

Youth and the Juvenile Justice System

2022 NATIONAL REPORT





Youth and the Juvenile Justice System: 2022 National Report

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Preface

Youth and the Juvenile Justice System: 2022 National Report is the fifth edition of a comprehensive report on youth victimization, offending by youth, and the juvenile justice system. With this release, the report series has adopted a new name (the series was previously known as “Juvenile Offenders and Victims”), but the focus of the report remains unchanged: the report consists of the most requested information on youth and the juvenile justice system in the United States. Developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Institute of Justice, the report draws on reliable data and relevant research to provide a comprehensive and insightful view of youth victims and offending by youth, and what happens to youth when they enter the juvenile justice system in the U.S.

The report offers—to Congress, state legislators, other state and local policymakers, educators, juvenile justice professionals, and concerned citizens—empirically based answers to frequently asked questions about the nature of youth victimization and offending and the justice system’s response. The juvenile justice system must react to the law-violating behaviors of youth in a manner that not only protects the community and holds youth accountable but also enhances youth’s ability to live productively and responsibly in

the community. The system must also intervene in the lives of abused and neglected children who lack safe and nurturing environments.

To respond to these complex issues, juvenile justice practitioners, policymakers, and the public must have access to useful and accurate information about the system and the youth it serves. At times, such information is not available or, when it does exist, it is often too scattered or inaccessible to be useful.

This report bridges that gap by pulling together the most requested information on youth and the juvenile justice system in the United States. The report draws on numerous national data collections to address the specific information needs of those involved with the juvenile justice system. The report presents important and, at times, complex information using clear, nontechnical writing and easy-to-understand graphics and tables. It is structured as a series of briefing papers on specific topics, short sections that can be read independently from other parts of the report.

The material in this report represents the most reliable information on youth and their involvement with the justice system through the 2019 data year. Given the range of information covered by the report, a data-year cutoff had to be established. We elected

2019 as a common anchoring point because all the major data sets required for the report were current through 2019 at the time we began writing. The onset of COVID-19 in 2020 caused some data collections to be substantially delayed and thus unavailable during the writing of the report. Further, the various coronavirus mitigation efforts introduced across the country, such as school closures and stay-at-home orders, likely impacted the type and volume of behaviors that came to the attention of the justice system, and simultaneously necessitated changes to

policies and practices within youth-serving agencies. Therefore, 2019 reflects the experiences of youth and the juvenile justice system unencumbered by the impacts of the pandemic.

We expect that this report will be used mainly as a reference document, with readers turning to the pages on specific topics when the need arises. However, we encourage you to explore other sections when time permits. In each section, you will probably discover something new, something that will expand

your understanding, confirm your opinions, or make you question what you believe to be true.

It has been more than 20 years since the first edition of this report. Since that seminal publication, this report has become a primary source of information on youth victimization, offending by youth, and the justice system's response, and it will provide a context for debates over the direction to take to respond to these important social issues.



Acknowledgments

This report is the result of an ongoing effort that has benefited from the assistance of many individuals. Authors at the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) for various chapters and sections include:

- Charles Puzzanchera (chapters on youth population characteristics, youth victims, offending by youth, law enforcement and youth crime, youth in juvenile court, and youth in corrections).
- Sarah Hockenberry (sections on major depressive disorders, education, victims of serious violence, school crime, self-reported drug use, chapters on youth in juvenile court and youth in corrections).
- Melissa Sickmund (chapter on juvenile justice system structure and process).

In addition to authors' contributions, the following NCJJ staff provided assistance and review: Kristy

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Finally, this work would not be possible without the efforts of the many individuals who collect and report the data at the local, state, and national levels—data that are the essence of this report.



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Chapter 1

Youth population characteristics

1

Problems experienced by children today are the products of multiple and sometimes complex causes. Data presented in this chapter show that prevalence estimates for certain risk factors associated with delinquency have decreased while others have been on the rise. For example, teenage birth rates have declined to historically low levels; however, fewer children are being raised in two-parent families. The proportion of youth living in poverty has decreased since 2010, and was at its lowest level since 1975, but the proportion of youth experiencing major depressive episodes has increased in recent years. Although high school dropout rates have fallen for most demographic groups, the rates are still too high, especially in an employment market where unskilled labor is needed less and less.

This chapter serves to document the status of the U.S. youth population

on several indicators of child well-being and presents an overview of some of the more commonly requested demographic, economic, and sociological statistics on youth. These statistics pertain to factors that may be directly or indirectly associated with youth crime and victimization. Although these factors may be correlated with youth crime and/or victimization, they may not be the immediate cause but may be linked to the causal factor. The sections in this chapter summarize demographic, poverty, and living arrangement data developed by the U.S. Census Bureau, depression data from the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, birth statistics from the National Center for Health Statistics, and education data from the National Center for Education Statistics.



In 2019, about 1 in 5 residents in the United States was younger than 18

After a period of decline, the youth population is expected to increase through 2050

For 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that 73,088,675 persons in the United States—22% of the population—were under the age of 18. The youth population reached a low point in 1984 at 62.5 million, increased 19% through 2010, and then declined 1% through 2019.

Population projections from the Census Bureau suggest that the decline in the population under age 18 will soon reverse, and the youth population will increase through the middle of the 21st century, albeit slowly. Compared

with 2020, the youth population is expected to increase 2% by 2030 and 6% by 2050. However, as Vespa and his colleagues note, the U.S. is a graying country: the growth in the population ages 65 and older will outpace all other age groups through 2050. In fact, by the mid-2030s, persons age 65 and older will outnumber the population under age 18 for the first time in history.

The race/ethnicity profile of the youth population has changed

In response to the Office of Management and Budget's 1997 revisions to the federal data collection standards on race and ethnicity, the 2000 decennial census adopted revised racial classifica-

tions. Prior to the 2000 census, respondents were asked to classify themselves into a single racial group: (1) White, (2) Black or African American, (3) American Indian or Alaska Native, or (4) Asian or Pacific Islander. Starting with the 2000 Census, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders were separated from Asians. In addition, respondents could classify themselves into more than one racial group. Information about Hispanic ethnicity is collected separately from race.

Not all national data systems have reached the Census Bureau's level of detail for racial coding—and historical data cannot support this new coding structure, especially the multi-race categories.* Therefore, this report generally uses the four-race coding structure. For ease of presentation, the terms White, Black, American Indian, and Asian are used.

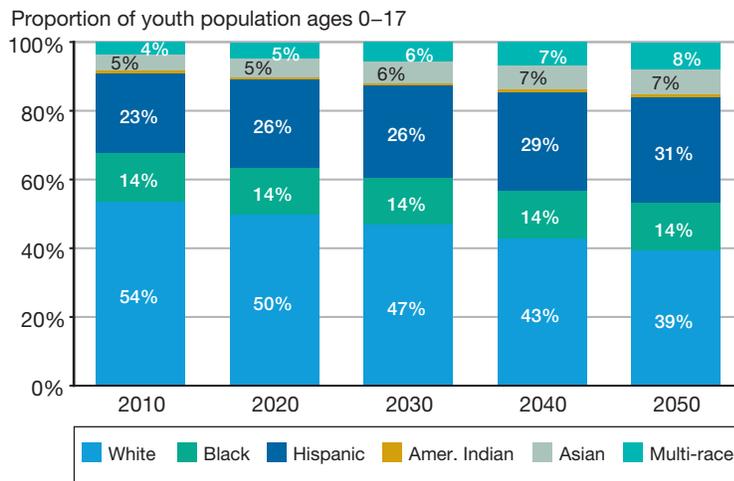
When viewed through the lens of race and ethnicity, the youth population has undergone a sizeable shift.

Race/ethnicity profile, youth ages 0–17:

Race/ethnicity	2000	2019	Pct. change 2000–2019
Non-Hispanic			
White	62%	52%	-15%
Black	15	15	-1
American Indian	1	1	-9
Asian	4	6	57
Hispanic	17	25	49

In 2019, just over half (52%) of the youth population was classified as non-Hispanic White, down from 62% in 2000, while the proportion classified as

The race/ethnicity profile of the youth population will change considerably by 2050



- Between 2020 and 2050, the number of non-Hispanic Black youth is projected to increase 7%, the number of non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander youth is projected to increase 44%, the number of multi-racial youth is expected to grow 77%, and the number of youth of Hispanic ethnicity is expected to increase 28%. Conversely, the number of non-Hispanic White youth will decrease 16%.
- As a result of these changes, the race/ethnicity profile of U.S. youth will shift: by 2050, nonwhite youth will account for 61% of the youth population under age 18.

Note: The proportion of American Indian youth is too small to label and was 1% in each year.

Source: Author's adaptation of U.S. Census Bureau's *Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019* and *Projected Population by Single Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: July 1, 2016 to July 1, 2060* [machine-readable data files].

*The National Center for Health Statistics modifies the Census Bureau's population data to convert the detailed racial categories to the traditional four-race categories. This bridging is accomplished by estimating a single racial group classification of multi-race persons based on responses to the National Health Interview Survey, which asked respondents to classify themselves using both the old and new racial coding structures.

non-Hispanic Black and non-Hispanic American Indian changed little since 2000. Conversely, the proportion of the youth population classified as non-Hispanic Asian and Hispanic increased between 2000 and 2019.

In 2019, one-fourth (25%) of youth in the U.S. were of Hispanic ethnicity, up from 17% in 2000. Population projections from the Census Bureau suggest that the number of Hispanic youth in the U.S. will increase between 2020 and 2050, bringing the Hispanic proportion of the youth population to 31%.

Juvenile justice systems serve populations that vary greatly in racial/ethnic composition

In 2019, at least 9 of every 10 youth in Maine, Vermont, and West Virginia were non-Hispanic and White. In contrast, more than half of California's and New Mexico's youth populations were Hispanic (52% and 62%, respectively). Other states with large Hispanic youth populations were Arizona (45%), Nevada (41%), and Texas (49%).

In 2019, American Indian/Alaskan Natives accounted for at least 10% of the youth population in five states: Alaska (22%), Montana (10%), New Mexico (10%), Oklahoma (12%), and South Dakota (14%).

The states with the greatest proportion of Black youth in their populations in 2019 were Alabama (30%), Georgia (35%), Louisiana (38%), Maryland (33%), Mississippi (43%), and South Carolina (31%). The Black proportion of the youth population was highest in the District of Columbia (55%).

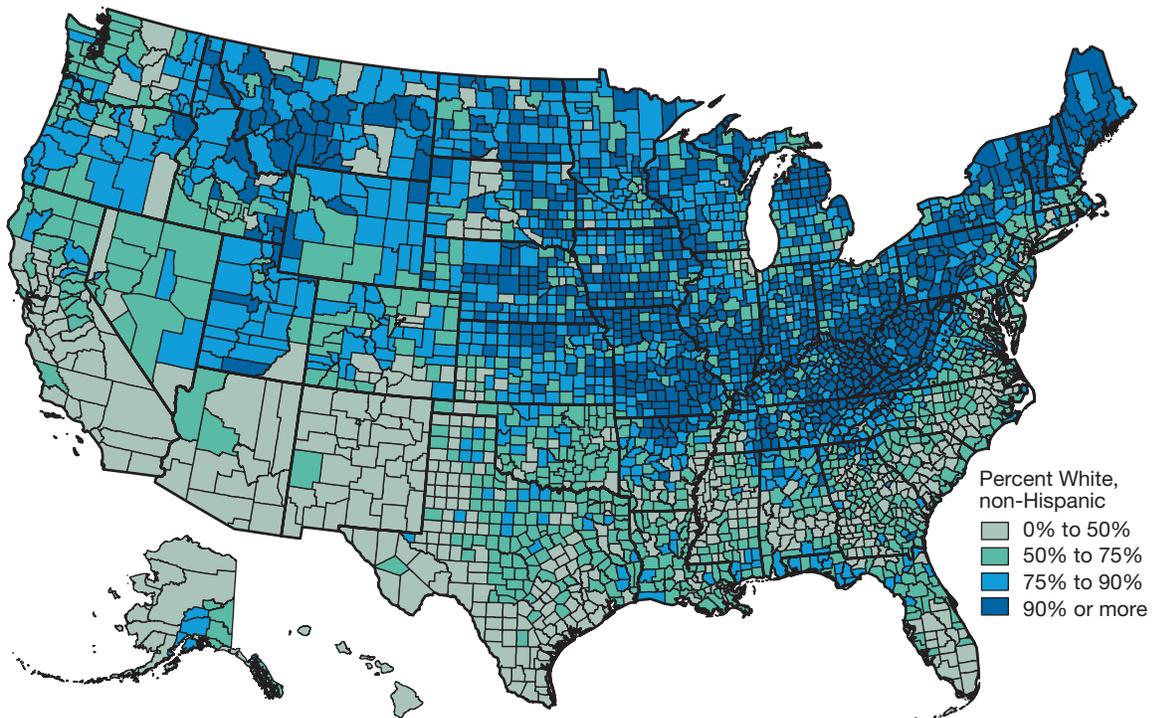
In 2019, non-Hispanic White youth accounted for less than half of the 0–17 population in 11 states

State	2019 population ages 0–17	Percent change 2010–2019	Racial/ethnic profile, 2019				
			Non-Hispanic				
			White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic
U.S. total	73,088,700	–1%	52%	15%	1%	6%	25%
Alabama	1,088,700	–4	59	30	0	2	8
Alaska	180,400	–4	54	6	22	9	10
Arizona	1,641,700	1	40	6	5	4	45
Arkansas	701,300	–1	65	19	1	3	13
California	8,881,100	–4	28	6	1	14	52
Colorado	1,256,700	2	58	6	1	4	32
Connecticut	727,300	–11	56	13	0	6	25
Delaware	204,300	–1	50	28	0	5	17
Dist. of Columbia	128,000	26	24	55	0	3	17
Florida	4,234,000	6	44	21	0	3	31
Georgia	2,505,400	1	45	35	0	5	15
Hawaii	299,400	–1	20	3	0	57	20
Idaho	448,100	4	77	2	1	2	19
Illinois	2,817,300	–10	53	17	0	6	25
Indiana	1,569,400	–2	72	13	0	3	12
Iowa	728,000	0	78	7	0	3	11
Kansas	701,500	–4	68	8	1	3	19
Kentucky	1,004,300	–2	80	11	0	2	7
Louisiana	1,089,900	–2	52	38	1	2	7
Maine	249,600	–9	90	4	1	2	3
Maryland	1,338,200	–1	44	33	0	7	16
Massachusetts	1,353,600	–5	63	10	0	8	19
Michigan	2,144,300	–8	68	18	1	4	9
Minnesota	1,303,200	2	70	12	2	7	9
Mississippi	700,000	–7	50	43	1	1	5
Missouri	1,374,700	–3	74	15	1	3	7
Montana	228,900	2	80	2	10	1	7
Nebraska	476,000	4	70	8	1	3	18
Nevada	694,700	5	37	13	1	8	41
New Hampshire	255,800	–11	86	3	0	4	7
New Jersey	1,943,600	–6	47	14	0	11	27
New Mexico	477,200	–8	24	3	10	1	62
New York	4,031,900	–7	50	16	0	9	25
North Carolina	2,304,600	1	54	24	1	4	17
North Dakota	180,600	20	77	5	8	2	7
Ohio	2,581,400	–5	73	18	0	3	7
Oklahoma	953,900	2	57	10	12	3	18
Oregon	864,800	0	67	4	1	6	23
Pennsylvania	2,635,800	–5	68	15	0	4	13
Rhode Island	203,900	–9	59	9	1	4	27
South Carolina	1,113,700	3	56	31	0	2	10
South Dakota	217,800	7	73	4	14	2	7
Tennessee	1,511,000	1	67	21	0	2	10
Texas	7,406,800	8	33	13	0	5	49
Utah	929,900	6	76	2	1	4	18
Vermont	114,300	–11	91	3	0	3	3
Virginia	1,868,700	1	56	22	0	8	14
Washington	1,661,000	5	59	7	2	11	22
West Virginia	360,400	–7	91	5	0	1	3
Wisconsin	1,267,900	–5	71	11	1	4	13
Wyoming	133,600	–1	79	2	3	1	16

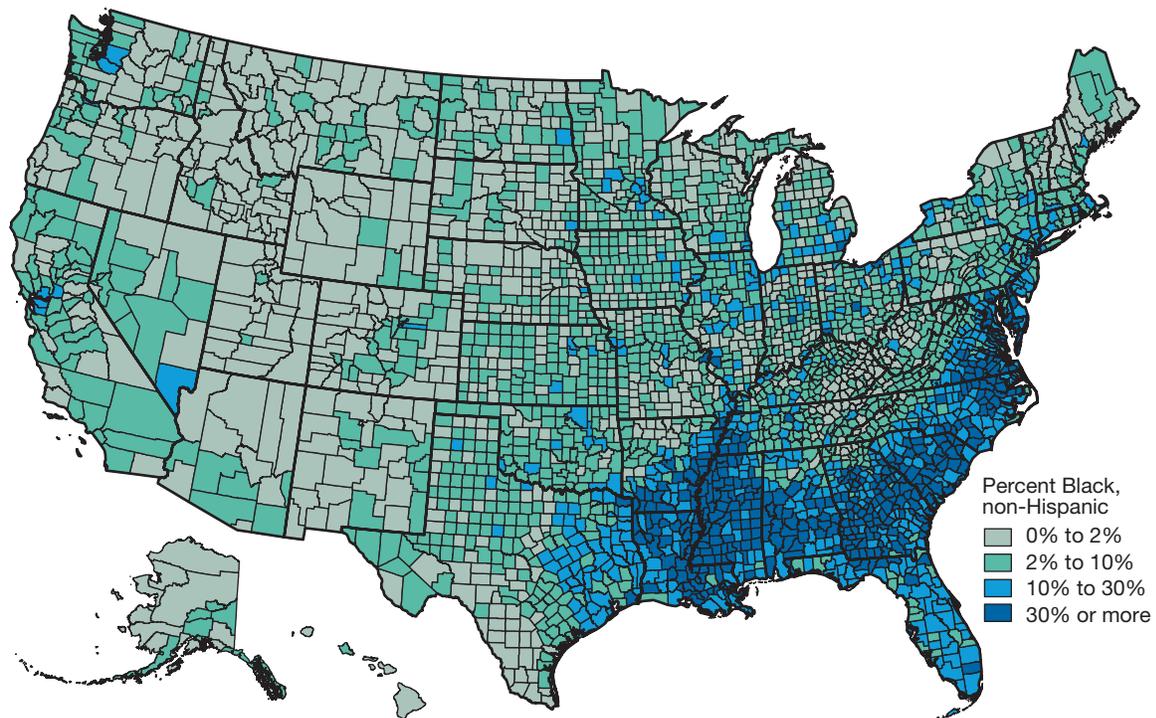
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of Puzanichera et al.'s. *Easy Access to Juvenile Populations* [online analysis].

