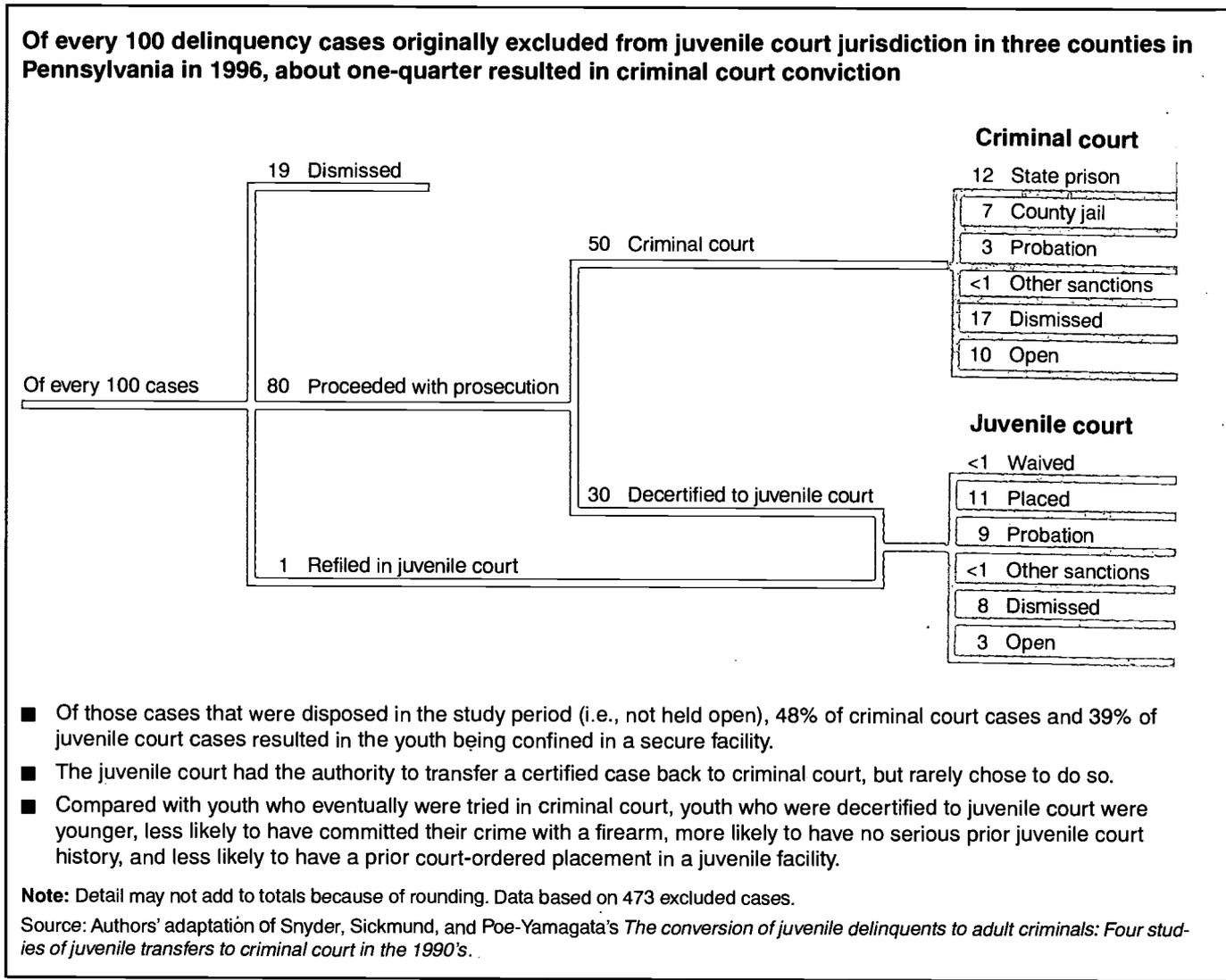
Prior to 1996, Pennsylvania had in place two types of transfer mechanisms: a broad waiver statute that allowed waiver for youth 14 or older charged with certain felonies, and a statute that excluded all juveniles charged with murder from juvenile court jurisdiction. In 1996, the State added a new set of exclusion provisions. Under the new law, youth are excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction if they:

- Are age 15 or older *and*
- Are charged with certain violent offenses (such as robbery, kidnapping, violent sex offenses, or aggravated assault) *and*
- Committed the offense with a weapon or have been previously adjudicated of an excluded offense.

The new exclusion law targets a group of offenders that would have been eligible for transfer under the existing waiver statute, but the new exclusion law also transfers some cases that had a relatively low likelihood of waiver.

A study of court records for three Pennsylvania counties found that robberies and aggravated assaults each accounted for nearly 50% of the 1996 exclusions. Compared with the robbery and aggravated assault cases waived in 1994, cases excluded in 1996 under the new law included greater proportions of females (13% vs. 1%) and youth under age 17 (50% vs. 25%).

Excluded juveniles also had less significant juvenile court careers than did youth transferred in 1994. Of the 1996 excluded cases, 53% had no prior adjudications, compared with



7% of the cases waived in 1994. Fewer of the excluded youth had ever been placed on probation (36% vs. 48%), and fewer had any prior residential placements (28% vs. 68%).

Although the experiences in other States may differ, of all the cases excluded in Pennsylvania in 1996, 19% were dismissed at the preliminary hearings and 1% did not meet the criteria for exclusion and were

refiled in juvenile court. As a result, 80% of the excluded cases proceeded past the first phase of criminal court processing. Of those that proceeded deeper into the criminal justice system, more than one-third (38%) were transferred to juvenile court following a decertification hearing. In the end, just half of all excluded cases (50%) reached the point at which the youth could be convicted in criminal court.

Compared with the dispositional outcomes of cases that remained in criminal court, those that were decertified to juvenile court were less likely to remain open after a year and were less likely to be dismissed. The proportion of juvenile court dispositions involving residential placement (36%) was about the same as the proportion of criminal court dispositions involving incarceration (39%), although the nature

of such custody is arguably quite different.

Cases initially excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction in three Pennsylvania counties, 1996:

Disposition	Court imposing disposition	
	Juvenile	Criminal
Incarceration	36%	39%
State prison	–	24
County jail	–	15
Probation	28	7
Other sanction	1	<1
Dismissed	26	34
Open after 1 year	8	20

– Not applicable.

Of all the cases initially excluded from juvenile jurisdiction, 19% were ultimately sentenced to incarceration in an adult prison or jail following a criminal court conviction. In comparison, 77% of the cases waived from juvenile court to criminal court in 1994 resulted in prison or jail incarceration.

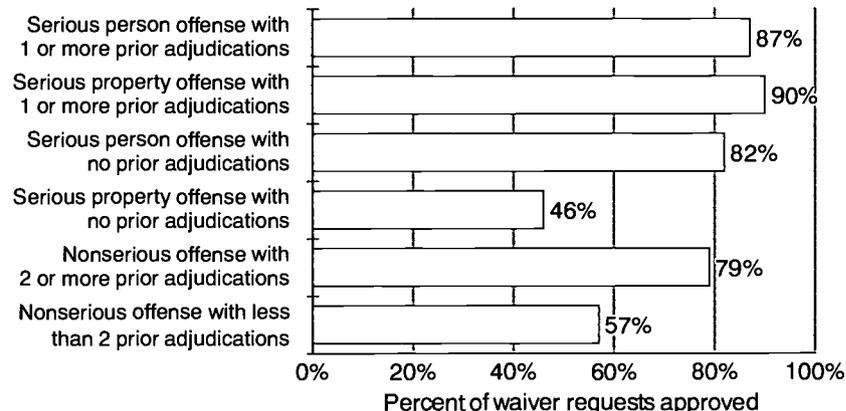
A comparison of the number of judicial waivers before and after implementation of the new Pennsylvania exclusion statutes shows that the decline in the number of judicial waivers roughly equals the number of excluded youth who were sanctioned in a criminal court under the exclusion statutes. Therefore, the impact of the exclusion statute was negligible if one simply considers the ultimate case outcomes. The exclusion statute, however, added to the processing time of cases that were eventually handled within the juvenile justice system and placed an additional burden on local jails and the criminal courts.

### What explains the high use of waiver for offenders who have no prior adjudications?

Both the South Carolina and Utah studies found that substantial proportions of cases considered for waiver involved juveniles with no prior adjudications (72% in South Carolina and 82% in Utah). These high proportions of waiver approvals are explained by factors related to the crime incident.

In deciding if a case should be waived, prosecutors and judges have access to information on the circumstances surrounding the crime. That information has an impact on the transfer decision. Details such as the juvenile's use of a weapon, degree of injury suffered by any victims, whether the incident was gang-related, the presence of co-offenders, and the juvenile's relative involvement in the incident contribute to the perceived seriousness of the offense.

### What case characteristics affect the transfer decision?



- Offense seriousness is a key factor in the transfer decision. Cases involving serious person offenses (murder, violent sex offenses, robbery, kidnaping, and aggravated assault) were more likely to be approved for waiver (85%) than other types of cases (73%), regardless of the youth's court history.
- In addition to offense seriousness, a juvenile's court history was a relevant factor in transfer decisions. Cases involving juveniles with prior adjudications were more likely to be approved for waiver to criminal court (83%) than were cases involving juveniles with no prior adjudications (72%).

Note: Data are South Carolina waiver requests for 1985–1994.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Snyder, Sickmund, and Poe-Yamagata's *The conversion of juvenile delinquents to adult criminals: Four studies of juvenile transfers to criminal court in the 1990's*.

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When all of these incident and case characteristics were taken into consideration, some were found to be more important than others to the waiver decision. Analysis of the detailed case data from Utah found that the proportion of cases waived was significantly greater for cases involving juveniles who used a weapon *and* seriously injured one or more victims, even if the offender was a first-time offender, than for other cases, even those involving offenders with long court histories. Among the other types of cases, juveniles with long court histories (i.e., five or more formal cases) were significantly more likely to be approved for waiver than those with shorter court histories. Waiver requests were approved in:

- 87% of cases involving youth who used a weapon and seriously injured one or more victims.
- 81% of other cases involving youth who had five or more prior formal cases.
- 62% of other cases involving youth who had four or fewer prior formal cases.

Thus, cases involving the most serious offenses (with weapons and victim injury) do not require a long history of prior court involvement to achieve a high probability of waiver. In fact, this generally explains the relatively large proportion of waiver requests approved in Utah involving juveniles with no prior court involvement. Such cases are targeted for waiver because of the absolute seriousness of the current offense.

### **Do juvenile transfers to criminal court reduce recidivism?**

Because transferred juveniles are generally more serious offenders, they would be expected to have higher recidivism rates than those handled in juvenile court. Consequently, a simple recidivism comparison with juveniles not transferred is unfair. To conduct a fair comparison, comparable groups of transferred and not transferred juveniles must be studied.

A study by Bishop and Frazier and their associates followed nearly 3,000 juveniles who were transferred to criminal court in Florida in 1987 and a control group of delinquents who remained in the juvenile system. The two groups were matched on several dimensions (offense category, prior offenses, age, sex, and race). A 1-year followup found that after adjustments were made for variations in "time at risk," transfers had higher rates of rearrest, more serious rearrest offenses, and shorter time to rearrest.

The researchers extended the followup period to nearly 6 years. Analysis showed that although juveniles who were not transferred eventually caught up with transfers in terms of the proportion who were rearrested, transfers who reoffended did so more quickly and more times on average than the comparison group of delinquents. Only transfers charged with felony property offenses were less likely to be rearrested than their juvenile court counterparts. Although transferred

property felons were less likely to reoffend, when they did they did so more quickly and more often. Again, the researchers concluded that transfer was more likely to aggravate recidivism than to stem it.

However, the fairness of the comparison groups has been questioned. Although the groups were matched on several dimensions, they may have differed in other important ways that relate to recidivism. For example, the groups were not matched on characteristics such as weapon use, victim injury, gang involvement, or drug use history. Because these characteristics were not matched, it is not fully known whether transfers were "more serious" offenders than their juvenile court counterparts. Therefore, it remains unclear whether reoffending was higher among transfers because, as a group, they were more serious offenders.

Researchers have yet to examine recidivism controlling for these more detailed matching factors. Consequently, while the imperfect evidence to date supports the conclusion that transfers are more likely to recidivate, until findings that compare recidivism for groups matched on these more detailed factors are available, the question cannot be definitively answered. Ongoing research, funded by OJJDP since 1995, incorporates these more detailed factors. Studies being conducted by Bishop, Frazier, and Lanza-Kaduce and by Fagan are examining closely matched comparison groups in Florida, New Jersey, and New York.

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# Chapter 7

## Juveniles in correctional facilities

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Juvenile correctional systems have many different components. Some juvenile correctional facilities look very much like adult prisons. Others seem very much like “home.” Private facilities continue to play a substantial role in the long-term custody of juveniles, in contrast to the adult corrections system. In fact, nationwide there are more than twice as many privately operated juvenile facilities as publicly operated facilities, although private facilities hold less than half as many juveniles as are held in public facilities.

This chapter describes the population of juveniles detained and committed in public and private facilities in terms of demographics,

offenses, average time in the facility, and facility type. The chapter also includes descriptions of juveniles held in adult jails and prisons and those on death row. Much of the information is presented in State-level tables.