Proportion of non-Hispanic White youth in the youth population (ages 0–17), 2019

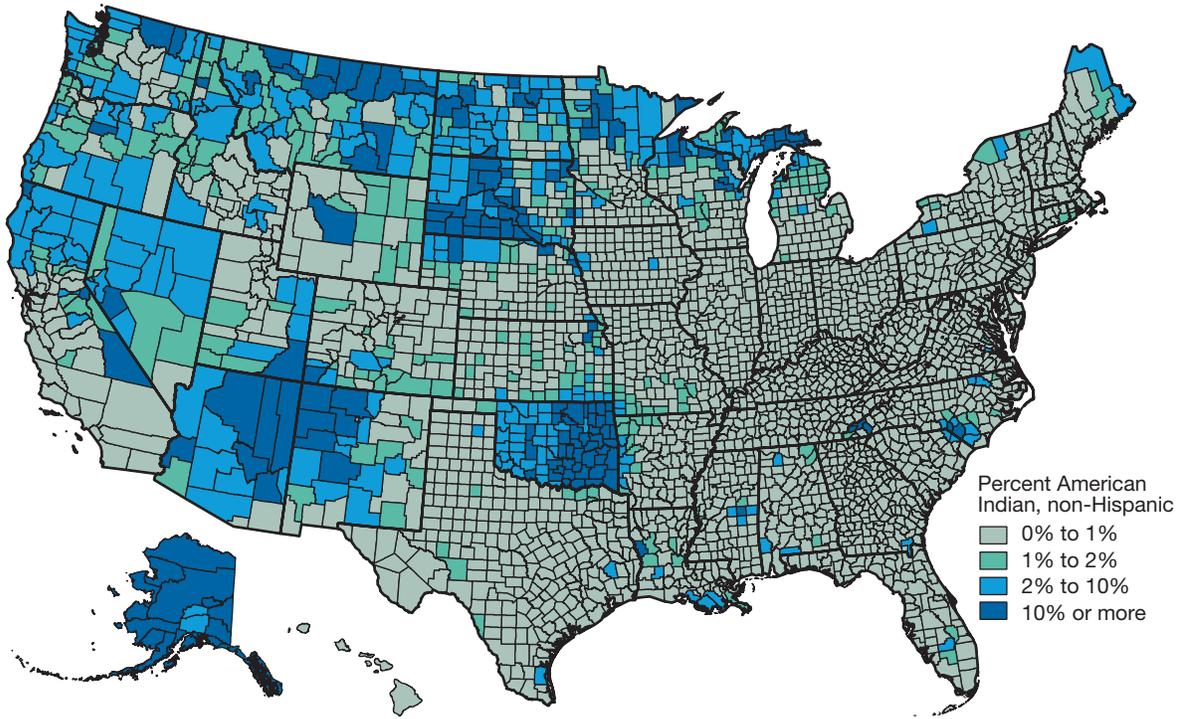


Proportion of non-Hispanic Black youth in the youth population (ages 0–17), 2019

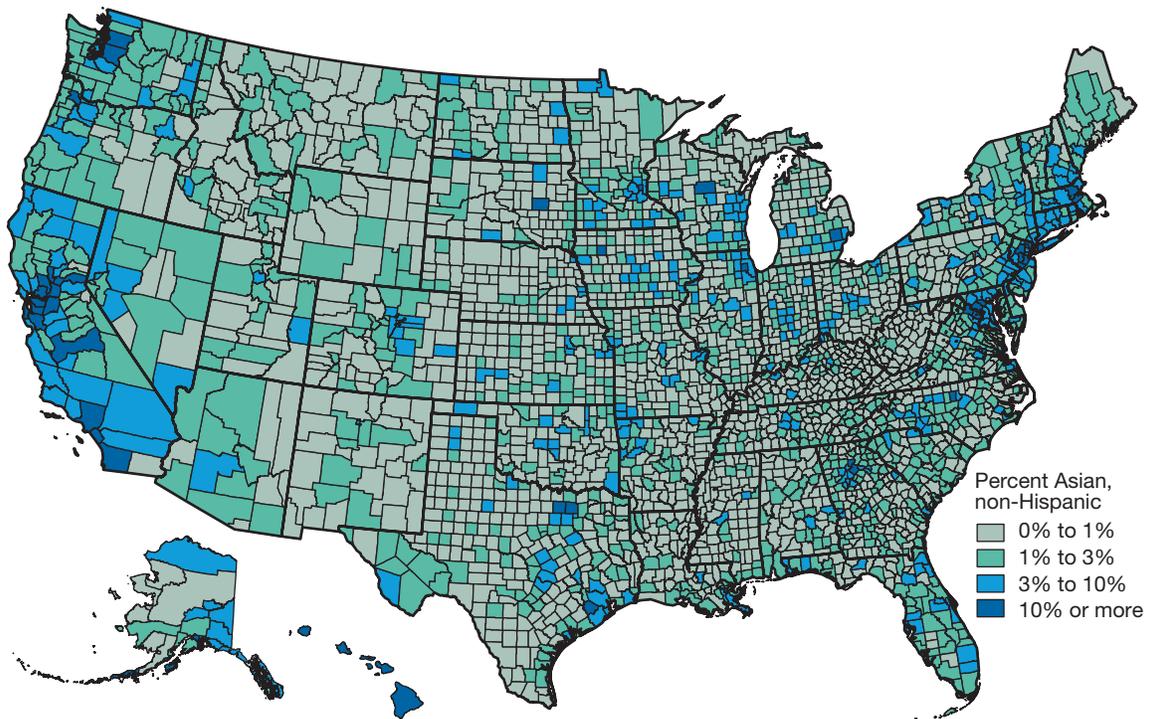


Source: Authors' adaptation of National Center for Health Statistics' *Vintage 2020 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2020)*, by Year, County, Single-year of Age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex.

Proportion of non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native youth in the youth population (ages 0–17), 2019

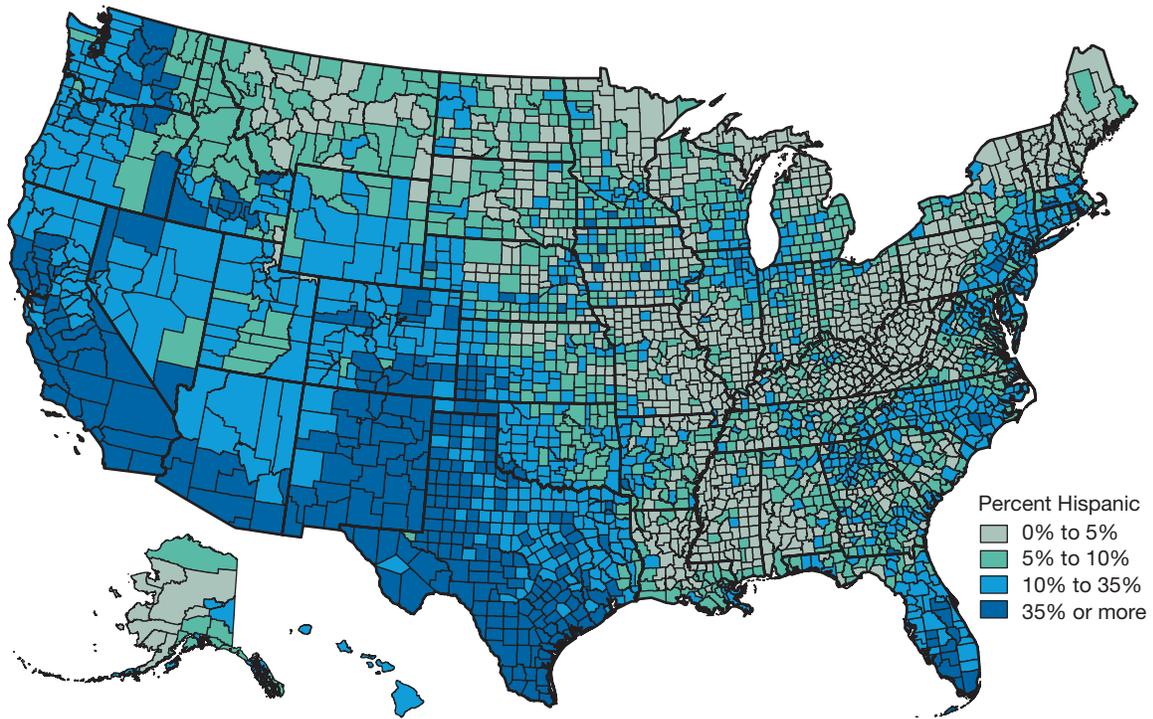


Proportion of non-Hispanic Asian youth in the youth population (ages 0–17), 2019

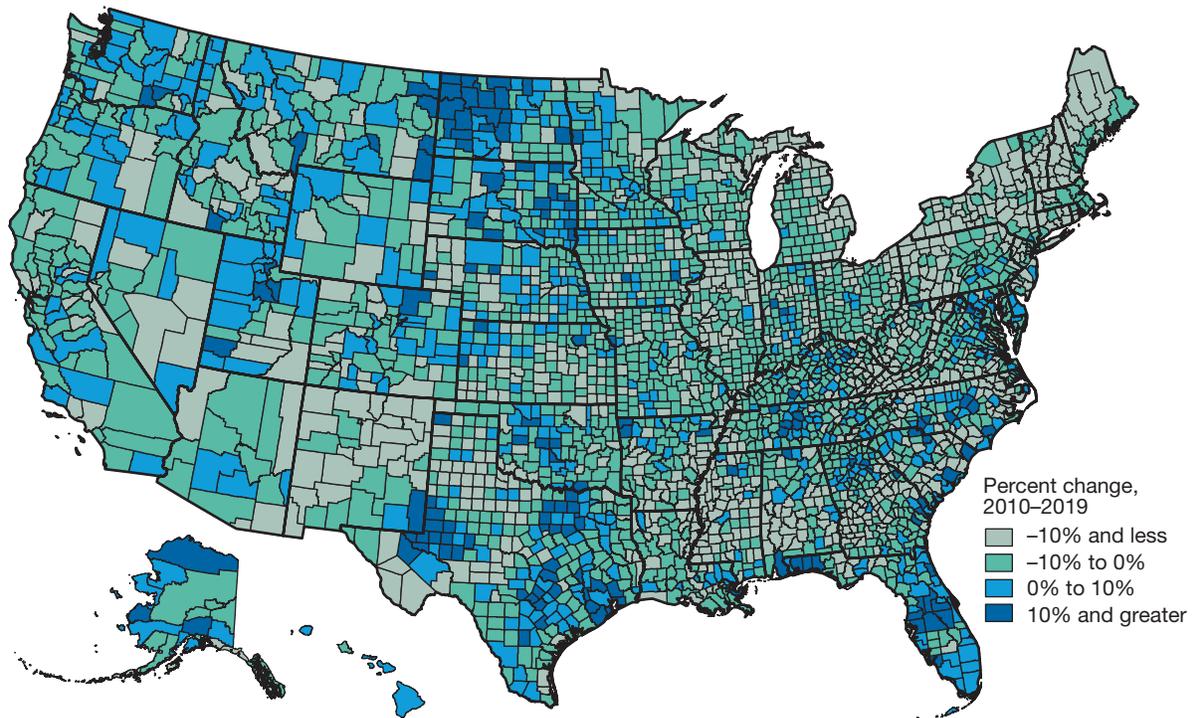


Source: Authors' adaptation of National Center for Health Statistics' *Vintage 2020 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2020)*, by Year, County, Single-year of Age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex.

Proportion of Hispanic youth in the youth population (ages 0–17), 2019



Change in the juvenile population (ages 0–17), 2000–2019



Source: Authors' adaptation of National Center for Health Statistics' *Vintage 2020 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2020)*, by Year, County, Single-year of Age (0, 1, 2, ..., 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex.

The proportion of children living in poverty in 2019 was at its lowest level since 1975

Exposure to poverty at an early age is linked to delinquency

Research has often supported a connection between poverty and involvement in crime. Youth who grow up in families or communities with limited resources are at a higher risk of offending than those who are raised under more privileged circumstances. Those who are very poor or chronically poor seem to be at an increased risk of serious delinquency. The timing of exposure to poverty is especially important. A meta-analysis by Hawkins et al. of several studies found that family socioeconomic status at ages 6–11 is a stronger predictor of serious and violent delinquency at ages 15–25 than family socioeconomic status at ages 12–14. Similarly, Jarjoura, Triplett, and Brinker found that poverty experienced within the first five years of life significantly increased subsequent delinquency involvement.

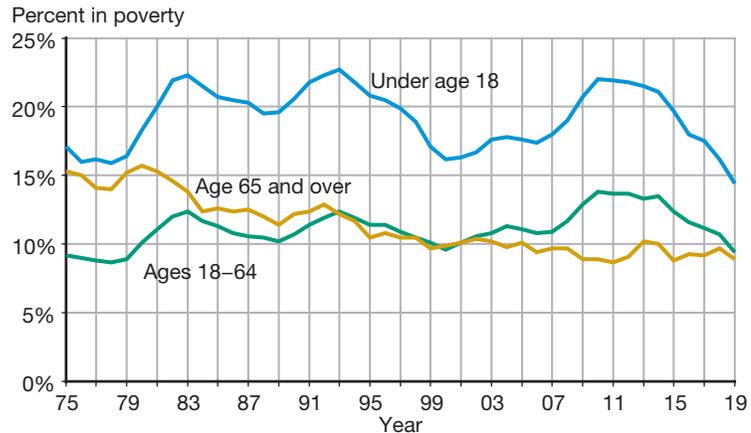
The linkage between poverty and delinquency, however, may not be direct. Some argue that the problems associated with low socioeconomic status (e.g., inability to meet basic needs, low access to support resources) are stronger predictors of delinquency than socioeconomic status alone. For example, Agnew et al. found that self-reported delinquency was highest among individuals who experienced several economic problems.

The child poverty rate has been on the decline

The U.S. Census Bureau assigns each person and family a poverty threshold according to the size of the family and ages of its members.* The national poverty thresholds are used throughout the U.S. and are updated for inflation annually. In 2010, the poverty threshold for a family of four with two children was \$22,113. In 2019, this

* Family members are defined as being related by birth, marriage, or adoption.