The information is based on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement and Children in Custody Census of Juvenile Detention, Correctional, and Shelter Facilities. Much of the information on juveniles held in adult correctional facilities is drawn from the Bureau of Justice Statistics’ Jail Census, Annual Survey of Jails, and National Corrections Reporting Program.

## Nearly 106,000 juvenile offenders were held in residential placement facilities on October 29, 1997

### New, detailed data are available on juveniles in residential placement in the United States

The newest information on residents in juvenile custody is drawn from the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP). The CJRP was administered for the first time in 1997 by the Bureau of the Census for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The CJRP replaced the Census of Public and Private Juvenile Detention, Correctional, and Shelter Facilities, also known as the Children in Custody (CIC) census, which had been conducted since the early 1970's. The CJRP, which will be repeated biennially, provides the Nation with the most detailed picture of juveniles in custody ever produced. The first CJRP asked all juvenile residential facilities in the U.S. to describe each youth assigned a bed in the facility on October 29, 1997.

The CJRP differs fundamentally from the CIC census, which collected aggregate data on juveniles held in each facility. The CJRP, instead, collects individual data on each juvenile held in the residential facility, including gender, date of birth, race, placement authority, most serious offense charged, court adjudication status, date of admission, and security status. These comprehensive data were requested regarding all offenders under 21 years of age in the facility.

Facilities also provided information regarding the housing of overflow detention populations, physical layout of the facility, separation of residents, counts of residents age 21 and older, and the use of locked doors and/or gates.

### One-day count and admission data give different views of residential populations

The CJRP provides 1-day population counts of juveniles in residential placement facilities. Such 1-day counts give a picture of the standing population in facilities. One-day counts are substantially different from annual admission and release data, which give a measure of facility population flow.

Juveniles may be *committed* to a facility as part of a court-ordered disposition or they may be *detained* prior to adjudication or after adjudication while awaiting disposition or placement elsewhere. In addition, a small proportion of juveniles may be *voluntarily admitted* in lieu of adjudication as part of a diversion agreement. On a 1-day count basis, the majority of juveniles in residential placement were adjudicated and placed there as part of a court-ordered disposition (72%). Juvenile courts had adjudicated and placed most of these committed juveniles (95%); criminal courts placed the remaining 5% of committed juveniles following conviction. Detained juveniles represented 26% of the 1-day count of juveniles in residential placement.

Of the 26% of juveniles in residential placement who were detained while awaiting adjudication, disposition, or placement, 6% were juveniles who were transferred and awaiting criminal court processing or who were awaiting a transfer hearing. The majority of detained juveniles were being handled in juvenile court (94%).

Because detention stays tend to be short compared with commitment placements, detained juveniles rep-

resent a much larger share of population flow data than of 1-day count data. For example, CIC census data on admissions show that detention admissions accounted for 80% or more of annual admissions to residential facilities. This detained proportion of admissions is more than three times the detained proportion of the standing population from the 1997 CJRP (26%).

CJRP does not capture data on juveniles held in adult prisons or jails; therefore, in the CJRP data, juveniles placed in juvenile facilities by criminal courts represent an unknown proportion of juveniles incarcerated by criminal courts.

### Nearly 106,000 juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997, met the CJRP criteria

Responses to the CJRP identified 125,805 young persons assigned beds in 1,121 public and 2,310 private facilities nationwide. Of these, 105,790 (84%) met the inclusion criteria for the census:

- Under age 21; *and*
- Assigned a bed in a residential facility at the end of the day on October 29, 1997; *and*
- Charged with an offense or court-adjudicated for an offense; *and*
- In residential placement because of that offense.

	Youth in residential placement on October 29, 1997	
	Count	Percent
Total residents	125,805	100%
Met CJRP criteria	105,790	84
Delinquency	98,913	79
Person offense	35,357	28
Violent offense	26,498	21
Status offense	6,877	5
Did not meet CJRP criteria	20,015	16

These 105,790 juveniles are the universe for the data analysis in this chapter. Some facilities were not able to provide all the information requested for all juveniles meeting CJRP inclusion criteria. Of the records for the 105,790 juveniles, 17% were missing information for one or more variables. Data were imputed from complete records to fill in incomplete records. Therefore, reported CJRP estimates regarding the characteristics of juveniles in custody may differ somewhat from their actual characteristics.

The majority of juveniles who met the criteria for inclusion in the CJRP census were in placement for delinquency offenses (93%); proportionally few juveniles meeting the inclusion criteria were held for status offenses (7%).

### The 1997 CJRP population looks similar to the 1995 CIC population

Although trending of CJRP data with data collected under the CIC census is problematic, a look back at the last CIC data indicates that the new CJRP data collection is capturing a comparable population.

	Juveniles in custody on February 15, 1995	
	Count	Percent
Total population	108,746	100%
Law violation	91,505	84
Delinquency	84,020	77
Person offense	30,969	28
Violent offense	18,011	17
Status offense	7,485	7
Nonoffenders*	17,241	16

\*Includes youth referred for abuse, neglect, emotional disturbance, or mental retardation; and voluntarily admitted youth (generally referred by school officials or parents or as part of a diversion program).

What cannot be determined is how much of the increase in the numbers of delinquents and status offenders is real and how much is an artifact of the change in method. For example, an October instead of a February reference date may have resulted in a larger count; also, both the "roster" format of the data collection and the use of electronic reporting may have facilitated a more complete accounting of facility residents. In addition, CJRP provides respondents with more explicit definitions and instructions than CIC did.

### The CJRP allows presentation of State custody rates based on where the offense occurred

The CIC census was limited to presentation of State data based only on the State in which reporting facilities were located. This prevented the calculation of meaningful State custody rates for the population of juveniles held in private facilities. For example, juveniles sent to the numerous private facilities in Pennsylvania by States other than Pennsylvania could not have been included in the rate statistics for the States that sent them. For this reason, CIC could only produce State custody rates for the population of juveniles held in publicly operated facilities.

The CJRP, on the other hand, captures information on the State where the juvenile committed the offense. The State of offense is presumed to be the State that has jurisdiction over the juvenile (although this was not reported directly). Thus, the CJRP for the first time allows presentation of State-based custody rates that include juveniles sent to both public and private facilities.

### State variations in upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction influence custody rates

Although State custody rate statistics control for upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction, comparisons made among States with different upper ages are problematic. While 16- and 17-year-olds constitute approximately 25% of the youth population ages 10–17, they account for nearly 50% of arrests of youth under age 18, nearly 40% of delinquency court cases, and more than 50% of juveniles in residential placement. If all other factors were equal, one would expect higher juvenile custody rates in States where older youth are under juvenile court jurisdiction.

In addition to upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction, differences in age limits of extended jurisdiction influence custody rates. Some States may keep a juvenile in custody for several years beyond the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction; others cannot.

Variations in provisions for transferring juveniles to criminal court also have an impact on juvenile custody rates. If all other factors were equal, States with broad transfer provisions would be expected to have lower juvenile custody rates than other States.

Demographic variations should also be considered when making jurisdictional comparisons. The urbanicity and economics of an area are thought to be related to crime and custody rates.

Available bed space also influences custody rates. Bed space is particularly relevant to detention in rural areas.

**Overall, delinquents outnumber status offenders in the residential placement population 14 to 1—the ratio is more than 41 to 1 in public facilities and less than 5 to 1 in private facilities**

Percent of juvenile offenders in residential placement on October 29, 1997

Most serious offense	All facilities	Public facilities			Private facilities		
		Total	Committed	Detained	Total	Committed	Detained
<b>Delinquency</b>	<b>98,913</b>	<b>74,552</b>	<b>50,163</b>	<b>23,819</b>	<b>24,361</b>	<b>21,515</b>	<b>2,450</b>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Person	36	37	39	31	33	33	31
Criminal homicide	2	2	3	2	0	0	1
Sexual assault	6	5	6	3	7	7	5
Robbery	10	11	12	8	6	6	4
Aggravated assault	10	10	11	9	8	8	7
Simple assault	7	6	5	6	10	10	12
Other person	9	2	2	9	12	12	13
Property	32	31	33	26	37	37	36
Burglary	13	13	14	11	13	13	11
Larceny-theft	7	7	8	5	9	9	8
Auto theft	7	6	6	6	9	9	7
Arson	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other property	5	4	5	4	6	5	8
Drug	9	9	9	9	11	11	9
Trafficking	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
Other drug	6	6	5	6	8	8	7
Public order	10	10	10	10	11	10	12
Weapons	4	4	5	4	4	3	4
Alcohol	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other public order	5	5	5	5	7	6	7
Technical violation†	13	14	9	24	9	8	13
Violent Crime Index*	27	29	32	23	20	21	17
Property Crime Index**	28	26	28	22	31	32	28
<b>Status offense</b>	<b>6,877</b>	<b>1,783</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>695</b>	<b>5,094</b>	<b>3,852</b>	<b>716</b>
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Running away	22	27	15	40	20	18	29
Truancy	19	23	32	9	18	19	18
Incorrigibility	41	26	29	22	47	47	45
Curfew violation	3	4	3	6	2	2	1
Underage drinking	5	6	6	8	4	4	3
Other status offense	10	14	14	15	9	10	5

- Juveniles charged with crimes against persons made up a greater share of the delinquent population in public facilities (37%) than in private facilities (33%).
- Juveniles held for Violent Crime Index offenses (a subset of crimes against persons) made up 27% of the overall delinquency population in residential facilities—32% of delinquents committed to public facilities and 21% of delinquents committed to private facilities.

†Includes violations of probation, parole, and valid court order.

\*Includes criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.

\*\*Includes burglary, larceny-theft, auto theft, and arson.

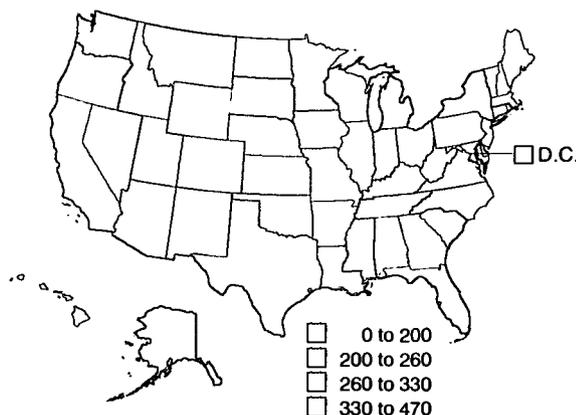
Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

## Nationally in 1997, 368 juveniles were in custody for every 100,000 in the population

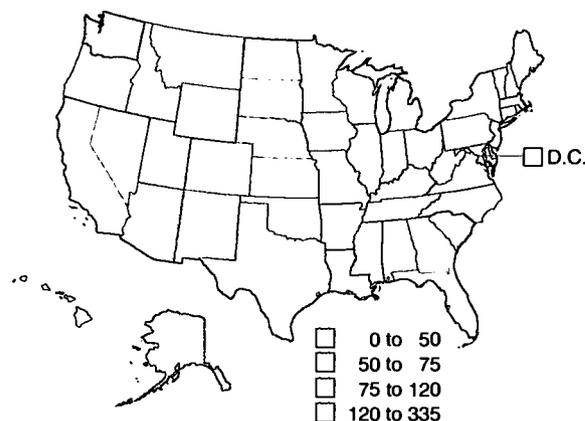
### California, Texas, and Florida together account for 25% of juveniles but over 30% of juveniles in custody

State*	Juveniles in custody	Custody rate (per 100,000)			State*	Juveniles in custody	Custody rate (per 100,000)		
		Total	Committed	Detained			Total	Committed	Detained
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>105,790</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>Upper age 17 (continued)</b>				
<b>Upper age 17</b>				<b>Upper age 16</b>					
Alabama	1,685	348	262	79	Oklahoma	808	196	126	69
Alaska	352	418	329	75	Oregon	1,462	389	319	34
Arizona	1,868	344	239	99	Pennsylvania	3,962	302	238	62
Arkansas	603	198	167	27	Rhode Island	426	412	348	57
California	19,899	549	386	154	South Dakota	528	556	410	84
Colorado	1,748	379	242	116	Tennessee	2,118	358	290	66
Delaware	311	402	229	173	Utah	768	247	172	74
Dist. of Columbia	265	662	297	332	Vermont	49	70	44	23
Florida	5,975	394	261	130	Virginia	2,879	399	230	168
Hawaii	134	106	86	13	Washington	2,216	335	244	91
Idaho	242	145	102	43	West Virginia	398	200	97	101
Indiana	2,485	366	269	93	Wyoming	340	511	467	26
Iowa	1,064	307	222	73	<b>Upper age 15</b>				
Kansas	1,242	386	256	123	Georgia	3,622	480	307	172
Kentucky	1,079	243	190	51	Illinois	3,425	286	205	78
Maine	318	220	156	56	Louisiana	2,776	582	459	115
Maryland	1,498	273	166	105	Massachusetts	1,065	194	110	82
Minnesota	1,522	258	198	54	Michigan	3,710	375	263	108
Mississippi	756	218	181	34	Missouri	1,401	248	175	58
Montana	302	266	236	21	New Hampshire	186	154	127	24
Nebraska	741	353	236	111	South Carolina	1,583	427	328	99
Nevada	857	460	267	183	Texas	6,898	327	252	72
New Jersey	2,251	266	142	122	Wisconsin	2,013	359	300	56
New Mexico	778	342	262	79	<b>Upper age 15</b>				
North Dakota	272	336	200	132	Connecticut	1,326	508	436	69
Ohio	4,318	332	229	101	New York	4,661	323	267	53
					North Carolina	1,204	196	152	43

#### Commitment rate



#### Detention rate



\*State where the offense occurred.

Note: The custody rate is the number of juveniles in residential placement per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 through the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction in each State. U.S. total includes 3,401 juveniles in private facilities for whom State of offense was not reported.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file] and Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

# Nationally, person offenders accounted for 33% and property offenders for 30% of juveniles in custody

## The offense profile of juveniles in residential placement varies considerably from State to State

State*	Most serious offense						State*	Most serious offense					
	Person			Public				Person			Public		
	Violent	Other person	Property	Drugs	order	Status		Violent	Other person	Property	Drugs	order	Status
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>7%</b>	Missouri	18%	6%	38%	7%	15%	16%
Alabama	11	7	35	7	29	12	Montana	17	12	29	6	23	14
Alaska	19	15	24	1	36	5	Nebraska	8	12	50	6	16	9
Arizona	16	8	36	10	27	4	Nevada	16	8	33	15	28	<1
Arkansas	16	13	38	5	20	7	New Hamp.	11	37	28	5	10	10
California	38	5	27	7	22	1	New Jersey	23	4	17	21	32	3
Colorado	22	13	32	6	24	3	New Mexico	24	11	35	5	24	1
Connecticut	16	11	19	24	26	5	New York	23	10	23	13	11	20
Delaware	23	9	33	12	23	<1	North Carolina	23	11	43	6	12	4
Dist. Columbia	23	5	19	34	16	3	North Dakota	8	12	28	5	11	36
Florida	22	10	37	9	21	1	Ohio	25	8	34	7	22	4
Georgia	20	11	30	8	28	3	Oklahoma	31	7	35	4	18	6
Hawaii	22	19	27	1	22	9	Oregon	41	7	37	4	8	2
Idaho	14	12	36	2	37	0	Pennsylvania	20	10	27	11	22	10
Illinois	33	4	25	13	25	1	Rhode Island	28	12	23	15	20	2
Indiana	11	13	31	7	21	17	South Carolina	19	9	27	5	36	4
Iowa	16	11	36	10	14	13	South Dakota	14	12	28	7	27	13
Kansas	23	9	30	7	14	19	Tennessee	19	6	22	6	19	28
Kentucky	22	13	32	6	18	10	Texas	28	9	33	8	21	2
Louisiana	26	8	38	13	10	5	Utah	16	4	28	6	37	11
Maine	19	12	46	2	12	8	Vermont	6	29	31	2	16	16
Maryland	17	9	32	24	16	2	Virginia	20	9	26	7	34	5
Massachusetts	41	15	25	8	11	<1	Washington	32	8	33	5	20	1
Michigan	27	9	31	7	16	11	West Virginia	22	10	34	11	10	14
Minnesota	18	13	33	4	22	11	Wisconsin	16	13	34	8	23	6
Mississippi	21	3	40	9	25	1	Wyoming	8	11	33	13	16	20

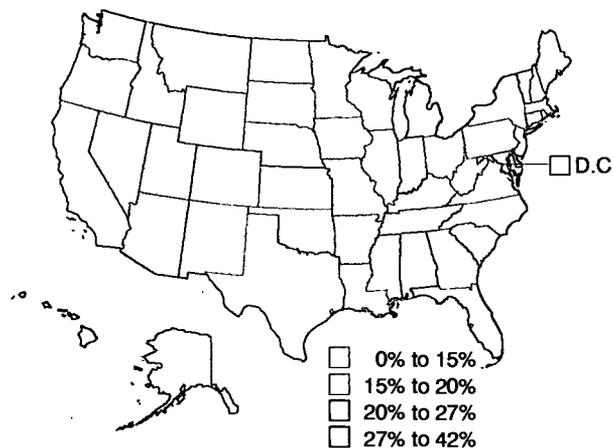
- Nationally, 25% of the juveniles in residential facilities were charged with Violent Crime Index offenses. States with the highest proportions of Violent Crime Index offenders were Massachusetts (41%), Oregon (41%), and California (38%). Vermont (6%), Nebraska (8%), North Dakota (8%), and Wyoming (8%) had the lowest proportions.
- Most States had a large proportion of property offenders. Nebraska led the Nation with 50%. New Jersey and the District of Columbia were the only jurisdictions with less than 20% property offenders.
- The proportion of juveniles held for drug offenses ranged from 34% in the District of Columbia to 1% in Alaska and Hawaii.

\*State where the offense occurred.

Note: U.S. total includes 3,401 juveniles in private facilities for whom State of offense was not reported.

Source: Authors' analysis of data from OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

Percent of juveniles held for Violent Crime Index offenses



## States vary in the proportion of juveniles placed in private facilities—ranging from 1% to 64%

**Nationally, 74% of juveniles are held in public facilities in the State where they committed their offense, 24% are held in in-State private facilities, and 2% are held in out-of-State private facilities**

State*	Juveniles in custody	In-State		Out-of-State private facilities	State*	Juveniles in custody	In-State		Out-of-State private facilities
		Public facilities	Private facilities				Public facilities	Private facilities	
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>105,790</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>2%</b>	Missouri	1,401	81%	19%	0%
Alabama	1,685	54	46	0	Montana	302	56	14	29
Alaska	352	75	25	0	Nebraska	741	69	22	10
Arizona	1,868	86	13	1	Nevada	857	97	3	0
Arkansas	603	59	41	0	New Hampshire	186	65	30	5
California	19,899	91	8	1	New Jersey	2,251	97	3	0
Colorado	1,748	48	40	12	New Mexico	778	95	4	1
Connecticut	1,326	74	24	2	New York	4,661	56	44	1
Delaware	311	67	5	28	North Carolina	1,204	89	10	0
Dist. of Columbia	265	65	32	3	North Dakota	272	36	58	6
Florida	5,975	50	48	2	Ohio	4,318	91	8	1
Georgia	3,622	85	15	0	Oklahoma	808	65	34	0
Hawaii	134	84	9	7	Oregon	1,462	80	20	0
Idaho	242	70	14	17	Pennsylvania	3,962	37	58	5
Illinois	3,425	93	5	2	Rhode Island	426	79	20	0
Indiana	2,485	66	31	2	South Carolina	1,583	88	12	0
Iowa	1,064	38	60	3	South Dakota	528	83	16	1
Kansas	1,242	67	32	0	Tennessee	2,118	57	43	0
Kentucky	1,079	75	25	0	Texas	6,898	86	13	0
Louisiana	2,776	63	36	0	Utah	768	52	42	6
Maine	318	80	16	4	Vermont	49	44	36	20
Maryland	1,498	51	48	1	Virginia	2,879	93	7	0
Massachusetts	1,065	35	64	0	Washington	2,216	94	6	0
Michigan	3,710	53	42	5	West Virginia	398	54	28	18
Minnesota	1,522	58	34	8	Wisconsin	2,013	70	30	0
Mississippi	756	99	0	1	Wyoming	340	50	49	1

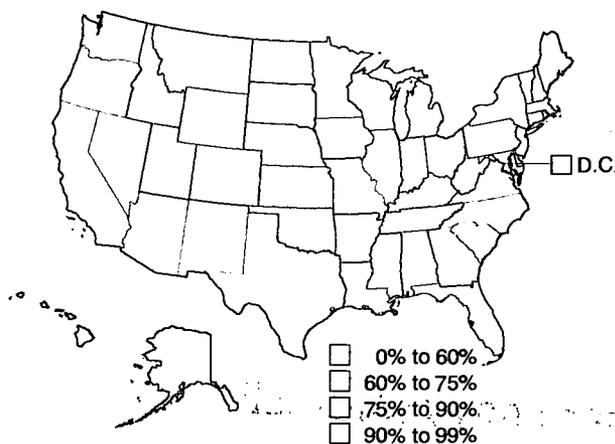
**Percent of juveniles held in public in-State facilities**

- Mississippi placed the largest proportion of juveniles in public in-State facilities (99%).
- Massachusetts placed the largest proportion of juveniles in private in-State facilities (64%).
- Montana placed the largest proportion of juveniles in out-of-State private facilities (29%).
- Among States placing juveniles in out-of-State private facilities, most placed more juveniles in private in-State facilities. The exceptions were Delaware, Idaho, and Montana: each placed more juveniles in out-of-State private facilities than in-State private facilities.

\*State where the offense occurred.

Note: U.S. total includes 3,401 juveniles in private facilities for whom State of offense was not reported and 91 juveniles in out-of-State public facilities.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].



# Disproportionate minority confinement often stems from disparity at early stages of case processing

## Federal requirements focus attention on disproportionate minority confinement

Under the “disproportionate minority confinement” requirement in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, States must determine whether the proportion of minorities in confinement exceeds their proportion in the population. If such overrepresentation is found, States must demonstrate efforts to reduce it.

## Overrepresentation, disparity, and discrimination have different meanings

**Overrepresentation** refers to a situation in which a larger proportion of a particular group is present at various stages within the juvenile justice system (such as intake, detention, adjudication, and disposition) than would be expected based on their proportion in the general population.

**Disparity** means that the probability of receiving a particular outcome (for example, being detained in a short-term facility vs. not being detained) differs for different groups. Disparity may in turn lead to overrepresentation.

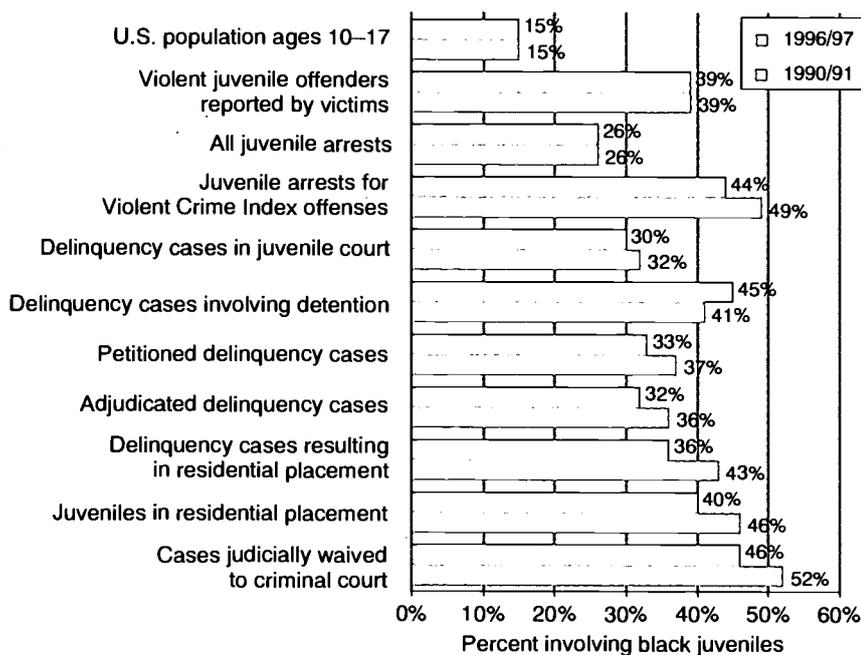
**Discrimination** occurs if and when juvenile justice system decisionmakers treat one group of juveniles differently from another group of juveniles based wholly, or in part, on their gender, racial, and/or ethnic status.

## Neither overrepresentation nor disparity necessarily implies discrimination

One possible explanation for disparity and overrepresentation is, of course, discrimination. This line of reasoning suggests that because of discrimination on the part of justice system decisionmakers, minority youth face higher probabilities of being arrested by the police, referred to court intake, held in short-term detention, petitioned for formal processing, adjudicated delinquent, and confined in a secure juvenile facility. Thus, differential actions throughout the justice system may account for minority overrepresentation.

Disparity and overrepresentation, however, can result from factors other than discrimination. Factors relating to the nature and volume of crime committed by minority youth may explain disproportionate minority confinement. This line of reasoning suggests that if minority youth commit proportionately more crime than white youth, are involved in more serious incidents, and have more extensive criminal histories, they will be overrepresented in secure facilities, even if no

### Black juveniles are overrepresented at all stages of the juvenile justice system, compared with their proportion in the population



■ Nationally, for most stages of juvenile justice system processing, the black proportion was smaller in 1996/97 than in 1990/91.

Sources: Authors' analysis of Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files] for 1991 and 1997, Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey* [machine-readable data files] for 1991 and 1996, FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1991 and 1997, OJJDP's *Juvenile court statistics* reports for 1991 and 1996, OJJDP's *Children in Custody Census of public and private juvenile detention, correctional, and shelter facilities 1990/91* [machine-readable data file], and OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

discrimination by system decision-makers occurred. Thus, minority youth may be overrepresented within the juvenile justice system because of behavioral and legal factors.

In any given jurisdiction, either or both of these causes of disparity may be operating. Detailed data analysis is necessary to build a strong case for one or the other causal scenario. On a national level, such detailed analysis is not possible with the data that are available. For example, national data use broad offense categories—such as robbery, which includes both felony and nonfelony robberies. More severe outcomes would be expected for juveniles charged with felony robbery. Disparity in decisions regarding transfer to criminal court would result if one group of offenders had a higher proportion of felony robberies than another group (since transfer provisions are often limited to felony offenses). The national data, however, do not support analysis that controls for offense at the felony/nonfelony level of detail. Similarly, although prior criminal record is the basis for many justice system decisions, criminal history data are not available nationally.