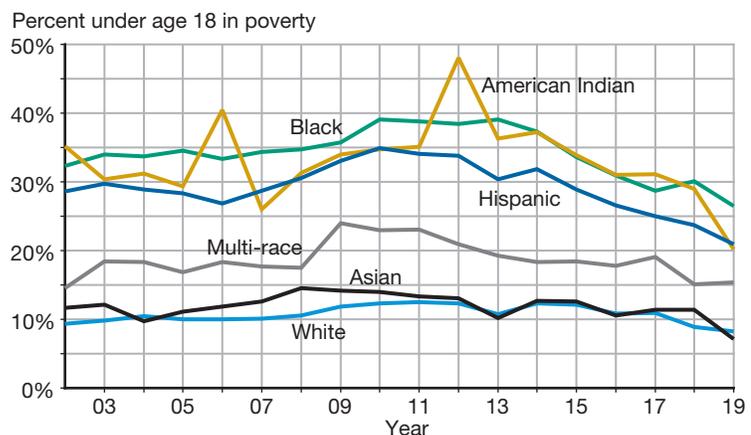
Following a decade long decline, the proportion of children younger than 18 living in poverty reached a new low in 2019



- Between 2010 and 2019, the child poverty rate declined 8 percentage points while the rate for persons ages 18–64 fell 4 percentage points. As a result, the proportion of children living in poverty in 2019 was at its lowest level since 1975 and the proportion of persons ages 18–64 in poverty reached its lowest level in two decades.

Source: Author's adaptation of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Current Population Survey. Historical Poverty Tables. Table 3: Poverty Status of People, by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1959–2019.*

With the exception of multi-racial youth, the proportion of children living in poverty in 2019 was at its lowest level since 2002 for all race/ethnicity groups



- More than one-third (37%) of the nearly 10.5 million youth younger than 18 living in poverty in 2019 were Hispanic, while White youth accounted for 29% of all youth in poverty, and Black youth accounted for 25%.
- In 2019, the proportion of Black, American Indian, and Hispanic youth in poverty was more than twice the proportion of White and Asian youth.

Notes: Race groups exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race.
Source: Author's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Current Population Survey (CPS) Table Creator* (for 2002–2017) and *Microdata Access, CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement 201903/202003* (for 2018–2019).

threshold was \$25,926. In comparison, the poverty threshold for a family of six with four children was \$34,161 in 2019.

Although the thresholds in some sense reflect families' needs, they are not intended to be a complete description of what individuals and families need to live.

In 2019, 10% of all persons in the U.S. lived at or below their poverty thresholds. This proportion was greater for persons under age 18 (14%) than for

those ages 18–64 (9%) and those above age 64 (9%). The youngest children were more likely to live in poverty than their older peers: while 14% of children ages 5–17 lived in households with resources below established poverty thresholds, 16% of children under age 5 did so.

Many children live far below poverty thresholds in what is labeled as extreme poverty. One technique for gaining a perspective on the frequency of extreme poverty is to look at the proportion of children who are living below

50% of the poverty level—e.g., in 2019, how many children lived in families of four with two children and incomes less than \$12,963, half the poverty threshold. In 2019, 6% of persons under age 18 were living below 50% of the poverty level, higher than the proportion of persons ages 18–64 and persons over age 64 (4% each). This proportion was once again highest for children under age 5 (7%). In all, more than 45% of children living in poverty in 2019 lived in what can be characterized as extreme poverty.

In 2019, the proportion of children living in poverty ranged from a low of 3.6% in New Hampshire to a high of 27.4% in Mississippi

State	Percent of persons living below the poverty threshold, 2019				State	Percent of persons living below the poverty threshold, 2019			
	All ages	Ages 0–17	Ages 18–64	Over age 64		All ages	Ages 0–17	Ages 18–64	Over age 64
U.S. total	10.5%	14.4%	9.4%	8.9%	Missouri	9.4%	12.7%	8.0%	9.7%
Alabama	12.9	18.1	11.0	12.6	Montana	9.7	11.9	9.7	7.3
Alaska	10.2	14.2	9.7	5.0	Nebraska	8.7	15.4	6.7	5.8
Arizona	9.9	14.5	8.4	9.1	Nevada	10.4	14.4	9.2	9.3
Arkansas	14.1	18.8	12.8	12.4	New Hampshire	3.7	3.6	3.5	4.0
California	10.1	13.9	9.1	8.6	New Jersey	6.3	6.8	5.0	10.2
Colorado	9.3	11.8	9.3	5.4	New Mexico	15.3	22.0	13.7	11.9
Connecticut	8.3	10.8	7.3	8.8	New York	12.5	17.4	11.4	10.6
Delaware	6.5	10.2	6.0	4.1	North Carolina	12.7	19.9	11.3	8.4
Dist. of Columbia	12.5	14.6	11.4	15.1	North Dakota	8.1	8.7	7.9	8.2
Florida	11.5	13.3	10.8	11.6	Ohio	12.4	19.5	11.3	6.9
Georgia	12.1	15.8	10.9	10.7	Oklahoma	10.8	12.8	10.6	8.5
Hawaii	8.4	11.0	7.9	7.0	Oregon	8.1	9.9	7.6	7.7
Idaho	7.1	8.5	7.5	3.3	Pennsylvania	8.7	12.1	8.0	7.0
Illinois	9.3	12.9	8.6	6.9	Rhode Island	9.2	13.8	7.3	10.4
Indiana	10.1	14.4	8.9	8.5	South Carolina	15.1	22.1	14.2	9.7
Iowa	9.5	13.7	9.2	4.9	South Dakota	10.6	17.2	8.7	7.0
Kansas	9.5	14.4	8.2	6.7	Tennessee	13.1	19.6	11.2	11.3
Kentucky	13.6	17.1	12.0	14.5	Texas	11.1	15.0	9.5	10.7
Louisiana	17.9	26.0	15.4	15.1	Utah	7.3	8.0	7.5	4.8
Maine	10.4	13.9	10.0	8.6	Vermont	8.6	13.1	8.7	4.5
Maryland	7.0	11.1	5.6	7.0	Virginia	8.8	11.7	8.0	8.3
Massachusetts	7.5	9.6	7.4	5.7	Washington	7.0	10.0	6.5	4.5
Michigan	10.2	14.3	9.8	6.7	West Virginia	13.9	18.6	13.3	10.9
Minnesota	5.7	7.4	5.4	4.2	Wisconsin	8.4	11.3	7.3	8.2
Mississippi	19.2	27.4	18.2	10.7	Wyoming	9.2	11.9	8.7	7.5

■ Nationally, 14.4% of youth under age 18—nearly 10.5 million—were living in poverty in 2019; the proportion of children living in poverty exceeded the national average in 17 states and the District of Columbia.

Source: Author's adaptation of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Current Population Survey, 2019 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, POV46, Poverty Status by State*.

In 2019, more than 1 in 4 Black children were living in poverty, and 1 in 8 were living in extreme poverty (incomes less than half the poverty threshold)

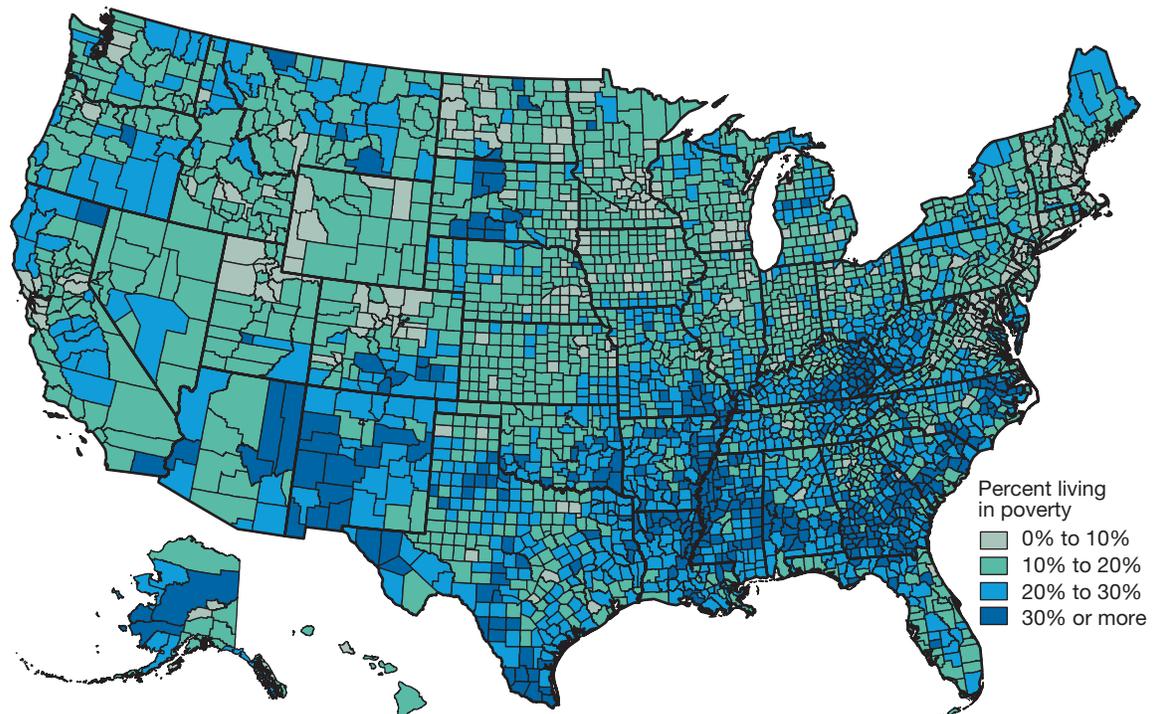
Age	Living below the poverty level							Living below 50% of the poverty level						
	All	White	Black	Amer. Indian	Asian	Multiple races	Hispanic	All	White	Black	Amer. Indian	Asian	Multiple races	Hispanic
All ages	10%	7%	19%	18%	7%	12%	16%	5%	3%	8%	9%	4%	6%	6%
Under age 18	14	8	27	21	8	14	21	6	4	12	11	4	8	8
Under age 5	16	9	31	25	6	20	21	7	4	14	11	3	10	9
Ages 5–17	14	8	26	20	8	12	20	6	4	11	11	4	7	7
Ages 18–64	9	7	16	16	7	11	13	4	4	7	9	4	5	5
Over age 64	9	2	19	21	10	6	16	4	3	7	9	5	2	7

■ There was little difference between the proportions of children in poverty compared with adults ages 18–64 in poverty for either White or Asian populations in 2019. Children under age 18 in poverty and adults ages 18–64 in poverty differed by 8 percentage points in the Hispanic population and 11 percentage points in the Black population.

Note: Racial categories (White, Black, American Indian, Asian, and multiple) do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. The Asian racial category includes Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders.

Source: Author's adaptation of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Microdata Access, CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement 201903/202003*.

Proportion of youth (ages 0–17) living in poverty, 2019



Source: Authors analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program: 2019 Poverty and Median Household Income Estimates - Counties, States, and National*.

The proportion of children living in single-parent homes more than doubled between 1970 and 2019

Children living with two parents generally report less delinquency

Research by Johnson, Hoffman, and Gerstein as well as Hemovich and Crano found that adolescents ages 12–17 living with two parents were less likely to use alcohol, cigarettes, and illicit drugs than their counterparts not living in two-parent families. Likewise, a review by Kroese and colleagues notes that existing research links growing up in a single-parent household with an increased likelihood of crime among adolescents. However, it is important to note that family structure may not be the proximate cause of problem behaviors. Rather, conditions within the family, such as poor supervision and low levels of parental involvement, are risk factors.

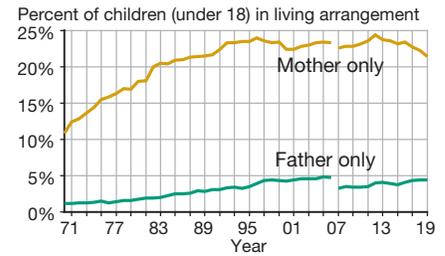
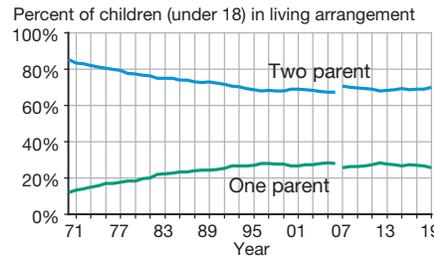
More than one-third of children living with only their mothers were in poverty

The economic well-being of children is related to family structure. In 2019, 14% of all children lived below the poverty level. However, children living in married couple families were less likely to live in poverty (6%) than children living with only their fathers (16%) or only their mothers (36%). Family structure is also related to the proportion of children in households receiving public assistance or food stamps. Overall, 3% of children in 2019 lived in households receiving public assistance and 17% lived in households receiving food stamps, but the proportions were far greater for children living in single-mother families.

Percent of children receiving assistance, 2019:

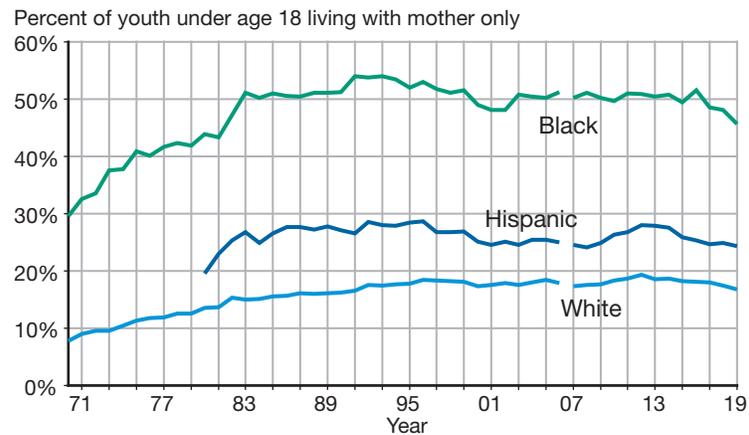
Living arrangement	Food stamps	Public assistance
All types	17%	3%
Two parents	10	1
Married	8	1
Unmarried	29	5
Single parent	35	6
Mother only	39	6
Father only	18	2
Neither parent	27	10

The proportion of children living in single-parent homes more than doubled between 1970 and 2019



- In 2019, 70% of children were living in two-parent families—a level that has changed little since 2007. Most other children live in single-parent households.
- Most children in single-parent families lived with their mothers in 2019, but a growing proportion were living with their fathers. Since 1970, the proportion of children in single-parent homes living with their fathers grew from 1% to 4% in 2019.

Despite a recent decline, Black children were more likely than White or Hispanic children to live with only their mother in a single-parent home



- Between 1970 and 2019, the proportion of children living with their mothers in single-parent homes increased from 8% to 17% for White children and from 30% to 48% for Black children. For children of Hispanic ethnicity, the proportion increased from 20% in 1980 to 24% in 2019.

Notes: Beginning with 2007, estimates for two-parent homes include married or unmarried parents (biological, step, or adoptive). Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race; however, most are White. Race proportions include persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Author's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Current Population Survey, Families and Living Arrangements, Historical Tables*.

In 2019, 51% of children receiving public assistance and 49% receiving food stamps lived in single-mother families. Two-parent families accounted for 30% of children receiving public assistance and 40% of those receiving food stamps.

Seven in ten children lived in two-parent families in 2019

Based on the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, 85% of children under age 18 were living in two-parent families in 1970. The proportion declined into the mid-2000s, where it fell to 67% in 2005. By 2019, 70% of children were living in two-parent (married or unmarried) families. Most other children lived in one-parent households. The proportion of children living in single-parent households increased from 9% in 1960 to 25% in 2019.

Beginning with the 2007 Current Population Survey, more accurate data are

available to document the proportion of children who live with married or unmarried parents. In 2019, 4% of children under age 18 were living with two unmarried parents, up slightly from 3% in 2007. In 2019, 66% of children under age 18 lived with married parents. This proportion was highest for Asian (86%) and White children (75%), lower for Hispanic children (68%), and lowest for Black children (42%).

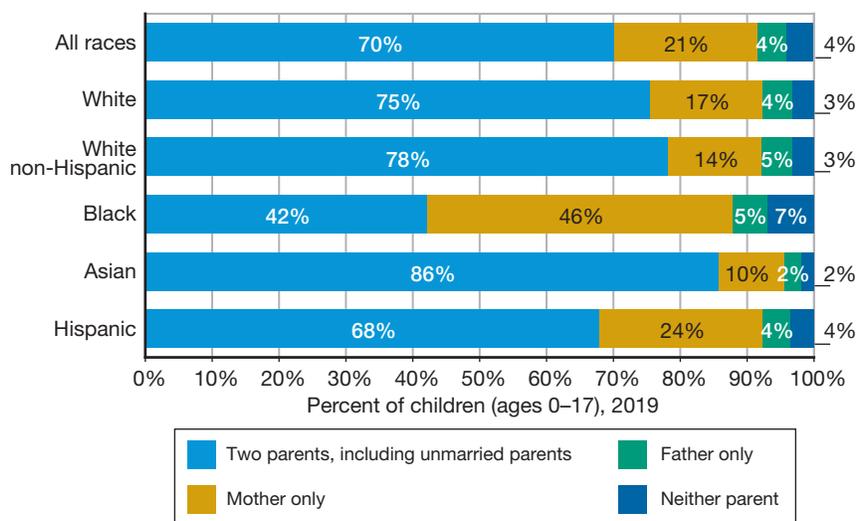
Most children who live in single-parent households live with their mothers. In fact, this was the second most common living arrangement of children in 2019. The proportion of children living with their mothers in single-parent households grew from 8% of the child population in 1960 to 21% in 2019. In 1970, the mothers of 7% of the children living in single-mother households had never been married; this proportion grew to 49% in 2019.