Thus, at the national level, questions regarding the causes of observed disparity and overrepresentation remain unanswered.

### **There is substantial evidence of widespread disparity in juvenile case processing**

While research findings are not completely consistent, data available for most jurisdictions across the country show that minority (es-

pecially black) youth are overrepresented within the juvenile justice system, particularly in secure facilities. These data further suggest that minority youth are more likely to be placed in public secure facilities, while white youth are more likely to be housed in private facilities or diverted from the juvenile justice system. Some research also suggests that differences in the offending rates of white and minority youth cannot explain the minority overrepresentation in arrest, conviction, and incarceration counts.

Further, there is substantial evidence that minority youth are often treated differently from majority youth within the juvenile justice system. In a review by Pope and Feyerherm of existing research literature, approximately two-thirds of the studies examined showed that racial and/or ethnic status did influence decisionmaking within the juvenile justice system. Since that review, a rather large body of research has accumulated across numerous geographic regions that reinforces these earlier findings. Thus, existing research suggests that race/ethnicity does make a difference in juvenile justice decisions in some jurisdictions at least some of the time.

Because juvenile justice systems are fragmented and administered at the local level, racial/ethnic differences exist in some jurisdictions but not in others. One would not expect research findings to be consistent, given variation across timeframes and regions.

### **Racial/ethnic differences occur at various decision points within the juvenile justice system**

Pope and Feyerherm found that when racial/ethnic effects do occur, they can be found at any stage of processing within the juvenile justice system. Across numerous jurisdictions, however, a substantial body of research suggests that disparity is most pronounced at the beginning stages. The greatest disparity between majority and minority youth court processing outcomes occurs at intake and detention decision points. Existing research also suggests that when racial/ethnic differences are found, they tend to accumulate as youth are processed through the justice system.

Pope and Feyerherm found that research reveals substantial variation across rural, suburban, and urban areas. Correspondingly, the concept of “justice by geography” introduced by Feld suggests that there are marked differences in outcome depending on the jurisdiction in which the youth is processed. For example, cases in urban jurisdictions are more likely to receive severe outcomes at various stages of processing than are cases in non-urban areas. Because minority populations are concentrated in urban areas, this effect may work to the disadvantage of minority youth and result in greater overrepresentation.

**In nearly all States, a disproportionate number of minorities were in residential placement in 1997**

State*	Minority proportion			State*	Minority proportion				
	1997 Juvenile population	Committed			1997 Juvenile population	Committed			
		Public	Private	Detained		Public	Private	Detained	
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>62%</b>	Missouri	18%	40%	34%	64%
Alabama	35	69	58	60	Montana	13	29	19	-
Alaska	35	47	67	57	Nebraska	14	40	45	44
Arizona	43	63	45	56	Nevada	35	50	-	39
Arkansas	25	62	56	67	New Hampshire	4	12	12	-
California	59	81	70	70	New Jersey	37	88	-	79
Colorado	28	56	56	51	New Mexico	62	81	-	82
Connecticut	26	83	59	77	New York	41	87	51	81
Delaware	31	75	79	77	North Carolina	33	68	36	60
Dist. of Columbia	87	100	-	100	North Dakota	11	-	29	31
Florida	40	58	63	64	Ohio	18	49	38	51
Georgia	40	70	68	70	Oklahoma	26	49	51	60
Hawaii	76	89	-	-	Oregon	16	29	28	23
Idaho	13	25	12	4	Pennsylvania	18	63	66	51
Illinois	36	70	52	78	Rhode Island	18	63	38	49
Indiana	14	41	31	38	South Carolina	40	69	58	67
Iowa	7	42	23	27	South Dakota	17	43	-	46
Kansas	17	52	32	49	Tennessee	24	52	52	51
Kentucky	11	40	24	38	Texas	53	78	73	77
Louisiana	44	81	74	76	Utah	12	34	33	28
Maine	3	5	-	7	Vermont	3	-	-	-
Maryland	40	68	75	73	Virginia	32	64	63	66
Massachusetts	22	64	59	60	Washington	21	41	44	41
Michigan	23	56	57	61	West Virginia	5	28	27	26
Minnesota	12	46	42	59	Wisconsin	15	60	39	36
Mississippi	47	70	-	62	Wyoming	12	27	15	-

- Nationally, minorities accounted for 34% of the juvenile population in 1997.
- Minorities accounted for 67% of juveniles committed to public facilities nationwide—a proportion nearly twice their proportion of the juvenile population.
- Minorities accounted for 62% of juveniles detained nationwide.
- Minority proportions were somewhat lower for youth committed to private facilities than to public facilities.
- In seven States, the minority proportion of the *total* population of juveniles in residential placement was 75% or greater: California, Connecticut, Delaware, Louisiana, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas (map).

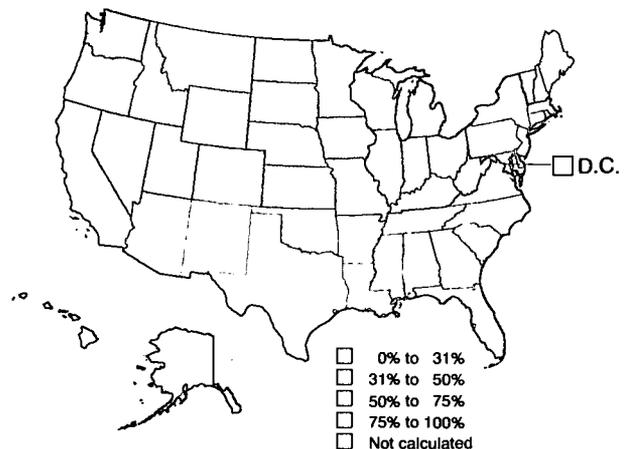
\*State where the offense occurred.

- Too few juveniles in category to calculate a reliable percentage.

Note: U.S. total includes 3,401 juveniles in private facilities for whom State of offense was not reported. Minorities includes blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders. The juvenile population is the number of juveniles ages 0-17.

Source: Authors' analysis OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

**Overall minority proportion of juveniles in custody**



## Minorities accounted for 7 in 10 youth held in custody for a violent offense

### More than 6 in 10 juveniles in residential placement were minority youth

In 1997, two-thirds of all juveniles in custody in public facilities were minorities as were just over half of all juveniles in private facilities.

Race/ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Public	Private
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	37	34	46
Minority	63	66	54
Black	40	40	39
Hispanic	18	21	11
Amer. Indian	2	1	2
Asian	2	2	2

### The racial/ethnic profile of juveniles held in 1997 is similar to the profile of those held in 1995

Data from the 1995 CIC census show race proportions similar to those derived from the CJRP data.

Race/ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in custody on February 15, 1995		
	Total	Public	Private
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	37	32	53
Minority	63	68	47
Black	40	43	34
Hispanic	19	21	10
Amer. Indian	2	1	2
Asian	2	3	1

In 1995, more than two-thirds of all juveniles in custody in public facilities were minorities as were just under half of all juveniles in private facilities.

### Non-Hispanic black juveniles account for 55% of juveniles in residential placement for robbery but only 30% of juveniles in residential placement for a status offense

Most serious offense	Percent of juvenile offenders in residential placement on October 29, 1997					
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
Total juveniles in residential placement	100%	37%	40%	18%	2%	2%
Delinquency	100	36	41	19	1	2
Person	100	31	43	21	1	3
Criminal homicide	100	19	44	30	2	5
Sexual assault	100	51	33	12	2	1
Robbery	100	16	55	24	1	3
Aggravated assault	100	26	41	26	2	4
Simple assault	100	41	38	16	2	2
Other person	100	41	40	15	1	2
Property	100	43	35	17	2	2
Burglary	100	46	32	18	2	2
Theft	100	45	37	15	1	1
Auto theft	100	36	38	20	2	3
Arson	100	52	29	17	1	1
Other property	100	42	38	16	1	2
Drug	100	23	56	19	1	1
Trafficking	100	14	64	21	<1	1
Other drug	100	26	54	18	1	1
Public order	100	38	38	20	2	2
Weapons	100	24	45	27	1	3
Other public order	100	48	33	15	2	2
Technical violation	100	40	37	19	2	1
Violent Crime Index*	100	27	45	23	1	3
Property Crime Index**	100	43	35	17	2	2
Status offense	100	59	30	7	2	1

- Non-Hispanic black juveniles accounted for more than 6 in 10 juveniles in residential placement for drug trafficking and more than 5 in 10 in residential placement for other drug offenses.
- Non-Hispanic white juveniles accounted for the majority of juveniles in residential placement for sexual assault, arson, and status offenses

Note: Race proportions do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

\*Includes criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.

\*\*Includes burglary, theft, auto theft, and arson.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

**Fewer than 3 in 10 non-Hispanic white juveniles were placed for a person offense, compared with nearly 4 in 10 Hispanic juveniles and non-Hispanic black juveniles**

Most serious offense	Percent of juvenile offenders in residential placement on October 29, 1997					
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
Total juveniles in residential placement	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Delinquency	93	90	95	97	91	97
Person	33	28	36	38	32	45
Criminal homicide	2	1	2	3	2	5
Sexual assault	5	7	4	4	5	2
Robbery	9	4	12	12	6	15
Aggravated assault	9	6	9	13	10	16
Simple assault	6	7	6	5	8	5
Other person	2	2	2	2	1	2
Property	30	35	27	28	32	32
Burglary	12	14	10	12	13	13
Theft	7	8	6	5	6	4
Auto theft	6	6	6	7	8	10
Arson	1	1	1	1	1	1
Other property	4	5	4	4	3	4
Drug	9	5	12	9	4	4
Trafficking	3	1	5	3	0	1
Other drug	6	4	7	6	4	3
Public order	9	9	9	10	9	9
Weapons	4	3	4	6	3	5
Other public order	5	7	5	4	7	4
Technical violation	12	13	11	12	14	8
Violent Crime Index*	25	18	28	31	23	38
Property Crime Index**	26	30	22	24	29	28
Status offense	7	10	5	3	9	3

- Robbery was the most serious offense for a greater proportion of black, Hispanic, and Asian juveniles than white or American Indian juveniles in residential placement.
- Drug offenses were the most serious offense for a greater proportion of black juveniles than other juveniles in residential placement.

Note: Race proportions do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

\*Includes criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.

\*\*Includes burglary, theft, auto theft, and arson.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

**Half of females in residential placement were minorities**

Minorities were somewhat less disproportionate in the female custody population than in the male custody population.

Race/ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	37	36	49
Minority	63	64	51
Black	40	41	33
Hispanic	18	19	13
Amer. Indian	2	1	2
Asian	2	2	1

**Females accounted for a slightly greater proportion of white than minority youth in custody**

The female proportion of juveniles in residential placement varied by race and ethnicity. Females accounted for 18% of nonminority white juveniles in residential placement. Among minorities overall, females accounted for 11% of juveniles in residential placement; however, the female proportion was 21% for American Indians and only 9% for Hispanics and Asians.

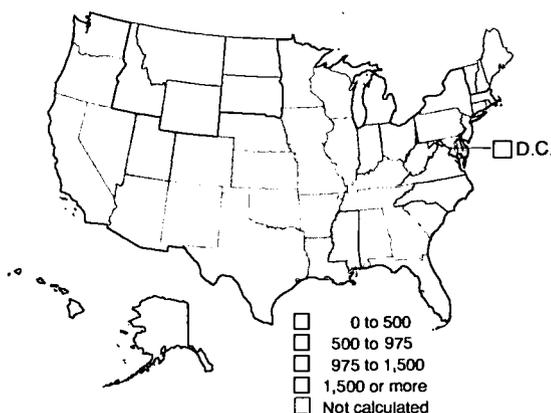
Race/ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Male	Female
Total	100%	86%	14%
White	100	82	18
Minority	100	89	11
Black	100	89	11
Hispanic	100	91	9
Amer. Indian	100	79	21
Asian	100	91	9

# Nationally, custody rates for black juveniles were substantially higher than rates for other groups

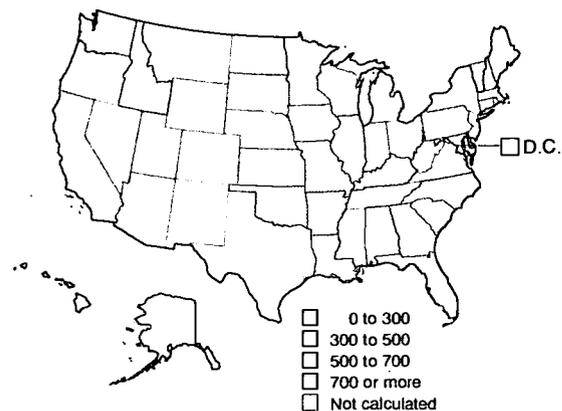
**For every 100,000 non-Hispanic black juveniles in the population, 1,018 were in a residential placement facility on October 29, 1997—for Hispanics the rate was 515, and for non-Hispanic whites it was 204**

State*	Custody rate (per 100,000)					State*	Custody rate (per 100,000)				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian		White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>1,018</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>203</b>	Missouri	168	741	241	43	69
Alabama	202	650	285	130	96	Montana	221	—	768	524	—
Alaska	289	1,055	372	734	352	Nebraska	234	1,754	716	1,417	177
Arizona	244	975	515	214	74	Nevada	382	942	448	1,250	297
Arkansas	106	533	111	0	45	New Hampshire	143	—	479	0	266
California	299	1,819	654	548	268	New Jersey	71	1,007	405	246	18
Colorado	238	1,397	705	617	206	New Mexico	169	905	498	220	251
Connecticut	160	2,225	1,276	—	90	New York	152	886	394	603	53
Delaware	132	1,195	582	0	0	North Carolina	108	435	32	140	97
Dist. Of Columbia	0	855	204	0	0	North Dakota	261	—	391	1,203	0
Florida	243	980	203	108	109	Ohio	205	1,105	404	315	83
Georgia	240	952	129	61	121	Oklahoma	123	688	214	282	59
Hawaii	65	212	74	—	120	Oregon	326	1,505	681	1,046	267
Idaho	139	—	160	330	236	Pennsylvania	137	1,348	929	—	148
Illinois	127	943	240	459	39	Rhode Island	220	1,799	1,287	—	592
Indiana	268	1,168	521	58	53	South Carolina	238	753	0	0	30
Iowa	239	2,250	736	1,700	243	South Dakota	356	—	2,401	1,204	—
Kansas	249	1,767	596	604	475	Tennessee	226	843	415	209	133
Kentucky	174	967	78	—	100	Texas	155	853	383	203	94
Louisiana	231	1,140	157	119	300	Utah	188	1,400	713	693	561
Maine	210	—	198	—	265	Vermont	66	—	—	0	0
Maryland	123	592	263	115	46	Virginia	204	997	355	230	174
Massachusetts	96	804	582	79	224	Washington	246	1,592	520	787	201
Michigan	205	1,171	406	293	305	West Virginia	156	1,230	511	—	—
Minnesota	155	1,676	515	1,690	417	Wisconsin	206	1,756	801	448	668
Mississippi	129	319	336	60	283	Wyoming	454	—	846	1,243	—

**Custody rate for black juveniles**



**Custody rate for Hispanic juveniles**



\*State where the offense occurred.

— Too few juveniles in the population to calculate a reliable rate.

Note: The custody rate is the number of juveniles in residential placement per 100,000 juveniles ages 10 through the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction in each State. U.S. total includes 3,401 juveniles in private facilities for whom State of offense was not reported. Race rates do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file] and Bureau of the Census' *Estimates of the population of States by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: 1990-1997* [machine-readable data files].

# Females represent a small share of juveniles in custody, but facilities must manage this unique population

## Females accounted for 1 in 17 juveniles in residential placement

Although males are half of the juvenile population, three-quarters of juvenile arrests, and just over three-quarters of delinquency cases in juvenile court, males accounted for 86% of juveniles in residential placement in 1997. Females represented a greater proportion of detained juveniles (17%) than committed juveniles (12%). The female proportion of juveniles voluntarily admitted to residential placement under a diversion agreement was large by comparison (34%).

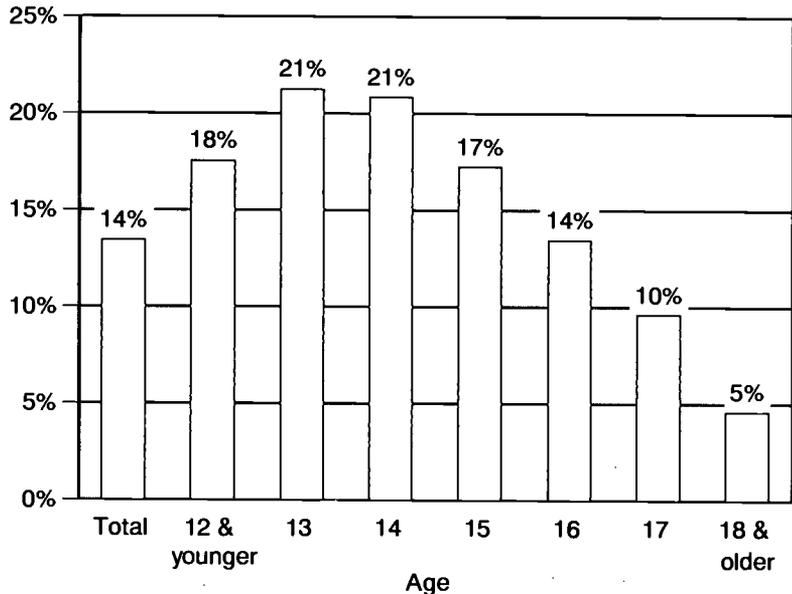
These proportions were different for public and private facility populations. Overall, the female proportion of residents was greater in private facilities (18%) than public facilities (12%). Females represented 23% of those detained in private facilities, compared with 16% of those detained in public facilities. Among the committed population, females made up just 9% of those in public facilities, compared with 17% of those in private facilities. Females accounted for 25% of those voluntarily admitted to public facilities under diversion agreements, compared with 38% in private facilities.

## Females in residential placement tended to be younger than their male counterparts

Compared with males, females in residential placement had an age distribution that was skewed toward the younger ages. For example, 16% of males in placement were below age 15, while 26% of females were that young. Most females were ages 15 and 16, each ac-

## The female proportion of the placement population was greatest among juveniles in their early teen years

Female proportion of juveniles in residential placement



■ After age 13, the female proportion of the residential placement population diminished with age.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

counting for more than one-quarter of all females in placement facilities. Most males were 16 and 17.

Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997

Age	Total	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%
12 & younger	2	2	3
13	4	4	7
14	11	10	17
15	20	19	26
16	27	27	27
17	23	24	17
18 & older	12	14	4

## The racial/ethnic profile for females was different from that for males

Half of female juveniles in residential placement were non-Hispanic whites. Among males, non-Hispanic blacks were the largest proportion.

Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997

Race/ethnicity	Total	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	37	36	49
Black	40	41	33
Hispanic	18	19	13
Other	4	4	5

### The female proportion of juveniles in custody was smaller for minorities than for whites

Females accounted for a smaller proportion of minorities overall (11%) than of nonminority whites (18%) in residential placement, although this was not true for all minority groups. The female proportion was 21% for American Indians, 11% for blacks, and 9% for Hispanics and Asians.

### Female proportions varied substantially across offenses

Overall, 11% of juveniles in residential placement for delinquency offenses were female. The female proportion was 1 in 5 for driving under the influence, non-index person offenses, and technical violations of the conditions of probation, parole, or a valid court order. For offenses such as weapons violations and drug trafficking, females constituted just 1 in 20 juveniles held. For other offenses, the female proportion was about 1 in 10.

In comparison, females represented 47% of juveniles in residential placement facilities for status offenses. As with the delinquency offense categories, there was variation across status offense categories in the proportion of females. Females constituted 63% of runaways, 47% of truants, 44% of incorrigibles, 35% of those held for underage alcohol offenses, and 28% of curfew violators.

### The population of minority females in placement, although small, had a large proportion of person offenders

A smaller proportion of non-Hispanic white females than minority females were held for a person offense. The proportion of black females in placement for person offenses was, in fact, comparable to the proportion for black males and even higher than the proportion for white males.

### Females were less likely than males to be held for Violent Index or Property Index offenses

Offense profile for juvenile offenders in residential placement on October 29, 1997

Most serious offense	All facilities		Public		Private	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	91,471	14,319	67,446	8,889	24,025	5,430
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Delinquency	96	77	99	91	89	55
Person	35	25	37	29	29	19
Violent Index*	27	13	30	16	19	7
Other person	8	12	7	13	10	12
Property	31	23	31	25	33	19
Property Index**	27	19	27	21	28	16
Other property	5	4	4	4	5	3
Drug	9	5	9	5	10	5
Trafficking	3	1	3	1	3	1
Other drug	6	4	6	4	7	5
Public order	10	7	9	9	10	4
Technical violation	11	17	12	23	7	7
Status offense	4	23	1	9	11	45

■ Nearly one-quarter of females in residential placement were held for a status offense. For females in private facilities, the proportion of status offenders was nearly half.

■ Females in public facilities were more likely to be held for a person offense than females in private facilities.

\*Includes criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.

\*\*Includes burglary, theft, auto theft, and arson.

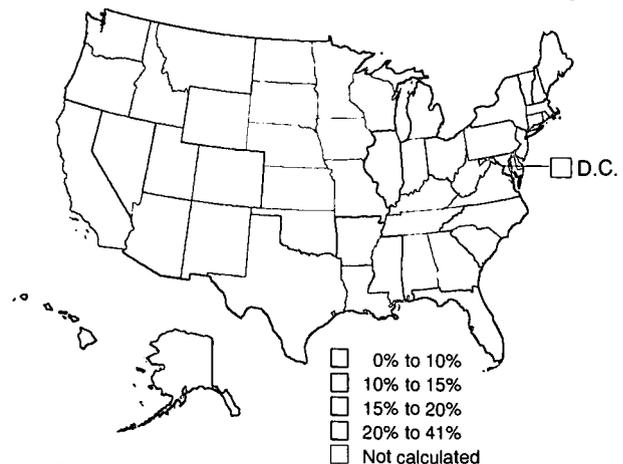
Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

Sex/offense	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	White	Black	Hispanic
<b>Females</b>			
Delinquency	100%	100%	100%
Person	27	39	35
Violent Index	12	21	21
Other person	16	17	15
Property	33	25	26
Drug	7	6	8
Public order	9	9	9
Technical violation	23	21	22
<b>Males</b>			
Delinquency	100%	100%	100%
Person	31	38	39
Violent Index	22	30	33
Other person	9	8	7
Property	40	28	29
Drug	6	14	9
Public order	11	9	10
Technical violation	13	11	12

**In nearly all States, females represented a relatively small proportion of juveniles in residential placement in 1997; their proportion was generally larger in private than in public facilities**

State*	Female proportion				State*	Female proportion			
	Overall	Committed		Detained		Overall	Committed		Detained
		Public	Private			Public	Private		
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	Missouri	16%	14%	19%	12%
Alabama	17	15	19	19	Montana	15	10	16	-
Alaska	20	16	21	19	Nebraska	25	22	26	26
Arizona	15	11	24	20	Nevada	19	14	-	22
Arkansas	9	4	12	15	New Hampshire	18	12	31	-
California	9	6	16	13	New Jersey	8	4	-	12
Colorado	14	2	16	17	New Mexico	11	9	-	17
Connecticut	13	4	26	28	New York	20	13	26	24
Delaware	7	1	7	10	North Carolina	15	12	31	18
Dist. of Columbia	8	9	-	10	North Dakota	19	-	20	18
Florida	11	3	8	19	Ohio	13	10	15	18
Georgia	17	9	25	23	Oklahoma	16	8	17	23
Hawaii	16	14	-	-	Oregon	14	10	14	26
Idaho	12	10	4	24	Pennsylvania	13	7	14	16
Illinois	7	7	9	8	Rhode Island	10	8	10	17
Indiana	20	21	11	27	South Carolina	14	14	12	18
Iowa	21	10	28	15	South Dakota	17	14	-	19
Kansas	22	16	44	13	Tennessee	19	16	16	30
Kentucky	17	12	27	19	Texas	10	5	27	16
Louisiana	13	14	11	14	Utah	14	10	16	14
Maine	13	11	-	10	Vermont	-	-	-	-
Maryland	9	6	3	16	Virginia	17	13	25	21
Massachusetts	13	0	15	16	Washington	13	11	13	19
Michigan	16	16	19	12	West Virginia	12	1	9	17
Minnesota	17	9	22	18	Wisconsin	16	11	17	32
Mississippi	6	5	-	14	Wyoming	41	48	28	-

**Overall female proportion of juveniles in custody**



- Nationally, females accounted for 14% of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997.
- The female proportion of committed juveniles in private facilities was nearly twice that in public facilities (17% vs. 9%).
- Wyoming had the greatest proportion of females (41%) among juveniles in residential placement.
- In several States, females represented less than 10% of juveniles in residential placement: Arkansas, California, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Vermont.

\*State where the offense occurred.

- Too few juveniles in category to calculate a reliable percentage.

Note: U.S. total includes 3,401 juveniles in private facilities for whom State of offense was not reported.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

## On the 1997 census day, person offenders had been committed or detained longer than other juveniles

### Developing information on the length of time juveniles spend in residential placement is difficult

Information on length of stay is key to understanding the justice system's handling of juveniles in residential placement. Ideally, length of stay would be calculated for individual juveniles by combining their days of stay in residential placement from their first admission to their last release relating to a particular case. These individual

lengths of placement could then be averaged for different release cohorts of juveniles (cohorts could be identified by year of release, offense, facility, adjudication status, or demographic characteristics).

Because the CIC census was a facility-level, rather than an individual-level, data collection, it did not support such individual-level length of stay analysis. Information on average length of stay developed from CIC data was based on facility aver-

ages weighted by the number of releases reported for the year by facilities. The CIC average stay information did not capture complete length of placement for juveniles who stayed at more than one facility during the course of their disposition.