The proportion of children living with their fathers in one-parent households grew from 1% in 1970 to 4% in 2019. In 1970, the fathers of 4% of the children living in single-father households had never been married; this proportion grew to 39% in 2019, a pattern similar to the mother-only households.

The Census Bureau found a major difference between mother-only and father-only households: cohabitation was much more common in father-only households. A living arrangement is considered to be cohabitation when there is an unrelated adult of the opposite gender, who is not one's spouse, living in the household. In 2019, children living in single-parent households were more likely to have a cohabiting father (28%) than a cohabiting mother (9%).

Some children live in households headed by other relatives or by nonrelatives. In 2019, 3% of children lived in households headed by other relatives, and about half of these children were living in the home of a grandparent. (Across all household types, 10% of children lived in households that included a grandparent.) In 2019, 1% of all children lived with nonrelatives.

In 2019, Asian youth were most likely to live with two parents while Black youth were least likely



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

Source: Author's analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's *Current Population Survey, 2019 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*.

Most children live in a household with at least one parent in the labor force

Overall, 88% of children in 2019 lived in families with one or both parents in the labor force, i.e., employed or actively looking for work. Of all children living with two parents, 97% had at least one parent in the labor force, and 62% had both parents in the labor force. When just one parent in two-parent families was in the labor force, 87% of the time it was the father. Among children living in single-parent households, those living with fathers only were more likely to have the parent in the labor force than those living with mothers only (87% vs. 78%).

In 2019, 3.8 million youth ages 12–17 reported experiencing a major depressive episode

Major depressive episodes in adolescence can have long lasting effects

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) annually conducts the National Survey on Drug Use and Health to collect information from persons ages 12 and older in the U.S. In addition to gathering information about substance use behaviors, the survey also collects information about depression; specifically, respondents are asked to report whether they have had a major depressive episode (MDE) in the 12 months prior to the survey. According to the American Psychiatric Association, an MDE is defined as a period of at least 2 weeks when a person experiences a depressed mood or loss of interest or

pleasure in daily activities, plus at least 4 additional symptoms of depression (e.g., problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, and feelings of self-worth).

Depression is known to have effects not only on mental health but also on physical health and can affect adolescent development. As noted in the *2021 America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being* report, familial and peer relationships may become strained, depressive episodes may continue into adulthood, academic performance may suffer, and youth who reported at least one major depressive episode in the prior 12 months are more likely to begin using alcohol or other drugs and are at greater risk for suicide.

The likelihood of experiencing a major depressive episode varied by demographics

In 2019, 1 in 6 (16%) youth ages 12–17 reported having at least one MDE in the prior 12 months. Older youth (youth ages 16–17) and females were more likely to report an MDE compared with their counterparts. The proportion of youth who reported having an MDE was similar for White and Hispanic youth and was higher than the proportion for Black youth.

Approximately 1 in 10 (11%) youth ages 12–17 reported having at least one MDE that involved severe impairment in the prior 12 months. That is, the MDE adversely impacted the respondent's life in relation to home management, work, close relationships with others, and social life. Fewer than half (43%) of youth who had at least one MDE in the prior 12 months received treatment. Compared with their counterparts, youth ages 14 and older, females, and White youth were more likely to have received treatment.

A small proportion of youth experienced an MDE and a substance use disorder

According to SAMHSA, 2.7% of youth reported having a substance abuse disorder (SUD) in the prior 12 months. SUDs are characterized by impairment caused by routine use of alcohol and/or other drugs, that results in health problems and failure to meet responsibilities at home, work, or school. Fewer than 2 in 100 youth (1.7%) reported having both an MDE and SUD in the prior 12 months. A similar proportion of youth (1.4%) reporting an SUD also reported having an MDE with severe impairment. Compared with youth who did not experience an MDE in the prior 12 months, MDE youth were more likely to have used illicit drugs, marijuana, or opioids, to binge drink alcohol, or to smoke cigarettes in the prior month.

In 2019, 16% of youth ages 12–17 reported a major depressive episode in the past 12 months, and 43% of these youth received treatment

Demographic	Percentage of youth (ages 12–17) reporting occurrence in the last 12 months		
	Major depressive episode (MDE)	MDE with severe impairment	MDE and received treatment
Total	16%	11%	43%
Age			
Ages 12–13	11	7	38
Ages 14–15	16	12	44
Ages 16–17	20	15	46
Gender			
Male	9	6	37
Female	23	17	46
Race/ethnicity			
White, non-Hispanic	16	11	50
Black, non-Hispanic	11	8	36
Hispanic	17	12	37
American Indian	12	12	NA
Asian	15	11	NA
Two or more races	21	15	NA

■ In 2019, youth ages 16–17, females, and multi-racial youth were more likely to report an MDE than their counterparts.

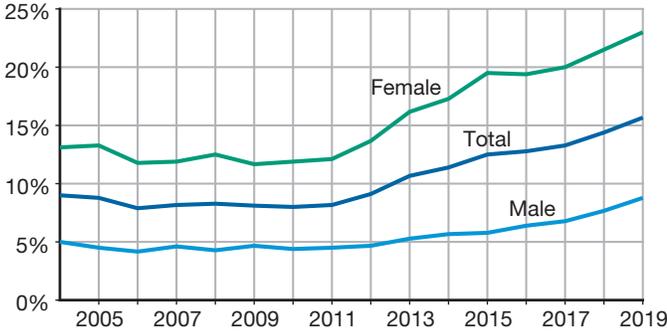
* Treatment refers to seeing or talking to a medical doctor or other professional or using prescription medication for depression.

NA: Data not available.

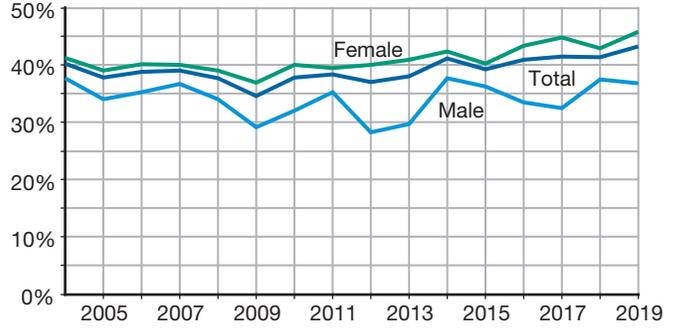
Source: Author's adaptation of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics' *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being, 2021*.

The proportion of youth ages 12–17 experiencing at least one major depressive episode has increased for all demographic groups in recent years

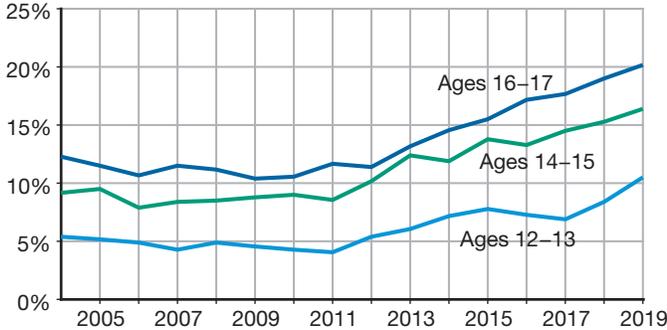
Percent of youth (ages 12–17) reporting a major depressive episode (MDE) in the last 12 months



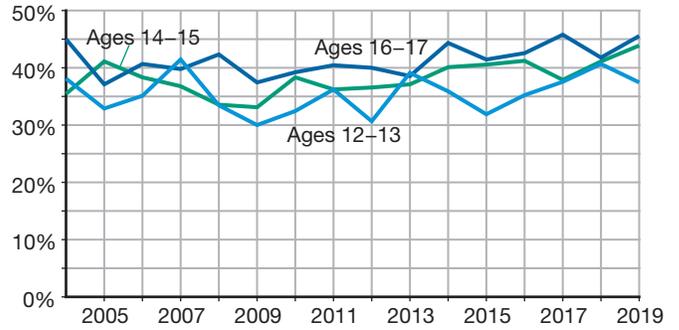
Of youth reporting MDE, percent reporting receiving treatment in the last 12 months



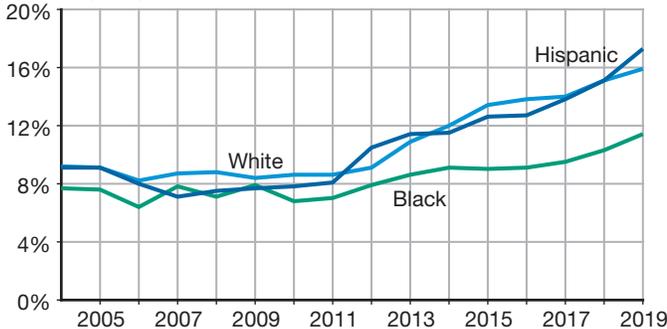
Percent of youth (ages 12–17) reporting a major depressive episode (MDE) in the last 12 months



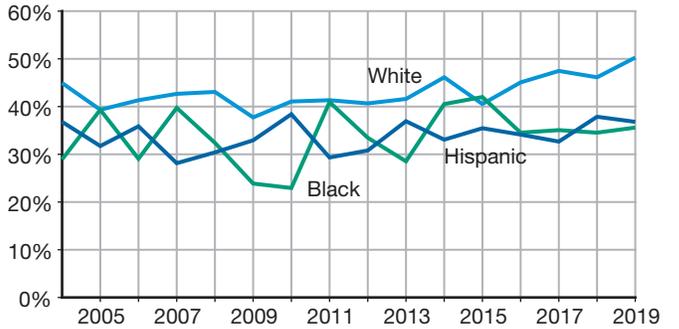
Of youth reporting MDE, percent reporting receiving treatment in the last 12 months



Percent of youth (ages 12–17) reporting a major depressive episode (MDE) in the last 12 months



Of youth reporting MDE, percent reporting receiving treatment in the last 12 months



- The proportion of youth reporting an MDE in 2019 (16%) increased 7 percentage points since 2004. Females (+10%), youth ages 16–17 (+8%), and White youth (+7%) had the largest percentage point increases between 2004 and 2019.
- Overall, the likelihood of receiving treatment following an MDE increased 3 percentage points between 2004 and 2019, but the level of increase varied by youth demographics.

Source: Author's adaptation of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics' *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being, 2021*.



The teenage birth rate declined considerably since the early 1990s

Teen birth rates reached a new low point in 2019

Research suggests (see Martin et al., Ely and Driscoll, Hoffman and Maynard, and Driscoll) that giving birth during adolescence brings long-term difficulties for the teen mother and her child. Compared with babies born to older mothers, babies born to adolescent mothers, particularly younger adolescent mothers, are at higher risk for low birthweight and infant mortality. In addition, giving birth during adolescence is linked to limited educational attainment for the teen mom, which can adversely impact their employment opportunities and future earnings, and children born to teen moms are themselves less likely to complete high school.

In 2019, the birth rate for older youth (i.e., females ages 15–17) was 6.7 live births for every 1,000 females in the age group. In the same year, the birth rate for young adults (i.e., women ages 18 and 19) was more than 4 times greater (31.1). Conversely, the birth rate for females ages 10–14 (0.2) was well below the rates of older teens.

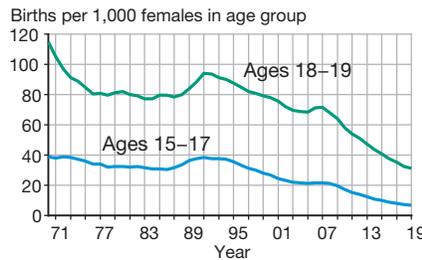
Teen birth rates have been on the decline since 1991, but the decline for females ages 15–17 (83%) outpaced the decline for young adults (67%) through 2019. The rate for both age groups in 2019 reached their lowest levels since 1970. Birth rates for older teens and young adults varied by race and Hispanic ethnicity.

Births per 1,000 females, 2019:

Race/ethnicity	Ages 15–17	Ages 18–19
All races	6.7	31.1
White	3.8	22.3
Black	11.1	46.4
Hispanic	11.5	46.2
American Indian	13.5	51.8
Asian	0.9	5.2
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	7.7	53.8

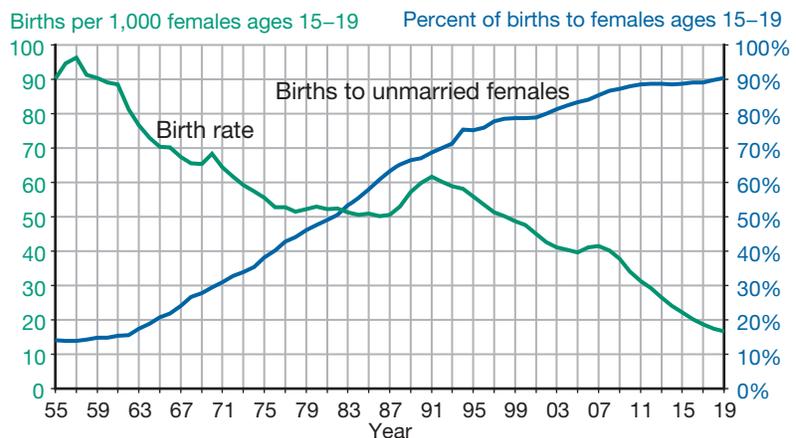
Note: Race groups exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanic youth can be of any race.

Birth rates in 2019 for both females ages 15–17 and young adults ages 18–19 were at their lowest level since 1970



- The birth rate for teens ages 15–17 fell 21% between 1970 and 1986 and then increased over the next 5 years back to its 1970 level. The birth rate for young adult females ages 18–19 dropped even more than the rate for teens ages 15–17 between 1970 and 1986, falling 31%. Although the rate for young adults also increased through 1991, the rate did not return to its 1970 level.
- Since 1991, teen birth rates declined considerably; by 2019, the rates for both age groups reached their lowest level since at least 1970.

The annual birth rate for females ages 15–19 declined substantially between 1955 and 2019, while the proportion of these births that were to unmarried women increased



- In 1955, about 14% of births to females ages 15–19 were to unmarried women. By 2019, that proportion grew to 91%.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Martin et al.'s Births: Final Data for 2019, *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 70(2); National Center for Health Statistics' annual series, Births: Final Data, *National Vital Statistics Reports*, for the years 2000–2009; and Ventura et al.'s Births to Teenagers in the United States, 1940–2000, *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 49(10).

The birth rate for White females ages 15–17 in 2019 was about one-third the rates of Hispanic, Black, and American Indian females of the same age, and about half the rate of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander females.

Across race/ethnicity groups, the birth rate for females ages 15–17 declined 70% or more between 1991 and 2019, and reached their lowest level since 1990.