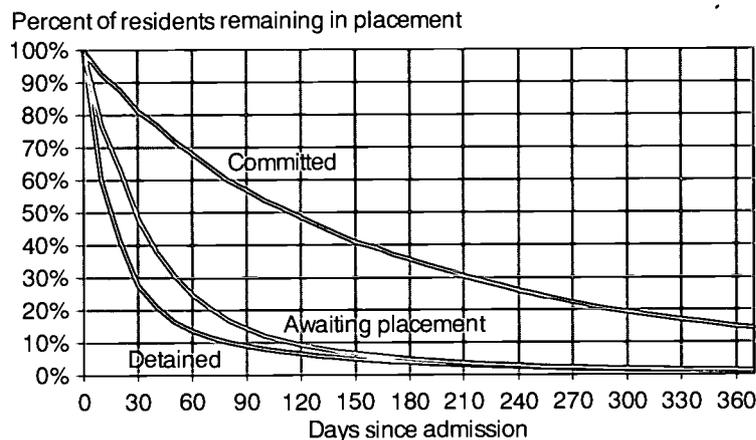
Nevertheless, CIC reported that the average length of stay for juveniles released from public facilities in 1994 was 2 weeks for those who had been detained and 5 months for those who had been committed. Juveniles in private facilities (primarily a committed population) stayed an average of 3.5 months.

### The CJRP provides individual-level data on time spent in placement

The CJRP captures information on the number of days since admission for each juvenile in residential placement. These data represent the number of days the juvenile had been in the facility up to the reference date of the census (October 29, 1997). Because the data are not based on a release cohort, the complete length of stay cannot be determined. As with the CIC census, the CJRP data reflect only a juvenile's placement at one facility and not multiple placements in multiple facilities. Nevertheless, the CJRP provides an overall profile of the time juveniles had been in the facility at the time of the census—a 1-day snapshot of time in the facility.

Because CJRP data are individual-level rather than facility-level, more differentiated averages can be calculated. In addition, the data support the development of pictures of the proportion of residents remaining after a certain number of days. This sort of analysis provides juve-

### One-third of committed juveniles, but less than 5% of detained juveniles, remained in placement 6 months after admission



- Among juveniles detained while awaiting adjudication or disposition, 70% had been in placement in the facility for at least 7 days, 50% for at least 15 days, and 28% for at least 30 days. By 60 days, only 14% of these detained juveniles remained in placement; and by 90 days, less than 10% remained.
- Among juveniles awaiting placement elsewhere, 69% had been in the facility at least 15 days, 48% for at least 30 days. By 60 days, 25% remained; and after 90 days, 15% remained.
- Among committed juveniles (those adjudicated, disposed, and placed in the facility), 90% had been in the facility at least 15 days, 81% at least 30 days, 68% at least 60 days, and 57% at least 90 days. After a full year, 15% of committed juveniles remained in placement.

Note: Juveniles awaiting placement elsewhere are distinguished here but are included in the detained category for all other analyses.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

nile justice policymakers with a useful means of comparing the time spent in placement for different categories of juveniles.

### Residents' average time in the facility varied by facility type and placement status

Juveniles committed to public facilities had been in placement longer on average than juveniles committed to private facilities. In public facilities, the average time in the facility for committed juveniles was 192 days. In private facilities, committed juveniles had been in the facility an average of 174 days.

The reverse pattern was found for the detained population: juveniles detained in private facilities had been in the facility longer on average than those detained in public facilities (70 days vs. 37 days).

Among juveniles voluntarily admitted under a diversion agreement, those in private placement had been in the facility an average of 195 days. Those in public placement had been in the facility an average of 25 days.

### Males had been in facilities longer on average than females

Among committed juveniles, the difference between the average time in the facility for males and females was more than 3 weeks. Committed males had been in the facility more than 6 months on average (189 days), compared with an average of 165 days for committed females.

Detained males had been in the facility an average of 42 days, compared with an average of 32 days for detained females.

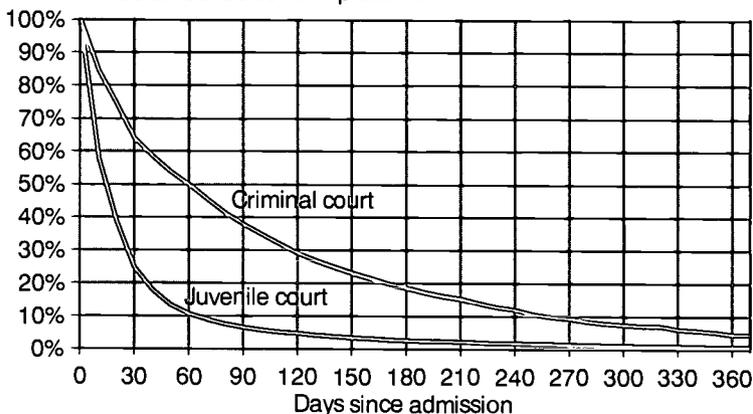
### Minorities had been in facilities longer than nonminority whites

Among committed juveniles, minorities had been in the facility an average of 193 days. In comparison, committed nonminority whites had been in the facility an average of 174 days—2 weeks less.

A similar pattern was found among detained juveniles. Detained minority juveniles had been in the facility an average of 1 week longer than nonminority whites (43 days vs. 36 days).

### Juveniles transferred to criminal court or awaiting transfer remained in detention longer than those awaiting juvenile court adjudication or disposition

Percent of detained residents in placement

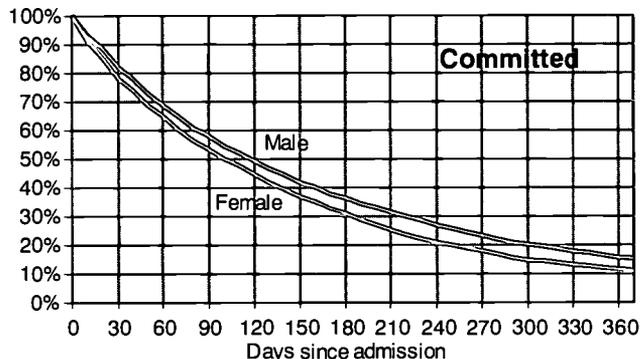


- Among juveniles detained while awaiting adjudication or disposition in juvenile court, 69% had been in the facility for at least 7 days, 49% at least 14 days, and 25% at least 30 days. By 60 days, only 11% remained in the facility; and by 90 days, 6% remained.
- Among detained juveniles awaiting a transfer hearing or awaiting criminal court processing, 89% had been in the facility for at least 7 days, 80% at least 14 days, and 64% at least 30 days. At 60 days, 50% remained in the facility, and by 90 days, 38% remained. After 6 months, nearly 20% remained; and after a full year, 4% remained.

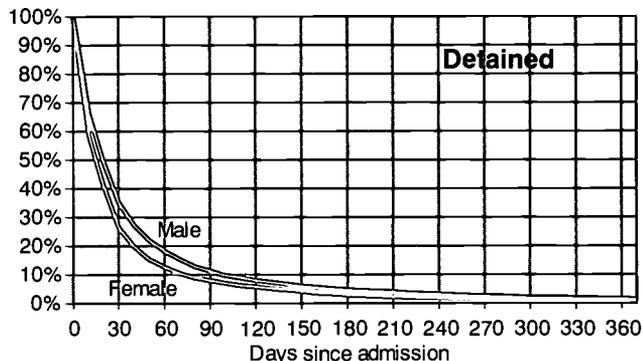
Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

### Half of committed females had been in the facility at least 14 weeks—half of committed males had been held at least 17 weeks

Percent of residents remaining in placement



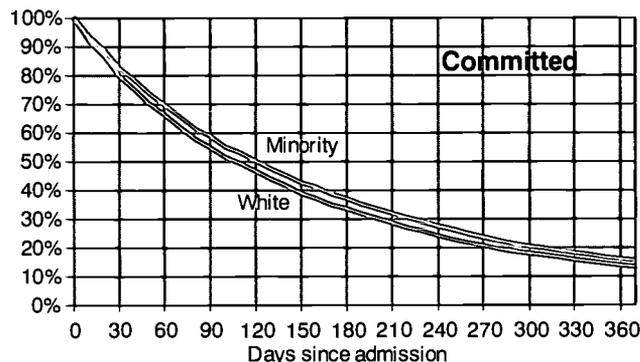
Percent of residents remaining in placement



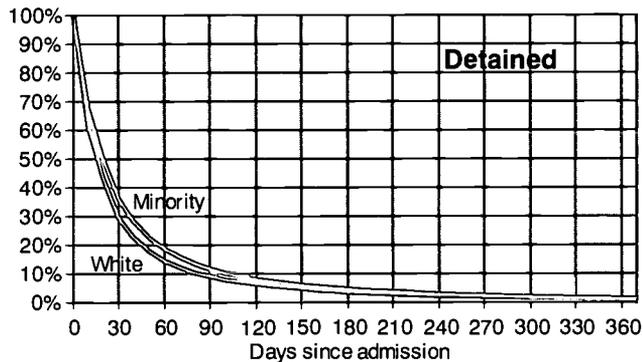
- Among committed juveniles, 36% of males had been in the facility at least 180 days compared with 31% of females.
- Among the detained population, 35% of males had been in the facility at least 30 days compared with 26% of females.

### Half of committed minority juveniles had been in the facility at least 17 weeks—half of committed whites had been held at least 15 weeks

Percent of residents remaining in placement



Percent of residents remaining in placement



- Among committed juveniles, 37% of minority juveniles had been in the facility at least 180 days, compared with 33% of nonminority white juveniles.
- Among the detained population, 36% of minority juveniles had been in the facility at least 30 days, compared with 29% of nonminority white juveniles.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

### Juveniles held for violent offenses had been in placement longer on average than other juveniles

Overall, committed delinquents had been in the facility an average of just over 6 months (186 days). The average time in the facility was the same for committed status offenders. Juveniles committed for Violent Crime Index offenses, in comparison, had been in the facility an average of nearly 9 months (266 days).

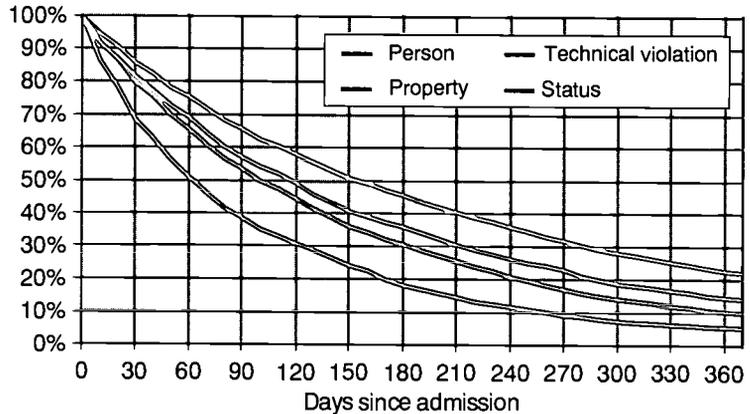
Among detained juveniles, the pattern was similar. Detained delinquents had been in the facility an average of 40 days, detained status offenders an average of 49 days; but the average for juveniles detained for Violent Crime Index offenses was 64 days.

### Demographic differences in time in the facility reflect differences in offense profiles

The findings that on the 1997 census day male and minority youth had been in placement longer than their female and nonminority white counterparts are attributable to differences in offense profiles: males and minorities had larger proportions of person offenders, particularly violent person offenders, in their populations. Within individual offense categories, demographic differences in time in the facility were negligible.

### Committed person offenders and status offenders had been in placement longer than other types of offenders

Percent of committed residents remaining in placement



- The curves for the percent of committed drug and public order offenders remaining in placement were largely overlapping with the curve for property offenders.
- Among committed juveniles, 46% of person offenders had been in the facility at least 180 days.
- The proportion of juveniles remaining in placement at least 180 days was larger for committed status offenders than for delinquents other than person offenders: 36% of committed status offenders and 31% of committed property offenders had been in the facility at least 180 days. A smaller proportion of juveniles committed for technical violations (18%) had been in the facility that long.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement 1997* [machine-readable data file].

## 7 in 10 juveniles in residential placement were held under locked rather than staff-secure arrangements

### Security arrangements varied by the type of facility and the type of juvenile involved

National accreditation standards for juvenile facilities express a preference for relying on staff, rather than on hardware, to provide security. The guiding principle is to house juveniles in the "least restrictive placement alternative." Staff security measures include periodically taking counts of the youth in custody, using classification and separation procedures, and maintaining an adequate ratio of security staff to juveniles.

For each juvenile reported to the CJRP, respondents were asked about the "locked doors and/or gates [that] confined THIS young person within the facility and its grounds during the afterschool, day-time hours on October 29, 1997." Overall, facilities reported that 7 in 10 juveniles in residential placement were confined during afterschool hours by at least one locked door or gate. The vast majority of juveniles in residential placement in public facilities were confined under locked arrangements. For juveniles in private facilities, the reverse was true.

Type of facility	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Locked	Staff-secure
Total	100%	71%	29%
Public	100	86	14
Private	100	30	70

Nearly 4 in 10 committed juveniles and nearly 1 in 10 detained juveniles were confined by means of staff security only.

Type of placement	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Locked	Staff-secure
Committed	100%	64%	36%
Detained	100	91	9
Other	100	44	56

The use of locked doors or gates varied by offense category. Juveniles held for Violent Crime Index offenses and technical violations were the most likely to be held behind locked doors. Unlike juveniles held for delinquency offenses, those in residential placement for status offenses were more likely to be confined under staff-secure than under locked arrangements.

Offense	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Locked	Staff-secure
Delinquency	100%	74%	26%
Person	100	77	23
Violent Index	100	80	20
Other	100	65	35
Property	100	70	30
Index	100	71	29
Other	100	67	33
Drugs	100	68	32
Trafficking	100	76	24
Other	100	64	36
Public order	100	73	27
DUI	100	58	42
Weapons	100	75	25
Other	100	72	28
Technical violation	100	81	19
Status	100	25	75

Minority juveniles were more likely than nonminority juveniles to be confined behind locked doors. Among minorities, black and Hispanic juveniles were more likely to be confined behind locked doors than were other minorities.

Race/ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Locked	Staff-secure
White	100%	64%	36%
Minority	100	75	25
Black	100	75	25
Hispanic	100	77	23
Amer. Indian	100	66	34
Asian	100	69	31

There was less overrepresentation of minorities among the population of juveniles who were confined under staff-secure arrangements than among those who were locked in.

Race/ethnicity	Percent of juveniles in residential placement on October 29, 1997		
	Total	Locked	Staff-secure
Total	100%	100%	100%
White	37	34	46
Minority	63	66	54
Black	40	42	34
Hispanic	18	20	15
Amer. Indian	2	1	2
Asian	2	2	2

Juveniles age 12 or younger were substantially less likely than older juveniles to be held behind locked doors (57% vs 71%). Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of juveniles under the age of 13 in residential placement were locked in.

## Crowding in juvenile custody facilities affects a substantial proportion of juveniles in custody

### Many more juveniles were held in crowded secure public facilities in 1995 than in 1991

The CJRP does not collect data on facility crowding. The CIC census, however, collected information on facility design capacity, which together with facility population data provided a measure of crowding.

Crowding in juvenile facilities has increased as the juvenile custody population has grown. Since the vast majority of juveniles in custody are held in secure public facilities, such as detention centers and training schools, even small increases in crowding in these facilities affect a large number of juveniles.

In 1995, half of all public *detention centers* were operating above their design capacity. These crowded facilities held nearly three-quarters of residents in public detention centers. In comparison, one-third of detention centers were crowded in 1991, and they held about half of detention center residents that year. The increase in the number of overcapacity public detention facilities meant that there were 7,400 more residents in crowded detention centers in 1995 than in 1991—a rise of nearly 75%.

The situation was much the same in public *institutional facilities* for long-term placements (such as training schools). Although the proportion of such facilities that were operating above their design capacity stayed constant (about 45% in 1991 and 1995), the number of residents held in crowded facilities increased substantially. Public long-term institutional facilities that were overcapacity held more than 70% of public long-term institutional residents in 1995, compared with 62% in 1991.

### Nearly 70% of public facility residents were held in facilities operating above their design capacity on February 15, 1995

Design capacity	All public facilities		Residents	
	Total	Percent operating above design capacity	Total	Percent held in facilities operating above design capacity
All public facilities	1,080	40%	69,929	69%
Fewer than 31 residents	595	21	8,543	29
31–110 residents	324	58	18,506	59
111–200 residents	90	63	13,141	66
201–350 residents	39	82	10,075	82
More than 350 residents	32	88	19,664	91

- In 1995, 40% of public facilities housed more residents than they were constructed to hold—a greater proportion than in 1991 (36%).
- The larger a facility's design capacity, the more likely it was to be operating overcapacity.
- Facilities designed for fewer than 110 residents accounted for nearly three-quarters of overcapacity facilities.

### Compared with public facilities, a substantially smaller proportion of private facilities were crowded on February 15, 1995

Design capacity	All private facilities		Residents	
	Total	Percent operating above design capacity	Total	Percent held in facilities operating above design capacity
All private facilities	1,989	8%	39,706	15%
Fewer than 31 residents	1,694	7	17,377	10
31–110 residents	259	14	14,078	16
111–200 residents	25	20	3,672	17
201–350 residents	5	20	1,345	19
More than 350 residents	6	33	3,234	32

Note: Design capacity is the number of residents a facility is constructed to hold without double bunking in single rooms and without using areas not designed as sleeping quarters to house residents.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Children in Custody Census 1994/95* [machine-readable data files].

There were 10,000 more residents in overcapacity training schools and other public long-term institutional facilities in 1995 than in 1991—an increase of more than 55%.

## Federal requirements to deinstitutionalize status offenders have been effective

### The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act prohibits secure placement of status offenders and nonoffenders

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended, states that "juveniles . . . charged with or who have committed offenses that would not be criminal if committed by an adult or offenses which do not constitute violations of valid court orders, or alien juveniles in custody, or such nonoffenders as dependent or neglected children, shall not be placed in secure detention facilities or secure correctional facilities. . . ."

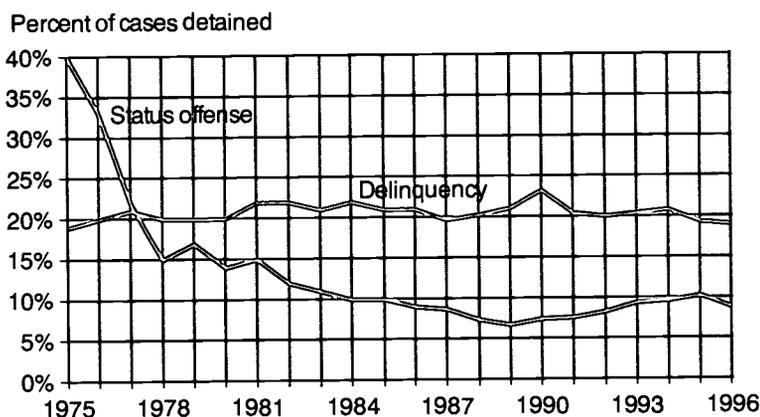
Federal regulations have interpreted the Act to permit accused status offenders and nonoffenders to be held in secure juvenile facilities for up to 24 hours following initial contact with the police or the court.

### Of detained status offenders, 4 in 10 were runaways

Among status offenders detained in public facilities in 1997, those held for running away made up the largest proportion, followed by those held for incorrigibility.

Most serious offense	Offense profile of 1997 detained status offenders in public detention centers
Runaway	40%
Incorrigibility	22
Truancy	9
Underage drinking	8
Curfew violation	6
Other status offense	15

### Court data show a substantial decline in the use of detention in status offense cases



- In 1975, status offense cases were twice as likely as delinquency cases to involve secure detention between the time of referral to court and case disposition.
- By 1992, the likelihood that a status offense case would involve detention was less than half that for delinquency cases.
- In 1975, an estimated 143,000 status offense cases involved detention—in 1996, the figure was 39,100. It is not known how many of these were in violation of the 24-hour rule.

Source: Authors' adaptation of NCJJ's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records* for the years 1975–1996 [machine-readable data files].

### One-quarter of status offenders in residential placement were locked in for afterschool hours

Although 75% of status offenders in residential placement were confined under staff-secure arrangements, 25% were confined during afterschool hours by at least one locked door or gate. Status offenders in residential placement for curfew violations or underage drinking were more likely than other status offenders to be confined under locked arrangements; status offenders placed for incorrigibility were the least likely.

Most serious offense	Proportion confined under locked arrangements during afterschool hours
Status offenders	25%
Curfew violation	40
Underage drinking	39
Runaway	28
Truancy	21
Incorrigibility	18

# In 1997, the 1-day count of youth under age 18 held in local adult jails was 9,100

## The number of youth under 18 in jails rose 35% from 1994 to 1997

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' Annual Survey of Jails, an estimated 9,100 youth under the age of 18 were held in adult jails on June 30, 1997—about 2% of the total jail population. The 1-day count of under-18 jail inmates in 1997 was 12% greater than the figure a year earlier and more than 35% greater than the 1994 figure. The majority of youth under age 18 held in adult jails were held as adults. Although they accounted for a smaller proportion of under-18 jail inmates, the number of

inmates under 18 who were being held as juveniles rose 50% from 1994 to 1996, then dropped 12% in 1997. In comparison, the overall 1-day count of jail inmates grew 7% from 1994 to 1996 and another 9% in 1997.

Prior to 1994, the Annual Survey of Jails counted the number of jail inmates initially subject to juvenile court authority as juvenile offenders even if they were tried as adults in criminal court. In 1985, an estimated 1,630 such juveniles were held in adult jails. By 1992, the estimate had risen to 2,800.

## Recent rules change the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act jail removal requirement

Regulations effective December 10, 1996, modify Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act requirements in several ways:

- Clarify the sight and sound separation requirement and provide that brief and inadvertent or accidental contact in nonresidential areas is not a reportable violation.
- Permit time-phased use of program areas in collocated facilities.
- Expand the 6-hour hold exception to include 6 hours before and after court appearances.
- Allow adjudicated delinquents to be transferred to adult institutions once they have reached the State's age of full criminal responsibility, where such transfer is expressly authorized or required by State law.

The revised regulations are intended to offer flexibility to States in carrying out the Act's requirements.

## Over three-quarters of youth under age 18 in adult jails in June 1997 were convicted or awaiting trial as adult criminal offenders

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Jail inmates under age 18	6,700	7,800	8,100	9,100
Held as adults	5,100	5,900	5,700	7,000
Held as juveniles*	1,600	1,800	2,400	2,100

\* It is not known how many of these juveniles were jailed in violation of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act's requirement and how many were held pursuant to its exceptions.

Note: Estimates are for June 30, 1994, 1995 and 1997, and June 29, 1996.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Gilliard and Beck's Prison and jail inmates at midyear 1997, *BJS Bulletin*.

## The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act limits the placement of juveniles in adult facilities

The Act states that "... juveniles alleged to be or found to be delinquent and [status offenders and nonoffenders] shall not be detained or confined in any institution in which they have contact with adult[s] incarcerated because they have been convicted of a crime or are awaiting trial on criminal charges. ..." This provision of the Act is commonly referred to as the "sight and sound separation" requirement. The Act also states that "... no juvenile shall be detained or confined in any jail or lockup for adults. ..."

This provision is known as the jail and lockup removal requirement.

Regulations implementing the Act exempt juveniles being tried as criminals for felonies or who have been convicted as criminal felons from the jail and lockup removal requirement. In institutions other than adult jails or lockups or in jails and lockups under temporary hold exceptions, confinement of juvenile offenders is permitted if juveniles and adult inmates cannot see each other and no conversation between them is possible. This reflects the "sight and sound separation" requirement.

There are two temporary hold exceptions to jail and lockup removal: a 6-

hour grace period that allows adult jails and lockups to hold alleged delinquents in secure custody until other arrangements can be made; and a 24-hour exception, exclusive of weekends and holidays, for rural facilities that meet statutory conditions.

Some jurisdictions have established juvenile detention centers that are collocated with adult jail facilities or lockups. A collocated juvenile detention facility must meet specific criteria to establish that it is a separate and distinct facility.

## Males, 17-year-olds, minorities, and person offenders predominate among youth sent to adult prisons

### Youth under age 18 accounted for 2% of new court commitments to State adult prisons

Thirty-six States (containing 81% of the 1996 U.S. population ages 10–17) contributed data for 1992–1996 to the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP). These States reported approximately 5,600 new court commitments to their adult prison systems involving youth under 18. These youth accounted for nearly 2% of all new court commitments. Nearly 3 in 4 of these youth were 17 years old at admission. States with an upper age of juvenile jurisdiction below 17 accounted for half of all under-18 admissions.

### The under-18 proportion of new admissions varied by offense

Under-18 youth accounted for 4% of new admissions for person offenses, 7% of new admissions for robbery, 5% of those for murder, and 3% of those for aggravated assault and weapons offenses. For all other offense categories, the under-18 proportion was 2% or less.

New court commitments to State prison:

Most serious offense	Under-18 proportion
All offenses	2%
Person	4
Murder	5
Sexual assault	1
Robbery	7
Aggravated assault	3
Property	2
Burglary	2
Larceny-theft	1
Motor vehicle theft	2
Arson	2
Drugs	1
Trafficking	1
Public order	1
Weapons	3

Note: General offense categories include offenses not detailed.

### More than three-quarters of youth newly admitted to State prison were minorities

Minorities made up a greater proportion of new court commitments involving youth under age 18 than of those involving older offenders. Blacks accounted for the largest proportion of new prison admissions for both age groups.

New court commitments to State prison:

Race/ethnicity	Age at admission	
	Under 18	18 or older
Total	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	23	35
Minority	77	65
Black	60	46
Hispanic	15	18
American Indian	1	1
Asian	1	<1

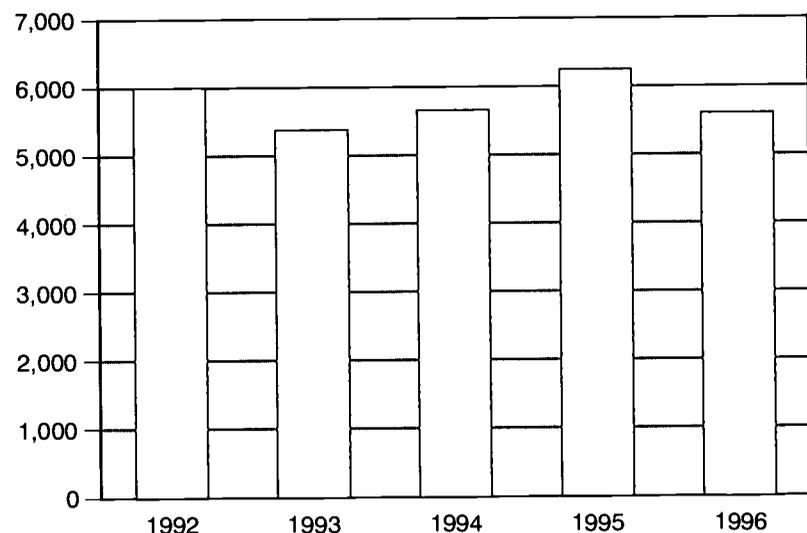
The minority proportion of new admissions varied by offense category. Drug offenses had the greatest proportion of minority admissions for both age groups.