Birth rates for females ages 15–17 varied greatly across states in 2019, ranging from 1.7 in New Hampshire to 12.6 in Mississippi

State	Births per 1,000 females in age group, 2019			Ratio of ages 15–17 to 18–19
	Age 15–19	Ages 15–17	Ages 18–19	
United States	16.7	6.7	31.1	22%
Alabama	25.6	10.1	47.8	21
Alaska	18.3	6.2	39.9	16
Arizona	18.5	8.3	33.0	25
Arkansas	30.0	11.2	58.3	19
California	12.4	5.0	23.1	22
Colorado	13.9	6.1	25.7	24
Connecticut	7.7	3.3	13.5	24
Delaware	14.9	6.7	25.8	26
Dist. of Columbia	16.8	11.8	20.2	58
Florida	16.2	6.1	31.3	19
Georgia	19.7	8.0	36.8	22
Hawaii	15.7	5.4	32.0	17
Idaho	14.9	5.0	30.7	16
Illinois	14.6	5.8	28.0	21
Indiana	20.8	7.9	39.5	20
Iowa	14.1	5.1	26.5	19
Kansas	19.2	7.3	36.8	20
Kentucky	24.9	9.4	47.6	20
Louisiana	27.8	10.9	53.9	20
Maine	9.1	2.7	18.0	15
Maryland	13.9	6.0	25.5	24
Massachusetts	6.9	3.0	11.3	27
Michigan	15.1	5.5	28.9	19
Minnesota	10.1	3.7	19.9	19
Mississippi	29.1	12.6	53.1	24
Missouri	20.3	7.6	39.2	19
Montana	16.3	6.1	32.0	19
Nebraska	15.3	6.7	27.8	24
Nevada	18.9	7.0	39.5	18
New Hampshire	6.6	1.7	13.2	13
New Jersey	10.0	4.1	19.6	21
New Mexico	24.4	10.8	44.8	24
New York	11.4	4.7	20.6	23
North Carolina	18.2	7.7	32.6	24
North Dakota	15.6	5.3	29.5	18
Ohio	18.8	6.9	36.0	19
Oklahoma	27.4	11.0	52.1	21
Oregon	12.1	4.1	24.0	17
Pennsylvania	13.3	6.0	23.1	26
Rhode Island	10.0	4.7	15.6	30
South Carolina	21.6	8.5	39.8	21
South Dakota	19.2	8.6	34.9	25
Tennessee	23.7	8.9	46.6	19
Texas	24.0	10.7	44.6	24
Utah	12.0	3.8	24.9	15
Vermont	7.6	3.0	12.3	24
Virginia	13.6	5.3	25.1	21
Washington	12.7	4.5	25.4	18
West Virginia	25.2	9.1	49.3	18
Wisconsin	12.5	4.5	24.0	19
Wyoming	19.4	6.6	39.2	17

■ Comparing birth rates for females ages 15–17 with those of young adults (ages 18 and 19) shows that the 15–17-year-old rate ranged from 13% of the young adult rate in New Hampshire to 30% of the young adult rate in Rhode Island and 58% in the District of Columbia.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Martin et al.'s Births: Final Data for 2019, *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 70(2).

The teenage birth rate in the U.S. ranks among the highest of industrialized nations

Birth rates for a large number of countries are collected and disseminated by the World Health Organization. The most recent data available for industrialized countries were not available for a common year but ranged from 2016 to 2019.

Births per 1,000 females ages 15–19

Country	Birth rate	Data year
Russian Federation	21.5	2016
United States	16.7	2019
New Zealand	13.3	2019
United Kingdom	11.9	2018
Australia	9.4	2018
France	8.6	2018
Greece	8.6	2018
Israel	8.2	2018
Portugal	7.3	2018
Germany	7.2	2018
Canada	6.6	2018
Ireland	6.2	2018
Spain	6.2	2018
Austria	5.5	2018
Belgium	5.5	2018
Finland	4.3	2018
Sweden	4.2	2018
Italy	4.1	2018
Japan	3.1	2018
Netherlands	2.6	2018
Norway	2.6	2018
Switzerland	2.3	2018
Denmark	2.0	2019

Source: Authors' adaptation of the World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory, *Adolescent Birth Rate (per 1000 Women Aged 15-19 Years)*.

The birth rate for U.S. females ages 15–19 remained one of the highest among industrialized nations. In 2010, however, the U.S. birth rate for females ages 15–19 occupied the top spot on this list. Following a 50% decline since 2010, the U.S. rate now ranks second, more than 20% below the most recent rate for the Russian Federation, but about 25% above the rate for New Zealand.



The high school dropout rate declined in the last 5 years, yet more than 470,000 youth left high school in 2019

The dropout rate varies across demographic groups

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) publishes annual statistics of (1) the number of persons in grades 10–12 who dropped out of school in the preceding 12 months, and (2) the percent of persons ages 16–24 who were dropouts. The first statistic (the event dropout rate) provides an estimate of flow into the dropout pool. The second statistic (the status dropout rate) provides an estimate of the proportion of dropouts in the young adult population. Event dropout rates are based on data from the annual October Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS and the American Community Survey (ACS) are the sources for the status dropout estimates.

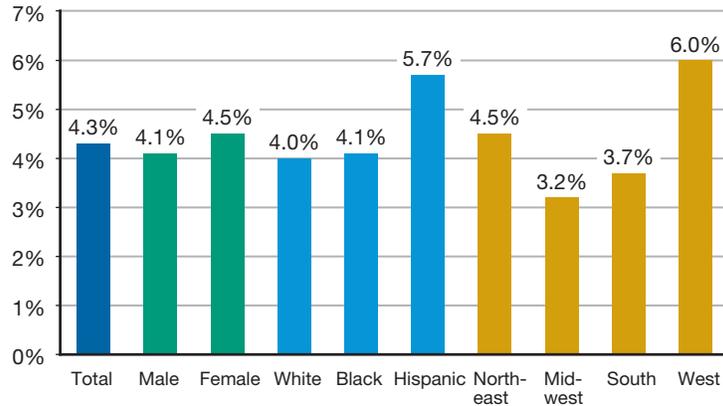
Approximately 4 of every 100 persons (4%) enrolled in high school in October 2018 left school before October 2019 without successfully completing a high school program—in other words, in the school year 2018-2019, about 470,000 youth dropped out and the event dropout rate was 4.3%. The 2019 event dropout rate for males (4.1%) was slightly lower than for females (4.5%), and the rates for White (4.0%) and Black (4.1%) youth, were less than the rate for Hispanic (5.7%) youth.

Dropout rates are greater for institutionalized youth than noninstitutionalized youth

Over the years, demographic disparities in annual event dropout rates have accumulated to produce noticeable differences in status dropouts rates—i.e., the proportion of young adults (person ages 16–24) who are not enrolled in school and have not completed high school (or received an equivalency certificate). The status dropout rate measure typically includes civilian, nonin-

In 2019, dropout rates were highest for females, Hispanic youth, and students living in western states

Percent of youth who dropped out of grades 10–12 in the preceding 12 months

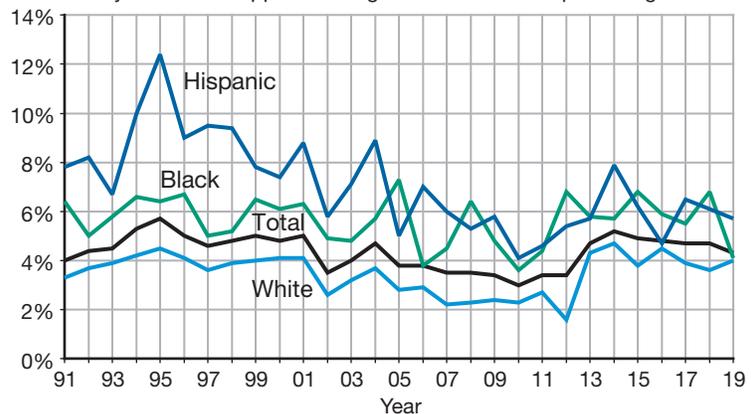


Notes: Race groups exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race.

Source: Author's adaptation of National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2019*, Table 219.55.

Dropout rates for White youth have remained below the rates of Black and Hispanic youth

Percent of youth who dropped out of grades 10–12 in the preceding 12 months



Notes: Race groups exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race.

Source: Author's adaptation of National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics: 2019*, Table 219.55.

stitutionalized 16–24-year-olds. Youth, such as those who are incarcerated or in the military, are not included. However, the ACS allows for comparisons of status dropout rates for 16–24-year-olds living in households and noninstitutionalized group quarters (i.e., college housing or military housing located within the U.S.) with those living in institutionalized group quarters (i.e., prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities). Regardless of race/ethnicity, status dropout rates were substantially higher for institutionalized youth than for other youth. In 2019, the status dropout rate was 30% for institutionalized youth and 5% for those living in households and noninstitutional group quarters.

Educational failure is linked to unemployment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates that 38% of the 2018-2019 school year dropouts ages 16–24 were in the labor force (employed or actively looking for work), though 15% of those dropouts were unemployed. In comparison, 72% of the 2019 high school graduates who were not in college were in the labor force, and a greater proportion of this workforce (18%) was unemployed.

Failing to complete high school results in lower earnings

According to the Career Outlook report by BLS, persons ages 25 and older with less than a high school diploma had the lowest median weekly earnings and the highest unemployment rate. In 2019, for example, the median weekly earnings among persons ages 25 and older was 20% less for those without a high school diploma than those who completed high school, and more than 50% less than persons with a bachelor's degree.

The status dropout rate decreased for both noninstitutionalized and institutionalized youth between 2010 and 2019

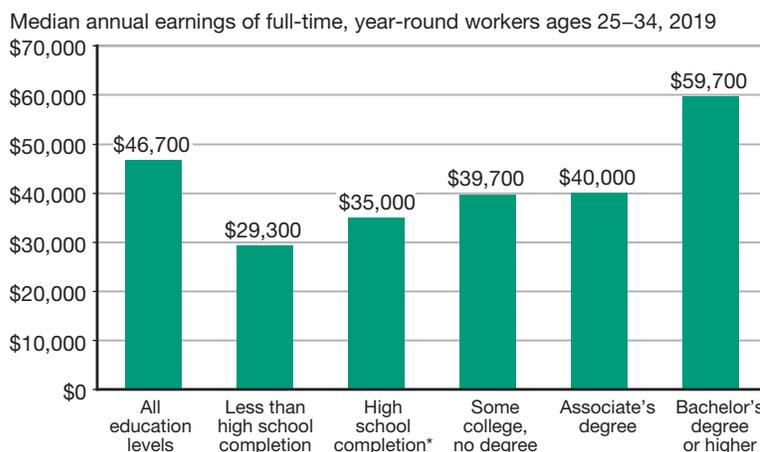
Race/ethnicity	Status dropout rate			
	Noninstitutionalized		Institutionalized	
	2010	2019	2010	2019
Total	8%	5%	37%	30%
White, non-Hispanic	5	4	29	22
Black, non-Hispanic	9	5	42	35
Hispanic	16	7	44	35
American Indian/Alaskan Native	15	9	39	26
Asian	3	2	28	31
Two or more races, non-Hispanic	6	5	23	25

- Among noninstitutionalized youth, American Indian/Alaskan Native and Hispanic youth had higher status dropout rates than all other racial groups in 2010 and 2019. For institutionalized youth, Black and Hispanic youth had higher status dropout rates in both years.
- The status dropout rate among institutionalized youth decreased among most racial groups between 2010 and 2019.

Notes: Status dropouts are 16–24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and who have not completed a high school program (including equivalency credentials, such as the GED). Noninstitutionalized persons include those living in households, college housing, or military housing located within the U.S. and institutionalized persons include those living in prisons, nursing facilities, or other healthcare facilities.

Source: Author's adaptation of the National Center for Education Statistics' *Digest of Education Statistics: 2019*, Table 219.80.

In 2019, persons who completed high school earned about \$5,700 more than those who did not complete high school



- Among 25–34-year-olds who worked full-time, year-round in 2019, the median earnings of those whose highest level of education was a high school diploma was about 20% higher than those who did not complete high school, and the median earnings of those who completed a bachelor's or higher degree was more than twice that of persons who did not complete high school.

*Includes equivalency credentials, such as the GED.

Source: Author's adaptation of Irwin et al's *Report on the Condition of Education*.

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Chapter 2

Youth victims

2

This chapter summarizes what is known about the prevalence and incidence of youth victimizations. It answers important questions to assist policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and concerned citizens in developing policies and programs to ensure the safety and well-being of children. How many children are abused and neglected? What are the trends in child maltreatment? How often are youth the victims of crime? How many children are victims of crime at school and what are the characteristics of school crime? When and where are youth most likely to become victims of crime? How many youth are murdered each year? How often are firearms involved in youth murders and who are their offenders? How many youth commit suicide?

Research has shown that child victimization and abuse are linked to negative outcomes, such as antisocial and

criminal behavior. So an understanding of childhood victimization and its trends may lead to a better understanding of youth offending.

Data sources include child maltreatment data reported by the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, and foster care and adoption information from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. Self-reported victimization data are presented from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey and its School Crime Supplement, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Official victimization data is reported by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Incident-Based Reporting System and its Supplementary Homicide Reporting Program. Suicide information is presented from the National Center for Health Statistics.

In 2019, child protective services agencies received about 84,600 maltreatment referrals each week

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System monitors child protective services caseloads

In response to the 1988 amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the Children's Bureau in the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services developed the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) to collect child maltreatment data voluntarily submitted by state child protective services (CPS) agencies. The Children's Bureau annually collects and analyzes both summary and case-level data reported to

NCANDS. For 2019, 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico reported case-level data on all children who received an investigation or assessment by a CPS agency. The case-level data provide descriptive information on cases referred to CPS agencies during the year, including:

- Characteristics of the referral of abuse or neglect made to CPS.
- Characteristics of the victims.
- Alleged maltreatments.
- Disposition (or findings).
- Risk factors of the child and the caregivers.
- Services provided.
- Characteristics of the perpetrators.

The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System counts several different aspects of child maltreatment

Referral: Notification to the CPS agency of suspected child maltreatment. This can include more than one child. This is a measure of "flow" into the CPS system.

Report: A referral of child maltreatment that was accepted, or "screened in," for an investigative response or an alternative response by a CPS agency.

Investigation: The gathering and assessment of objective information to determine if a child has been or is at risk of being maltreated and to determine if a CPS response is needed. An investigation typically involves an in-person meeting with the alleged child victim and results in a disposition as to whether or not the alleged maltreatment occurred.

Assessment: The process by which the CPS agency determines if a child or other person involved in a report of alleged maltreatment needs services.

Alleged victim: Child about whom a referral regarding maltreatment has been made to a CPS agency.

Alleged perpetrator: Person who is named in a referral to have caused or knowingly allowed the maltreatment of a child.

Victim: A child having a maltreatment disposition of substantiated or indicated. This includes a child who died and the death was confirmed to be the result of child abuse and neglect.

Perpetrator: Person who has been determined to have caused or knowingly allowed the maltreatment of a child.

Substantiated: An investigation disposition that concludes that the allegation of maltreatment (or risk of maltreatment) was supported by or founded on state law or state policy. This is the highest level of finding by a CPS agency.

Unsubstantiated: An investigation disposition that determines that there is insufficient evidence under state law to conclude or suspect that the child has been maltreated or is at risk of maltreatment.

Indicated: A disposition that concludes that maltreatment could not be substantiated under state law or policy, but there is reason to suspect that the child may have been maltreated or was at risk of maltreatment. Few states distinguish between substantiated and indicated dispositions.

Alternative response: The provision of a response other than an investigation that determines a child or family is in need of services. A determination of maltreatment is not made and a perpetrator is not determined.

Court action: Legal action initiated by the CPS agency on behalf of the child. This includes authorization to place the child in foster care, filing for temporary custody or dependency, or termination of parental rights. As used here, it does not include criminal proceedings against a perpetrator.

In 2019, referrals were made to CPS agencies at a rate of 59 per 1,000 children

In 2019, CPS agencies in the U.S. received an estimated 4.4 million referrals alleging that children were abused or neglected. An estimated 7.9 million children were included in these referrals. This translates to a rate of 59 referrals for every 1,000 children younger than 18 in the U.S. population. The 2019 rate was 14% above the referral rate in 2015 (52.3).

Professionals were the most common source of maltreatment reports

Professionals who come into contact with children as a part of their occupation (e.g., teachers, police officers, doctors, childcare providers) are required by law in most states to notify CPS agencies of suspected maltreatment. Thus, professionals are the most common source of maltreatment reports (69%).

Profile of maltreatment reports, 2019:

Source	Percent of reports
Professional	68.5%
Educator	21.0
Law enforcement	19.1
Medical	11.0
Social services	10.3
Mental health	6.0
Child daycare provider	0.7
Foster care provider	0.4
Family and community	21.8
Parents	5.9
Other relatives	5.9
Friend or neighbor	3.5
Anonymous	6.5
Other*	9.6

*Includes alleged victims, alleged perpetrators, and sources not otherwise identified.

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

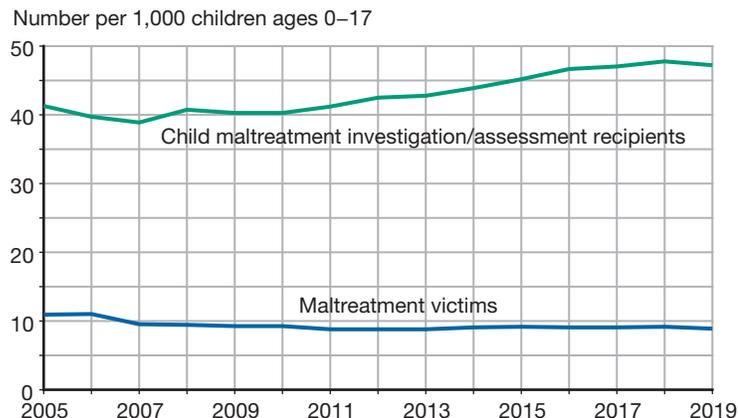
The typical CPS response time was 4 days in 2019

CPS agencies receive referrals of varying degrees of urgency; therefore, the time from referral to investigation varies widely. State response time standards also vary. Some states set a single standard and others set different standards depending on the priority or urgency of the case. Many specify a high-priority response as within 24 hours; some specify 1 hour. Lower priority responses range from 24 hours to several days. In 2019, the average response time for states that reported this information was 4.3 days.