New court commitments to State prison:

Most serious offense Race/ethnicity	Age at admission	
	Under 18	18 or older
Person	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	17	35
Minority	83	65
Property	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	46	46
Minority	54	54
Drugs	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	5	22
Minority	95	78
Public order	100%	100%
White, not Hispanic	28	47
Minority	72	53

### In the 36 States that reported data, under-18 prison admissions decreased 10% from 1995 to 1996

Youth under age 18 newly admitted



Source: Authors' analysis of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Corrections Reporting Program 1992–1996* [machine-readable data files].

**While many States had increases from 1992 to 1996 in the number of under-18 youth newly admitted to State adult prison systems, some States with the most admissions in 1996 had decreases**

State	Youth under age 18 admitted to State adult correctional systems		
	Number newly admitted in 1996	Proportion of 1996 admissions	Percent change 1992-1996
All reporting States*	5,599	2.3%	-6%
<b>Upper age 15</b>			
New York	624	3.5	-10
North Carolina	378	3.6	-51
<b>Upper age 16</b>			
Illinois*	460	2.7	29
South Carolina	353	5.3	56
Michigan	295	3.7	29
Georgia	219	2.3	99
Wisconsin*	196	4.1	165
Missouri	180	2.4	53
Louisiana	138	2.0	24
New Hampshire	6	1.1	-
<b>Upper age 17</b>			
Florida	773	4.1	-21
California	394	0.8	116
Youth Authority only	286	39.6	81
Mississippi*	217	4.4	117
Ohio	206	1.6	94
Alabama*	172	3.1	66
Oregon	141	5.7	-
Maryland	139	1.8	-5
Colorado	125	3.0	-
Washington	86	1.7	146
Pennsylvania	76	1.4	69
Virginia	71	0.9	18
Iowa	56	1.8	93
Nevada	54	1.9	-
Minnesota	52	2.1	-
Nebraska	50	3.6	67
New Jersey	49	0.5	32
Arkansas	27	3.6	-85
Utah	22	1.7	-
South Dakota	11	1.6	-
Tennessee	10	0.2	-
Kentucky	10	0.2	-
North Dakota	5	1.3	-
Oklahoma	5	1.0	-
Maine	1	0.2	-
Hawaii	0	0.0	-
West Virginia	0	0.0	-

\*Count has been adjusted for admissions that were missing age data, based on admissions that had age data.

\*In 1996, Wisconsin changed its upper age of juvenile jurisdiction from 17 to 16.

- Too few cases to calculate a reliable percent change.

Source: Authors' analysis of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Corrections Reporting Program 1992-1996* [machine-readable data files].

**6 out of 10 youth newly admitted to State prisons committed a person offense**

Compared with the offense profile for older inmates, new commitments involving youth under age 18 had a substantially greater proportion of person offenses (primarily robbery and aggravated assault) and a smaller proportion of drug offenses.

New court commitments to State prison:

Most serious offense	Age at admission	
	Under 18	18 or older
All offenses	100%	100%
Person	60	29
Murder	9	3
Kidnaping	1	1
Sexual assault	4	6
Robbery	31	9
Aggravated assault	11	7
Property	22	30
Burglary	14	12
Larceny-theft	3	8
Motor vehicle theft	2	2
Arson	1	1
Drugs	11	31
Trafficking	7	18
Possession	3	7
Public order	5	5
Weapons	4	3

Note: General offense categories include offenses not detailed.

**The vast majority of under-18 youth admitted to prison were male**

Males accounted for 96% of new court commitments involving youth under age 18. Commitments of females under 18 primarily involved charges of assault, robbery, murder, and drug offenses.

# Imposition of the death penalty for crimes committed at age 17 or younger is rare

## The current era of death sentences began in 1973

The Supreme Court decision in *Furman v. Georgia* (1972) struck down all existing death penalty statutes. Sentencing under post-*Furman* statutes began in 1973. The constitutionality of these current-era statutes was not determined by the Supreme Court until the 1976 decision in *Gregg v. Georgia*. Executions under the current-era statutes did not begin until 1977.

## Supreme Court decisions prohibit the death penalty for persons younger than 16

The Supreme Court, in *Eddings v. Oklahoma* (1982), reversed the death sentence of a 16-year-old tried as an adult in criminal court. The Court held that a defendant's young age, as well as mental and emotional development, should be considered a mitigating factor of great weight in deciding whether to apply the death penalty. The Court noted that adolescents are less mature, responsible, and self-disciplined than adults and are less able to consider the long-range implications of their actions. The Court, however, did not address the question of whether the 8th and 14th amendments prohibit the imposition of the death sentence on an offender because he was only 16 years old at the time the offense was committed.

In *Thompson v. Oklahoma* (1988), the issue before the Court was whether imposing the death penalty on an offender who was 15 years old at the time of the murder violated constitutional protections against cruel and unusual punishment. The Court concluded that the eighth amendment prohibited application

of the death penalty to a person who was younger than 16 at the time of the crime. In *Stanford v. Kentucky* (1989) the Court decided that the eighth amendment does not prohibit the death penalty for crimes committed at age 16 or 17.

## Youth younger than 18 constitute a small proportion of those receiving the death penalty

From January 1, 1973, through October 31, 1998, 177 death sentences were handed down to 164 persons who were younger than 18 at the time of their crime. Youth sentenced to death for crimes committed at

age 17 or younger accounted for approximately 3% of all individuals receiving death sentences since 1973.

## Most "juvenile" death sentences are eventually reversed

As with most death sentences, many under-18 death sentences imposed are reversed. Since 1973, 50% of these under-18 death sentences have been reversed, 7% have resulted in executions, and 43% are still in force.

Some of the youth sentenced to death had their sentences reversed only to have them reinstated. Of

### Most States that specify a minimum age for the death penalty set the minimum at age 16 or 18

None specified	Age 16 (or less)	Age 17	Age 18
Arizona	Alabama	Georgia	California
Idaho	Arkansas (14) <sup>b</sup>	New Hampshire	Colorado
Louisiana	Delaware	N. Carolina <sup>e</sup>	Connecticut <sup>f</sup>
Montana	Florida	Texas	Federal system
Pennsylvania	Indiana		Illinois
S. Carolina	Kentucky		Kansas
S. Dakota <sup>a</sup>	Mississippi (13) <sup>c</sup>		Maryland
Utah	Missouri		Nebraska
	Nevada		New Jersey
	Oklahoma		New Mexico
	Virginia (14) <sup>d</sup>		New York
	Wyoming		Ohio
			Oregon
			Tennessee
			Washington

<sup>a</sup> Juveniles may be transferred to criminal court. Age can be a mitigating factor.

<sup>b</sup> See Arkansas Code Ann. 9-27-318(b)(2) (Repl. 1991).

<sup>c</sup> The minimum age defined by statute is 13, but the effective age is 16 based on interpretation of U.S. Supreme Court decisions by the State attorney general's office.

<sup>d</sup> The minimum age for transfer to criminal court is 14 by statute, but the effective age for a capital sentence is 16 based on interpretation of U.S. Supreme Court decisions by the State attorney general's office.

<sup>e</sup> The age required is 17 unless the murderer was incarcerated for murder when a subsequent murder occurred; then the age may be 14.

<sup>f</sup> See Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-46a(g)(1).

Note: Minimum ages (at the time of the capital offense) reflect interpretation by State attorney general offices. States not listed do not have the death penalty.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Snell's Capital punishment 1997, *BJS Bulletin*.

the 164 persons sentenced to death for crimes committed at age 17 or younger, 12 had their sentences reversed and then reinstated at least once. One of these offenders has had his death sentence reversed four times and reinstated three times.

**76 death row inmates committed their crimes prior to age 18**

Of the 76 inmates on death row on October 31, 1998, for crimes com-

mitted at age 17 or younger, 59 were age 17 at the time of their offense, and the remaining 17 were age 16. Half of these inmates (38 of 76) were not juveniles at the time of their offense—they were legally adults, because they were older than their State's upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction. The majority of these (27 of 38) were 17-year-olds from Texas, where the upper age is 16.

The youngest of those on death row on October 31, 1998 for crimes committed prior to age 18 was 18 years old; the oldest was 40 years old, and the average age was 24. As of October 31, 1998, an average of 6 years had passed since the offender's initial death sentence.

**The victims of these death row inmates tended to be adults**

Most of the 104 victims of the 76 inmates on death row for crimes committed prior to age 18 were adult victims (84%). Most of the victims were white (59%). The majority of offenders were minorities (47 of 76); all were male.

Offender/victim	Percent of victims
Nonminority/nonminority	35%
Minority/minority	32
Minority/nonminority	32
Nonminority/minority	3

Note: Nonminority includes whites not of Hispanic ethnicity; all else are minority.

**Texas and Florida account for 4 in 10 offenders sentenced to death for crimes committed before age 18 from 1973 through October 31, 1998**

	Offenders
Total	164
Texas	42
Florida	23
Alabama	15
Mississippi	10
Louisiana	9
Georgia	7
South Carolina	7
North Carolina	6
Ohio	6
Oklahoma	6
Pennsylvania	5
Arizona	5
Missouri	4
Virginia	4
Indiana	3
Arkansas	2
Kentucky	2
Maryland	2
Nevada	2
Nebraska	1
New Jersey	1
Washington	1

Source: Authors' adaptation of Streib's Present death row inmates under juvenile sentences and executions for juvenile crimes, January 1, 1973 to October 31, 1998, *Juvenile Death Penalty Today*.

**Those executed for crimes committed at age 17 or younger were all from States where the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction is 16; therefore, they were legally adults at the time of their crime**

Executions of under-18 offenders: January 1, 1973–October 31, 1998:

Name	State	Age at offense	Age at execution	Race/ethnicity
Jay Pinkerton	TX	17	24	white
James Roach	SC	17	25	white
Ruben Cantu	TX	17	26	Hispanic
Dwayne Wright	VA	17	26	black
Charles Rumbaugh	TX	17	28	white
Johnny Garrett	TX	17	28	white
Frederick Lashley	MO	17	29	black
Dalton Prejean	LA	17	30	black
Curtis Harris	TX	17	31	black
Christopher Burger	GA	17	33	white
Robert Carter	TX	17	34	black
Joseph Cannon	TX	17	38	white

- On average, executions took place 11 years after initial death sentences were imposed.
- Ten of these twelve inmates had never had their sentences reversed. Their executions took place an average of 10 years following their initial death sentence. For the two who had their sentences reversed and then reinstated, an average of nearly 15 years passed before their execution.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Streib's Present death row inmates under juvenile sentences and executions for juvenile crimes, January 1, 1973 to October 31, 1998, *Juvenile Death Penalty Today*.

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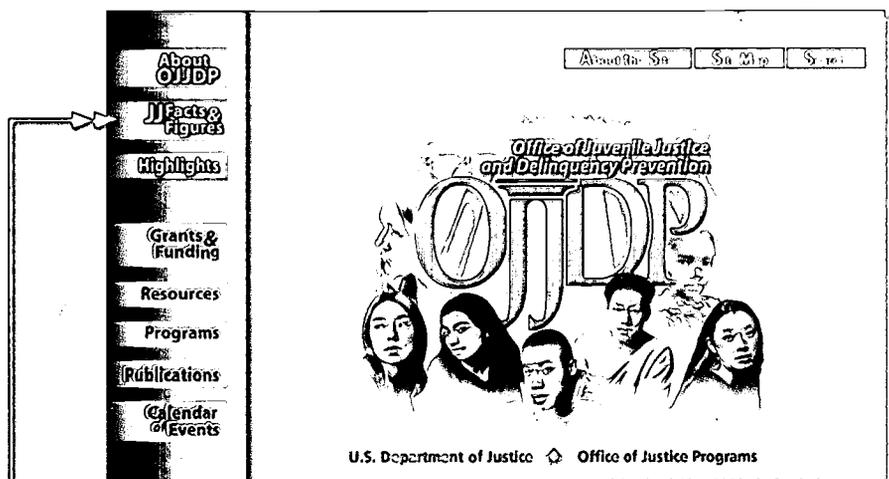
Keeps you up-to-date on the topics of juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, and missing and exploited children. It also presents a wide range of publications, funding opportunities, topic-specific resources, conferences, and highlights about OJJDP.

The Statistical Briefing Book, a component of OJJDP Online under JJ Facts and Figures, also offers direct access to more statistics and trends in juvenile justice and victimization to complement information featured in the *National Report*.

Keep informed and share your comments and feedback.

**OJJDP Online: [www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org)**

**Share Comments: [askncjrs@ncjrs.org](mailto:askncjrs@ncjrs.org)**



## Statistical Briefing Book

- ◇ Population characteristics
- ◇ Juveniles in court
- ◇ Juvenile arrests
- ◇ Juveniles as offenders
- ◇ Juveniles as victims
- ◇ Juveniles in corrections

**[www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org](http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org)**

**U.S. Department of Justice**  
**Office of Justice Programs**  
*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*

*Washington, DC 20531*

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