CPS investigated or provided an alternative response to more than half of all referrals

In 2019, CPS agencies screened in 54% of all referrals received. Thus, CPS agencies conducted investigations or alternative responses for more than 1.9 million reports in 2019. Once a report is investigated or assessed and a determination is made as to the likelihood that maltreatment occurred or that the child is at risk of maltreatment, CPS assigns a finding to the report—known as a disposition. States’ dispositions

The child maltreatment response rate increased 17% in the last 10 years, while the maltreatment victimization rate changed little



- In 2019, CPS agencies responded to reports involving nearly 3.5 million unique child victims, or 47.2 per 1,000 children ages 0–17 in the United States. These responses included formal investigations, family assessments, and other alternative responses.
- An estimated 656,000 unique children were found to be victims—19% of all children who received an investigation or assessment in 2019.
- The national child victimization rate in 2019 was 8.9 victims per 1,000 children ages 0–17, 4% below the rate 10 years prior.

Note: a child was counted once regardless of the number of times they received a CPS response or the number of times they were found to be a victim during the reporting year.

Sources: Authors’ adaptation of the Children’s Bureau’s (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) annual *Child Maltreatment Reports* for 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2015–2019.

and terminology vary but generally fall into the following categories: substantiated, indicated, alternative response (victim and nonvictim), and unsubstantiated (see the box on the previous page).

Most subjects of reports are found to be nonvictims

Of children who were the subject of at least one report of maltreatment, most were found to be nonvictims: 56.5% had dispositions of unsubstantiated, 10.6% had dispositions of no alleged maltreatment, and 13.8% had dispositions of alternative response. About one in six (17%) children who were the subject of at least one report were

found to be victims of maltreatment. The most common disposition for victims of maltreatment was substantiated (16%), and 1% of victims received a disposition of indicated.

The average CPS investigator handled about 71 reports in 2019

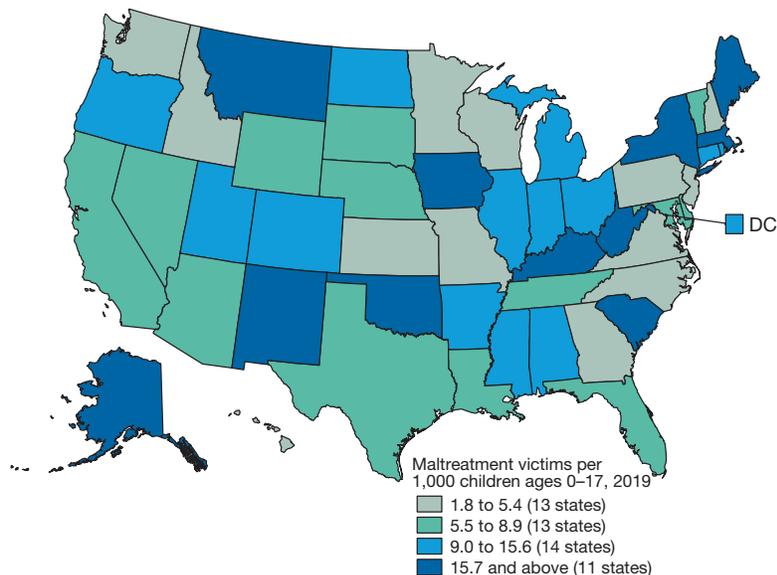
In most sizable jurisdictions, different CPS personnel perform screening and investigation functions. In smaller agencies, one staff person may perform both functions. In 2019, the average yearly number of investigations or assessments per investigation worker was 71. Among states with specialized screening and investigation workers, the investigation workers outnumbered

the screening workers nearly 6 to 1. Even in locations with specialized personnel, CPS staff typically perform numerous other activities, and some CPS workers may be responsible for more than one function.

Neglect was the most common type of maltreatment for victims in 2019

Many children were the victims of more than one type of maltreatment, but if categories of maltreatment are considered independently, 61% of victims experienced neglect, 10% were physically abused, 7% were sexually abused, 2% psychologically or emotionally maltreated, and 4% experienced other forms of maltreatment, such as threats of harm, abandonment, and congenital drug addiction. Child victims of multiple forms of maltreatment accounted for about 16% of victims in 2019. Thirty states and the District of Columbia reported that more than 50% of victims experienced neglect in 2019.

Child victimization rates varied considerably by state in 2019



- State-level child maltreatment victimization rates ranged from a low of 1.8 per 1,000 children ages 0–17 in Pennsylvania to a high of 20.1 in Kentucky.
- 26 states had child maltreatment victimization rates below the national average (8.9).

Note: a child was counted once regardless of the number of times they received a CPS response or the number of times they were found to be a victim during the reporting year.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Children's Bureau's (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) annual *Child Maltreatment Reports* for 2019.

There are several different types of child maltreatment

Child maltreatment occurs when a caretaker (a parent or parental substitute, such as a babysitter) 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 harm. A child may be a victim of multiple types of maltreatment. The following types of maltreatment are collected as part of NCANDS.

Medical neglect: caused by failure of the caregiver to provide for the appropriate health care of the child although financially able to do so, or offered financial or other resources to do so.

Neglect or deprivation of necessities: failure by the caregiver to provide needed, age-appropriate care although financially able to do so or offered financial or other means to do so. This includes not meeting a child's educational needs.

Physical abuse: includes physical acts that caused or could have caused physical injury to the child, including excessive corporal punishment.

Psychological or emotional maltreatment: acts or omissions, other than physical abuse or sexual abuse, that caused or could have caused conduct, cognitive, affective, or other behavioral or mental disorders. Frequently occurs as verbal abuse or excessive demands on a child's performance.

Sexual abuse: the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator, including contacts for sexual purposes, molestation, statutory rape, prostitution, pornography, exposure, incest, or other sexually exploitative activities.

Sex trafficking: refers to the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. States have the option to report to NCANDS any sex trafficking victim who is younger than 24 years. Prior to 2018, sex trafficking was reported as a form of sexual abuse.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Children's Bureau's (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) annual *Child Maltreatment Reports* for 2019.

Maltreatment victimization rates were highest for girls, children under age 1, and American Indian children

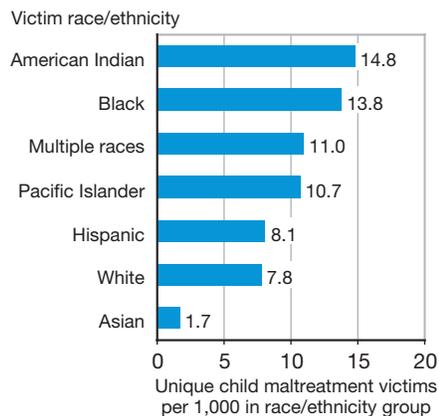
Girls are more likely to experience maltreatment than boys

More than half (51%) of victims of child maltreatment in 2019 were female. The victimization rate for girls was 9.4 per 1,000 girls younger than age 18, and the rate for boys was 8.4 per 1,000 boys younger than age 18.

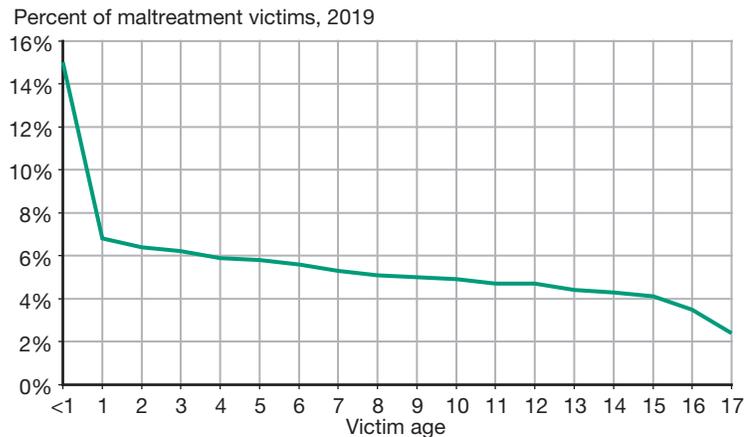
White children accounted for the largest share of maltreatment victims

In 2019, most victims of maltreatment were White (44%) children, followed by Hispanic (23%) and Black (21%). Children of multiple races (5%), Asian/Pacific Islander (1.2%) and American Indian/Alaska Native (1%) children accounted for a substantially smaller proportion of victims.

American Indian/Alaskan Native children had the highest child maltreatment victimization rate in 2019, 14.8 per 1,000 children, followed closely by Black children (13.8). The rate for American Indian/Alaskan Native children was nearly twice the rate for Hispanic (8.1) and White children (7.8).



More than one-third of child victims of maltreatment in 2019 were younger than age 4



- In 2019, infants younger than 1 accounted for 15% of victims of maltreatment, 1-year-olds accounted for 7%, and youth ages 2–6 each accounted for 6%—about the proportion expected if victimizations were spread evenly over all ages. Youth ages 16 and 17 accounted for relatively small proportions (3% and 2%, respectively).
- Victimization rates for infants younger than age 1 (25.7 per 1,000 children) were twice the rates for youth ages 1–6, triple the rates for youth ages 7–14, and 4 to 6 times the rates for youth ages 15–17.

Note: a child was counted once regardless of the number of times they received a CPS response or the number of times they were found to be a victim during the reporting year.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Children's Bureau's (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) annual *Child Maltreatment Reports* for 2019.

What is known about child victims of sex trafficking?

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to require states update their current definitions of child abuse and neglect to include victims of sex trafficking to continue receiving CAPTA funding. Specifically, the Act requires that states make a finding of “child abuse and neglect” and “sexual abuse” if the child is also found to be a victim of sex trafficking. Sex trafficking is a type of maltreatment that refers to the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.

who is younger than age 24. At the end of the 2019 federal fiscal year, 877 unique victims were reported to NCANDS by 29 states. Based on these reports:

- Nearly 9 in 10 (88%) victims were female, and 76% of victims were ages 14–17.
- Half of all victims of sex trafficking were not victims of other forms of maltreatment. Among those that did experience other forms, the two most common types were sexual abuse and neglect.
- For most victims (51%), the relationship to the perpetrator was unknown, in 41% it was a nonparent, and in 14% a parent.

States have the option to report to NCANDS any sex trafficking victim



The overwhelming majority of child maltreatment perpetrators are parents of the victims

There were more than 525,300 known perpetrators in 2019

Child maltreatment is by definition an act or omission by a parent or other caregiver that results in harm or serious risk of harm to a child. Incidents where children are harmed by individuals who are not their parents or caregivers generally do not come to the attention of child protective services agencies, but rather would be handled by law enforcement.

In 2019, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) identified 525,319 unique perpetrators of child maltreatment. A perpetrator was counted once, regardless of the number of children the perpetrator was associated with maltreating or the number of records associated with a perpetrator.

Women are overrepresented among maltreatment perpetrators

Compared with their share of the population (51%), women are overrepresented among child caregivers. Within families, mothers usually are the primary caregivers, and women far outnumber men in caregiver occupations. Women account for more than 95% of childcare providers and 99% of preschool and kindergarten teachers. They also make up 85% of healthcare support occupations. In 2019, females made up more than half of maltreatment perpetrators (53%).

More than two-thirds (69%) of perpetrators in 2019 were adults ages 25–44, while 17% were under age 25.

Profile of maltreatment perpetrators, 2019:

Perpetrator age	Percent of perpetrators
Total	100%
Younger than 18	2
Ages 18–24	15
Ages 25–34	42
Ages 35–44	27
Ages 45–54	9
Age 55 and older	4
Unknown age	2

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Nearly half of perpetrators were White (49%), about one-fifth were Black (21%), and one-fifth were Hispanic. This distribution is similar to the race profile of victims of child maltreatment.

Profile of maltreatment perpetrators, 2019:

Perpetrator race/ethnicity	Percent of perpetrators
Total	100%
White	49
Black	21
Hispanic	20
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	1
Multiple race	2
Unknown/missing	6

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Parents are the most common perpetrators of abuse and neglect

The overwhelming majority (78%) of perpetrators in 2019 were a parent to the victim; relatives (7%) accounted for the most common nonparent perpetrator relationship, followed by other nonparental relationships (e.g., friends, neighbors, and legal guardians).

Profile of maltreatment perpetrators, 2019:

Perpetrator relationship to victim	Percent of perpetrators
Total	100%
Parent	78
Other relative	6
Unmarried partner of parent	3
Other nonparent*	5
Professional**	1
Multiple relationships***	4
Unknown/missing	2

*Other nonparent includes friends, neighbors, legal guardians, and nonrelative foster parents.

**Professional includes adults who care for children as part of their employment duties, such as child daycare providers, foster parents, group home staff, and other professionals.

***Multiple relationships include perpetrators with different relationships to child victims, e.g., a perpetrator may be the parent of one victim in a report but have a different relationship to another child victim in the same report.

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Reported child maltreatment fatalities typically involve infants and toddlers and result from neglect

Child fatalities have increased since 2015

In 2019, an estimated 1,840 children died as a result of some form of maltreatment, 11% more than the 1,660 child fatality victims reported in 2015. The number of fatality victims in 2019 corresponds to a rate of 2.5 fatalities for every 100,000 children under the age of 18, compared with a rate of 2.2 in 2015.

Child fatalities, 2019:

Year	Estimated number	Rate (per 100,000)
2019	1,840	2.5
2018	1,780	2.4
2017	1,710	2.3
2016	1,730	2.3
2015	1,660	2.2

Children younger than age 4 accounted for more than three-quarters of maltreatment fatalities

Although children younger than 1 year old were just 15% of all maltreatment victims in 2019, they accounted for 46% of maltreatment fatalities. Similarly, children ages 1–3 were 19% of all victims but 31% of maltreatment fatalities.

Profile of maltreatment victims, 2019:

Victim age	Percent of total fatalities	Percent of all victims
Total	100%	100%
Younger than 1	46	15
Age 1	14	7
Age 2	11	6
Age 3	6	6
Ages 4–7	11	23
Ages 8–11	6	20
Ages 12–15	5	17
Ages 16–17	2	6

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Several factors make infants and toddlers younger than age 4 particularly vulnerable, including their dependency, small size, and inability to defend themselves.

Boys had the highest maltreatment fatality rate in 2019

Boys had a maltreatment fatality rate of 2.98 deaths per 100,000 boys of the same age in the population. For girls, the rate was 2.20 per 100,000. Although most victims of maltreatment fatalities were White (44%), Black children had the highest fatality rates, 5.08 per 100,000 black children. Asian children had the lowest fatality rate in 2019 (0.70 per 100,000 children).

The fatality rate for Black children was more than twice the rate for White (2.18), American Indian/Alaskan Native (2.08), and Hispanic (1.89) children.

Mothers were the most common perpetrators in child maltreatment fatalities

Among child fatalities in 2019, nearly 3 in 4 (73%) suffered from neglect and more than 4 in 10 (44%) experienced physical abuse, either exclusively or in combination with another maltreatment type.

The overwhelming majority (80%) of child fatalities in 2019 involved parents

acting alone, together, or with others. Mothers (acting alone or with others) were involved in 39% of fatalities, while fathers (acting alone or with others) were involved in 16%.

Profile of fatality perpetrators, 2019:

Perpetrator relationship to victim	Percent of perpetrators
Total	100%
Mother only	29
Two parents of known sex	23
Father only	14
Mother and nonparent(s)	10
Father and nonparent(s)	2
2 parents of known sex and nonparent	2
Nonparent	17
Unknown	4

Note: Detail may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Most maltreatment fatality victims were previously unknown to the CPS agency

Most child maltreatment fatalities involved families without a recent history with CPS. About one-third (34%) of maltreatment fatalities had at least one previous contact with CPS in the 5 years prior to their death; 7% of child fatality victims were previously substantiated as a victim of maltreatment, 21% had a prior contact that was not substantiated, and 6% had prior contacts that received both substantiated and unsubstantiated dispositions.



The number of children in foster care has increased 8% since 2012

AFCARS data track trends in foster care and adoption

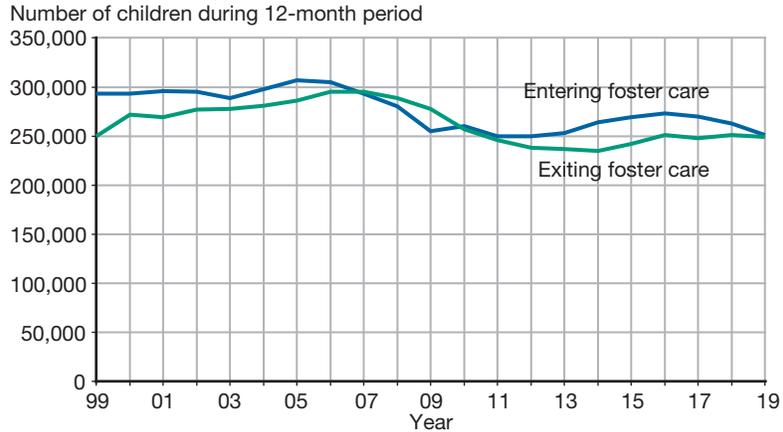
Foster care is defined in federal regulations as 24-hour substitute care for children outside their own homes. Foster care settings include, but are not limited to, family foster homes, relative foster homes (whether payments are being made or not), group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and preadoptive homes.

Under federal regulation, states and tribal Title IV-E agencies are required to submit data semi-annually to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), which collects case-level information on all children in foster care for whom state child welfare agencies have responsibility. AFCARS also collects data on children who are adopted under the auspices of state public child welfare agencies, as well as information on foster and adoptive parents. Data are reported for the federal fiscal year, which runs from October 1st through September 30th.

Nearly half of all children entering foster care were younger than 6

Children younger than 1 were the single age that accounted for the greatest share of children entering foster care—19% in 2019. Children between the ages of 1 and 5 were 30% of foster care entries in 2019, making them the largest age group of children entering foster care (of 5-year age groupings for children ages 1–20). Prior to 2005, the 11–15 age group made up the greatest share of youth entering foster care. The median age of children who entered foster care in 2019 was 6.3 years and the average age was 7.2 years. Logically, the average age of the standing foster care population is greater than the average age of children entering foster care. The median age of children in foster care in 2019 was 7.7 years and the average age was 8.4 years.

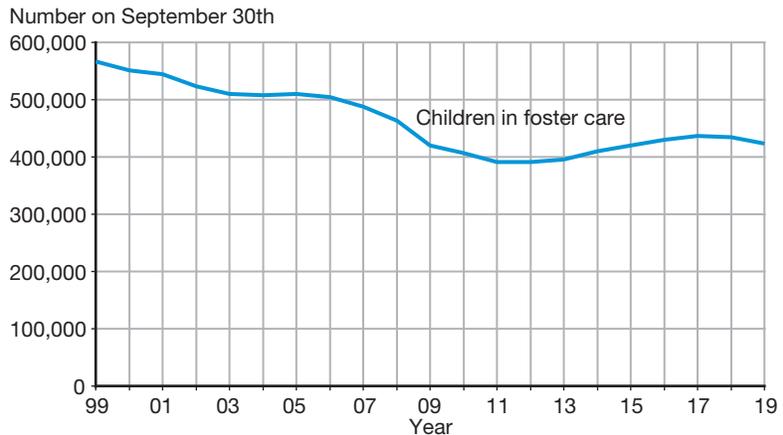
Since 2015, foster care entries declined while exits increased



- The number of children entering foster care fell 7% between 2015 and 2019, while the number of children exiting foster care increased 3% during the same period.
- In 2019, the number of children who exited foster care (249,000) was about the same as the number of children who entered foster care (251,000).
- The number of children entering foster care decreased 18% since its peak of 305,000 in 2005 and the number of children exiting declined 16% from its 2007 peak (295,000).

Sources: Authors' adaptation of the Children's Bureau's (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) AFCARS Report Final Estimates for FY1998 through FY2002; Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY2002–FY2012; and Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY2010–FY2019.

The number of children in foster care has grown in recent years



- An estimated 424,000 children remained in foster care on September 30, 2019, 25% fewer than the 1999 peak of 567,000 but 8% more than the 2012 low point (392,000).

Sources: Authors' adaptation of the Children's Bureau's (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) AFCARS Report Final Estimates for FY1998 through FY2002; Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY2002–FY2012; and Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY2010–FY2019.

Profile of children entering foster care:

Age	2000	2010	2019
Total	100%	100%	100%
Younger than 1	13	16	19
1 to 5	24	31	30
6 to 10	20	18	21
11 to 15	30	23	21
16 to 20	11	12	9

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

Black, Hispanic and mixed race children were overrepresented in foster care

In 2019, Hispanic (25%), Black (14%), and mixed race (4%) children combined to account for 43% of the U.S. population ages 0–20. In comparison, 52% of children in foster care in 2019 were Black (23%), Hispanic (21%), or mixed race (8%). The proportion of the foster care population involving White and mixed race children has grown since 2010, while the proportion involving Black children has declined.

Profile of children, 2019:

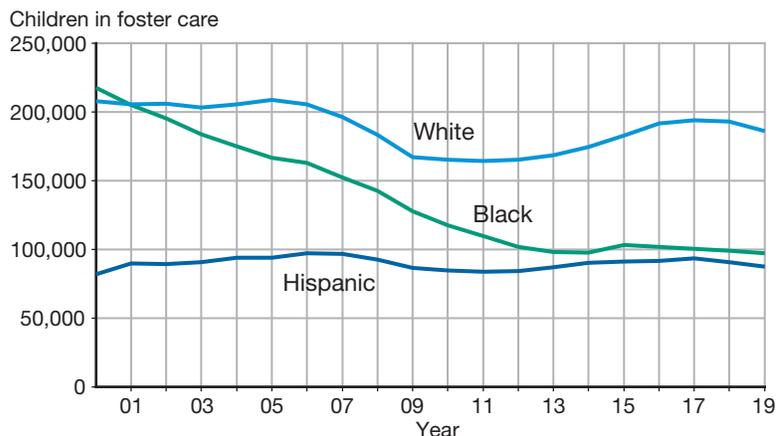
Race/ethnicity	In foster care	U.S. population
All races	100%	100%
White	44	51
Black	23	14
Hispanic	21	25
American Indian	2	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	5
Mixed race	8	4

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

Half of children in foster care on September 30, 2019, entered one year prior

On September 30, 2019, half of children in foster care had been in care for at least 13 months. This is down from the median time in both 2005 (15.5 months) and 2000 (19.8 months).

The number of Black children in foster care was cut in half between 2000 and 2019



- On September 30, 2019, 97,142 Black children were in foster care, 55% fewer than the number in foster care in 2000.
- While the total number of youth in foster care fell 25% from 2000 to 2019, Black children accounted for more than 80% of this decrease.

Sources: Authors' adaptation of the Children's Bureau's (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) *The AFCARS Report: Final Estimates for FY1998 through FY2002*; and *The AFCARS Report: Preliminary Estimates*, for fiscal years 2003–2019.

Profile of children in foster care:

Length of stay in foster care	2000	2010	2019
Total	100%	100%	100%
Less than 1 month	4	5	5
1–5 months	16	21	21
6–11 months	15	19	20
12–17 months	12	13	16
18–23 months	9	9	11
24–35 months	13	12	13
3–4 years	15	11	9
5 years or more	17	11	5

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

Reunification was the permanency goal for most foster care children

In 2019, more than half of children in foster care (55%) had a permanency goal of reunification with their parents and more than one-fourth (28%) had a

goal of adoption. The proportion of children without a permanency goal changed considerably from 2000 to 2019. In 2000, 17% of children in foster care did not yet have permanency goals; by 2019, 4% of children in foster care did not have permanency goals.

Profile of children in foster care:

Permanency goal	2000	2010	2019
Total	100%	100%	100%
Reunification with parents	41	51	55
Adoption	21	25	28
Emancipation	6	6	4
Guardianship	3	4	4
Live with other relative(s)	4	4	3
Long-term foster care	8	6	2
Goal not yet established	17	5	4

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



The most common outcome for children exiting foster care was reunification with their parents

Although the most common outcome, the proportion of foster care exits resulting in reunification has decreased since 1999

More than half of children who exit foster care are reunified with their parents or primary caretakers; however, the frequency of this outcome has decreased in the past decade. In 2010, an estimated 51% of children exiting foster care were reunified with their parents or primary caretakers; by 2019, this figure dropped to 47%. The second most common outcome for youth exiting foster care in 2019 was adoption (26%). Other outcomes for children include living with other relatives, emancipation, guardianship, transfer to another agency, and running away, which, combined, accounted for less than a third of exits.

Most children adopted from foster care were adopted by their foster parents

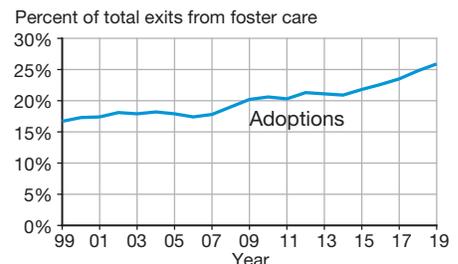
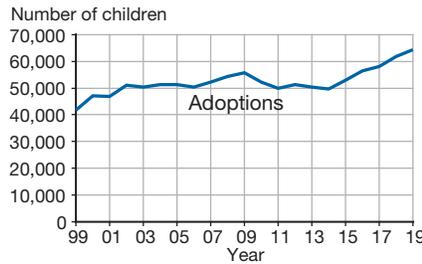
Most children adopted from foster care (52%) in 2019 were adopted by foster parents. About one-third (36%) were adopted by relatives, and the remaining 11% were adopted by nonrelatives. The proportion of children adopted by relatives in 2019 (36%) was greater than in 2010 (32%) and 2000 (21%).

The family structure of adoptive families has remained almost unchanged since AFCARS data collection began in 1998. Married couples adopt the majority of children adopted from foster care (68%), followed by single females (26%). The remaining 6% of children were adopted by unmarried couples and single males.

Children younger than 6 accounted for more than half of adopted children

The gender profile of adopted children has changed little since 2000, but the race/ethnicity profile of adopted children has shifted. In 2000, White chil-

In 2019, 64,415 children were adopted from foster care—55% more than were adopted from foster care in 1999



- The proportion of children exiting foster care to adoption has steadily increased, from less than one in five (17%) in 1999 to more than one in four (26%) in 2019.
- Adoption requires the termination of parental rights. Of the more than 122,200 children waiting to be adopted as of September 30, 2019, 58% had their parental rights terminated

Sources: Authors' adaptation of the Children's Bureau's (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) *AFCARS Report Final Estimates for FY1998 through FY2002*; and *The AFCARS Report: Preliminary Estimates*, for fiscal years 2003–2019.

dren accounted for 38% of adopted children; by 2019, White children accounted for half adopted children. The age profile of adopted children has also changed. In 2000, children under age 6 accounted for 47% of adopted children; by 2019, 56% of adopted children were under age 6. The median age of children adopted out of foster care has decreased over the past decades, from 6.4 in 2010 to 5.2 in 2019.

Profile of adopted children:

Demographic	2000	2010	2019
Gender	100%	100%	100%
Male	50	51	51
Female	50	49	49
Race	100%	100%	100%
White	38	43	50
Black	38	24	18
Hispanic	15	21	20
Age	100%	100%	100%
Less than 1	2	2	2
1 to 5	45	54	54
6 to 10	36	27	27
11 to 15	16	14	14
16 to 20	2	3	3

Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding and because of racial categories that are not displayed.

Reunification was the most common outcome for children exiting foster care

Of the children exiting foster care in 2019, 117,010 were reunited with their parents and 64,415 were adopted. Compared with prior years, a smaller proportion of children were reunited with their parents upon exit from foster care and a greater share were adopted.

Profile of children exiting foster care:

Outcome	2000	2010	2019
Total	100%	100%	100%
Reunification with parents	57	51	47
Adoption	17	21	26
Guardianship	3	6	11
Emancipation	7	11	8
Live with other relative(s)	10	8	6
Transfer to other agency	3	2	1
Runaway	2	1	0

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

The serious violent victimization rate of youth ages 12–17 in 2019 was 83% less than the rate in 1994

NCVS tracks crime levels

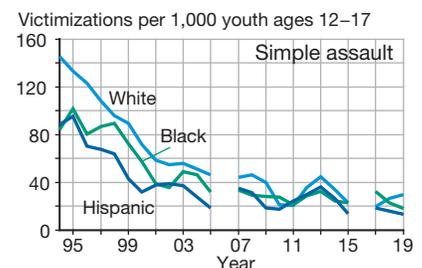
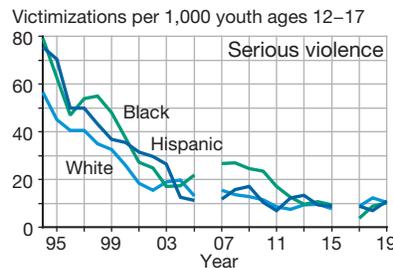
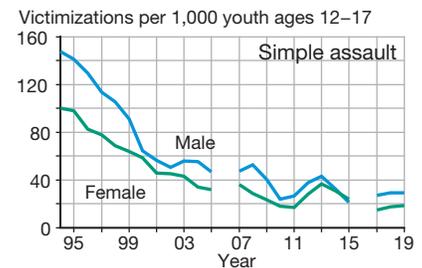
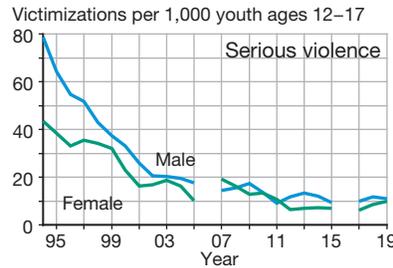
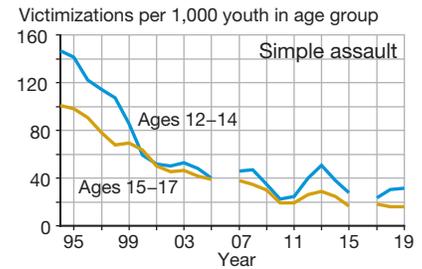
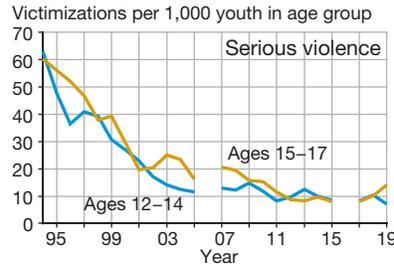
Since 1973, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) has used the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to monitor the level of violent crime in the U.S. NCVS gathers information on crimes against persons ages 12 and older from a nationally representative sample of households. NCVS monitors nonfatal serious violence (i.e., rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) and simple assault victimization. These data serve a critical role for understanding the volume and nature of crimes against youth ages 12–17 as well as trends in these crimes. A limitation, however, is that crimes against youth younger than age 12 are not captured.

Analysis of these data show that youth experienced relatively high levels of violent crimes during the mid-1990s but their rate of victimization has since declined: between 1994 and 2019, rates of serious violence and simple assault against youth declined more than 80%.

Male and female youth were equally likely to be victims of serious violence in 2019

In 1994, male youth were nearly twice as likely to be victims of serious violence as were females (78.8 per 1,000 vs. 43.5 per 1,000, respectively). However, following the relatively larger decline in the serious violence victimization rate among male youth (down 86%, compared with 77% for females), victimization rates for male and female youth were about the same in 2019 (11.0 vs. 10.0, respectively). In contrast, 2019 victimization rates for simple assault showed greater gender disparity, as male youth were 50% more likely to be victimized than females (29.0 vs. 18.7).

Victimization rates for serious violence and simple assault were lower in 2019 than in 1994 for all youth



- Most of the decline in both serious violence and simple assault victimization took place between 1994 and 2005. During this period, the rate of serious violence against youth ages 12–17 fell 77% and simple assault fell 68%, compared with 25% and 39%, respectively, between 2005 and 2019.
- The relative decline in simple assault victimization rates between 1994 and 2010 was about the same for male (80%) and female (81%) youth, while the decline in the serious violence rate for males (86%) outpaced that of females (77%).
- For most years, Black youth were at greater risk of serious violence than White or Hispanic youth. However, in 2019, rates of serious violence were about the same for each group. Conversely, White youth were at greater risk of simple assault victimization than Black or Hispanic youth most years during the 1994–2019 period. In 2019, White youth were 60% more likely to experience simple assault than Black youth, and more than twice as likely as Hispanic youth.

Notes: Serious violence includes rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. To improve stability and reliability, rates are based on two-year rolling averages. Due to methodological changes, victimization estimates for 2006 and 2016 are not comparable to other years.

Source: Authors' analyses of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey Dashboard* for 1994 through 2019.

Rates of serious violence declined for White, Black, and Hispanic youth

The rate of serious violent victimization declined for all race/ethnicity groups between 1994 and 2019, but the decline was greater for Black non-Hispanic youth (87%) and Hispanic youth (86%) than for White non-Hispanic youth (82%). The net result of these declines was that, by 2019, rates of serious violence against Black (10.3), White (10.4) and Hispanic (10.9) youth were about the same.

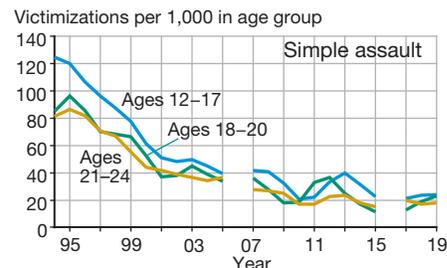
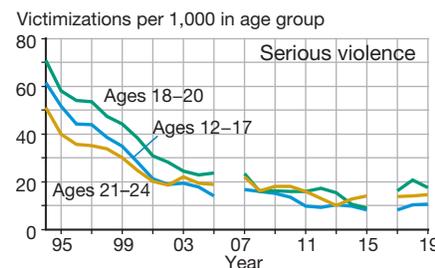
Simple assault victimization rates also declined considerably for each group between 1994 and 2019, but the decline was greater for Hispanic youth (85%) than for White youth (80%) and Black youth (78%). Despite these declines, however, White youth (29.5) were more likely to experience simple assault in 2019 than were Black youth (18.1) or Hispanic youth (13.1).

Most youth were victimized by someone they know

In 1994, youth ages 12–17 experienced comparable rates of serious violence committed by nonstrangers (e.g., family member, relatives, acquaintances, and other persons known to the victim) and strangers (32.0 vs. 28.1 per 1,000, respectively). Between 1994 and 2019, the rate of serious violent crimes committed by strangers declined 91%, while the rate for nonstrangers fell 77%. As a result, by 2019, the rate of serious violence committed by nonstrangers was nearly 3 times the rate committed by strangers (7.3 vs. 2.5).

The rate of simple assault committed by nonstrangers was, on average, more than twice the rate committed by strangers between 1994 and 2019. The rates of simple assault committed by nonstrangers and strangers declined similarly between 1994 and 2019, 84% and 83%, respectively. In 2019, the rate of simple assault committed by non-

With few exceptions, annual rates of serious violent victimization were greater for young adults than for youth ages 12–17



- Each year since 1994, young adults ages 18–20 were at greater risk of serious violent victimization than youth ages 12–17, while adults ages 21–24 were at greater risk than youth for most years since 2001. In 2019, young adults were 67% more likely to experience serious violence than youth, and adults were 39% more likely than youth.
- In contrast to the pattern for serious violence, the risk of simple assault victimization was greater for youth ages 12–17 than for young adults for most years between 1994 and 2019.

Notes: Serious violence includes rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. To improve stability and reliability, rates are based on two-year rolling averages. Due to methodological changes, victimization estimates for 2006 and 2016 are not comparable to other years.

Source: Authors' analyses of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey Dashboard* for 1994 through 2019.

strangers (13.8) was 2.4 times the rate committed by strangers (5.8).

Weapon use in nonfatal serious violence against youth has declined

Between 1994 and 2019, rates of serious violence against youth that involved a weapon (e.g., firearm, knife, or club) decreased by 91% (from 40.5 per 1,000 to 3.6). By 2019, nearly two-thirds (65%) of serious violence victimizations reported by youth did not involve a weapon, compared with one-third in 1994, and less than 1 in 10 (9%) involved a firearm.

The rate of injury among youth victims of serious violence declined 77% between 1994 and 2019. As a result, the 2019 injury rate for youth victims of serious violence was one-fourth the rate in 1994. Of those who were in-

jured as the result of serious violence, most youth did not report receiving treatment. On average between 1994 and 2019, 45% of injured youth reported not receiving treatment, but the proportion varied by year, ranging from a low of 29% to a high of 68%.

Declines in serious violence were similar for youth and young adults

From 1994 to 2019, rates of serious violence against youth ages 12–17 declined considerably, a pattern that was replicated among young adults ages 18–20 and adults ages 21–24. Most of the decline took place between 1994 and 2010; during which time the rate of serious violence fell 78% for youth, 77% for young adults, and 64% for adults. Similarly, rates of simple assault victimization declined 83% for youth, compared with 78% for young adults and 79% for adults.

Students were less likely to experience nonfatal victimization in and on their way to and from school in 2019 than in 1992

Nonfatal victimizations of youth ages 12–18 fell substantially between 1992 and 2019 both in and out of school

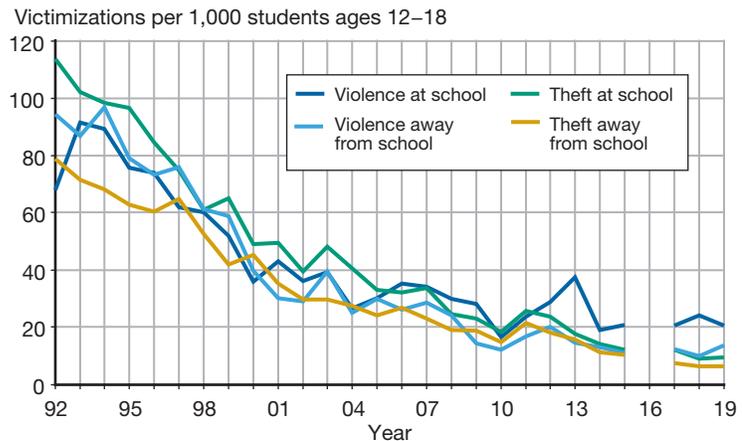
For more than 2 decades, the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics have jointly produced the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* report which, among other things, monitors the amount of crime students ages 12–18 experience when they are in (or on their way to/from) school and when they are away from school. Findings indicate that the rates of violent crime and theft—in school and away from school—each declined substantially between 1992 and 2019.

In 2019, more nonfatal victimizations (theft and violent crime) were committed against students ages 12–18 at school than away from school. Students at school experienced an estimated 764,600 nonfatal victimizations, compared with 509,300 away from school, representing overall victimization rates of 30 per 1,000 students at school and 20 per 1,000 students away from school.

From 1992 to 2019, the rate of violent crimes against students ages 12–18 occurring away from school fell 86% (from 94 victimizations per 1,000 to 14), while the rate at school fell 70% (from 68 to 21). In 2019, youth experienced more thefts at school than away from school, but the relative decline in the rate of theft was the same for students at school and away from school (down 92% for both). Annually since 1992, the rate of theft at school was higher than the rate of theft away from school.

In 2019, students residing in urban and rural areas had higher rates of theft and violent victimization at school and away from school than students residing in suburban areas.

Since 2012, students ages 12–18 were more likely to experience violent crime at school than theft crime at school



Notes: Violence includes rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. Due to a sample increase and redesign in 2016, victimization estimates for 2016 are not comparable to estimates for other years.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the National Center for Education Statistics' *Digest of Education*, Table 228.20.

In 2019, female students and students ages 15–18 were more likely to experience violence away from school than at school

Student demographic	Victimizations per 1,000 students ages 12–18, 2019			
	Violence		Theft	
	At school	Away from school	At school	Away from school
Total	20.6	13.7	9.4	6.3
Male	28.9	8.1	10.9	7.6
Female	11.7	19.5	7.8	5.0
Ages 12–14	26.4	6.9	9.4	4.9
Ages 15–18	14.9	20.2	9.3	7.6
White	21.1	19.2	10.0	5.9
Black	18.8	8.0	8.0	5.9
Hispanic	22.7	5.4	10.1	5.6

■ In 2019, students experienced an estimated 864,100 violent victimizations—60% of these occurred at school.

Note: Violence includes rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the National Center for Education Statistics' *Digest of Education*, Table 228.25.



In 2019, nearly 1 in 5 students reported having been bullied at school and about 1 in 6 reported having been cyberbullied

Nationwide, 19.5% of high school students said they were bullied at school in 2019

According to the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey (YRBSS), nearly 1 in 5 (19.5%) high school students reported having been bullied at school at least once during the 12 months prior to the survey. The YRBSS defines bullying as “when one or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again.” Regardless of grade level, females were more likely than males to be victims of bullying, and White, Hispanic, and multiple race females were more likely to report bullying than their male peers. Likewise, heterosexual females were more likely than males to report bullying. No other differences were significant between males and females.

Percent of high school students who reported being bullied on school property in the past year, 2019:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	19.5%	15.4%	23.6%
9th grade	22.4	18.0	27.0
10th grade	21.3	17.4	25.3
11th grade	16.9	12.4	21.2
12 grade	16.7	12.8	20.5
White	23.1	18.0	28.3
Black	15.1	13.3	17.2
Hispanic or Latino	14.8	10.9	18.6
Asian	12.0	11.3	12.7
Multiple race	21.3	15.0	26.4
Heterosexual	17.1	14.0	20.8
Gay, lesbian, or bisexual	32.0	31.7	32.0
Not sure	26.9	23.7	28.0

The proportion of students who were bullied at school in 2019 was about the same as the proportion in 2009 (19.9%).

Classrooms, hallways and stairwells are the most common locations of bullying at school

The School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) collects data from

students 12–18 years old, i.e., grades 6th through 12th, and their reports of being bullied at school. “At school” includes the school building, on school property, the school bus, or going to and from school. “Bullying” includes being made fun of; being the subject of rumors; being threatened with harm; being pressured into doing

things they did not want to do; excluded from activities on purpose; having property destroyed on purpose; and being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on along with injury as a result of the incident.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics’ analysis of the

In 2019, female high school students were more likely to report being bullied at school or experience electronic bullying than their male peers

Youth characteristic	Percent of students, 2019	
	Bullied on school property	Electronically bullied
All high school students	19.5%	15.7%
Gender		
Male	15.4	10.9
Female	23.6	20.4
Race/ethnicity		
White*	23.1	18.6
Black*	15.1	8.6
Hispanic or Latino	14.8	12.7
American Indian/Alaska Native*	32.1	21.3
Asian*	12.0	12.1
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander*	NA	NA
Multiple race*	21.3	19.2
Grade		
9th	22.4	16.5
10th	21.3	16.0
11th	16.9	14.4
12th	16.7	15.4
Sexual identity		
Heterosexual	17.1	14.1
Gay, lesbian, bisexual	32.0	26.6
Not sure	26.9	19.4

- In 2019, White high school students were more likely than Black, Hispanic, and Asian students to experience bullying at school and electronic bullying.
- While electronic bullying was similar across grade levels, 9th and 10th graders were more likely to experience bullying at school than 11th and 12th graders.
- Students who identify as heterosexual were significantly less likely to experience either form of bullying than students who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, and those who are not sure of their sexual orientation.

NA: Too few cases to develop a reliable estimate.

*Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanic youth can be any race.

Notes: The reference period was 12 months prior to the survey. Electronic bullying includes being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media.

Source: Author’s analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1991–2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data.

SCS data, about 22% of students ages 12–18 reported being bullied at school during the 2019 school year. Females were more likely than males to be made of or be the subject of rumors, while males were more likely to report being pushed, shoved, or spit on.

Percent of students ages 12–18 bullied at school, 2019:

Bullying problem	Total	Male	Female
Total	22.2%	19.1%	25.5%
Made fun of	13.8	11.8	15.9
Subject of rumors	15.3	11.9	18.9
Excluded from activities	6.0	3.7	8.5
Threatened	4.5	4.7	4.3
Pressured to do things	2.4	2.5	2.2
Property destroyed	1.7	1.8	1.6
Pushed/shoved/spit on	5.2	6.2	4.1

Victims of cyberbullying are likely to report:

- Being bullied in person
- Being afraid or embarrassed to go to school
- Skipping school
- Academic failure
- Low self-esteem
- Health problems
- Alcohol and drug use
- Family problems
- Delinquent behavior
- Suicidal thoughts or actions

Source: Authors' adaptation of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services online information, available at www.Stopbullying.gov.

Students who were bullied during the 2018-2019 school year also reported the location in which they had been victimized. Classrooms, hallways/stairwells, and the cafeteria were the three most commonly reported locations. Females were more likely than males to report being bullied in the hallway or stairwell, while males were more likely to experience bullying in a locker room or bathroom than females.

Among students ages 12–18 who were bullied, percent by location, 2019:

Location	Total	Male	Female
Inside classroom	46.7	47.5	46.1
Hallway or stairwell	38.9	33.6	43.1
Bathroom or locker room	10.9	12.5	9.7
Cafeteria	25.7	25.9	25.6
Somewhere else in school	3.0	2.4	3.4
Outside on school grounds	20.2	21.3	19.2
On the way to or from school	9.9	9.8	10.0
Online or by text	15.8	7.6	22.4

Students from suburban schools reported higher rates of being bullied in the hallway or stairwell (39%) than did students from urban schools and rural schools (37%, each). In contrast, a higher percentage of students from rural schools (30%) than students from urban schools (22%) and suburban schools (26%) reported being bullied in the school cafeteria.

Nearly 1 in 5 students report being bullied more than 10 days in the school year

Data from SCS asks students to report how often they experienced bullying during the school year. Among students who report being bullied, 52% were bullied one or two days in the school year, 29% were bullied 3–10

days in the school year, and 19% were bullied more than 10 days. Females (20%) were more likely than males (17%) to report being bullied 10 or more times a year, and White (20%) and Hispanic (21%) students were more likely to report being bullied 10 or more times than Black (13%) students.

In 2019, 1 in 5 females were cyberbully victims—1 in 9 males were victims

In 2019, the YRBSS found that, nationwide, 16% of students reported being electronically bullied during the past year through text messages and social media platforms. Regardless of grade level, females were significantly more likely than males to be victims of electronic bullying, and White, Black, Hispanic, and multiple race females were significantly more likely to report electronic bullying than their male peers.

Percent of high school students who reported being electronically bullied in the past year, 2019:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	15.7%	10.9%	20.4%
9th grade	16.5	11.9	21.3
10th grade	16.0	11.0	21.1
11th grade	14.4	8.6	20.3
12th grade	15.4	11.9	18.6
White	18.6	12.0	25.3
Black	8.6	6.1	11.1
Hispanic or Latino	12.7	9.3	15.9
Asian	12.1	11.1	13.2
Multiple race	19.2	14.4	23.0
Heterosexual	14.1	9.9	19.1
Gay, lesbian, or bisexual	26.6	25.5	27.1
Not sure	19.4	16.8	20.1

The proportion of students who experienced electronic bullying in 2019 was about the same as the proportion in 2011 (16.2%).

Youth younger than 18 accounted for more than 1 in 5 victims of serious violent crime known to law enforcement

Child victims are common in violent crimes handled by law enforcement

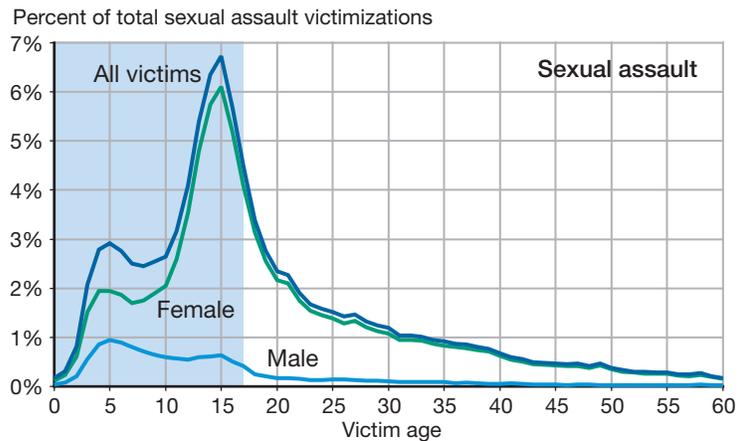
Not all crimes committed are reported to law enforcement. Those that are reported can be used to produce a portrait of crime as seen by the nation's justice system. Based on the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports*, 8% of all persons murdered in 2019 were under age 18 and 27% of these child victims were female. No other data source with comparable population coverage characterizes the victims of other violent crimes reported to law enforcement. However, data from the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) covering incidents in 2018 and 2019 capture information on more than 1 million victims of serious violent crime (i.e., murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) known to law enforcement agencies in 45 states and the District of Columbia, representing 45% of the U.S. population. The number of reporting agencies and proportion of the state reporting varies by state; however, from these data an arguably representative description of violent crime victims can be developed.

Sexual assault victims accounted for more than half of all child victims of serious violent crime

NIBRS data indicate that 22% of the victims of serious violent crime reported to law enforcement agencies in 2018 and 2019 were children under age 18. More specifically, children were the victims in 9% of murders, 58% of sexual assaults, 8% of robberies, and 13% of aggravated assaults. Of all child victims of serious violent crime, less than one-half of 1% were murder victims, 7% were robbery victims, 35% were victims of aggravated assault, and 57% were victims of sexual assault.

Among youth victims of serious violence, nearly 3 in 4 females and more

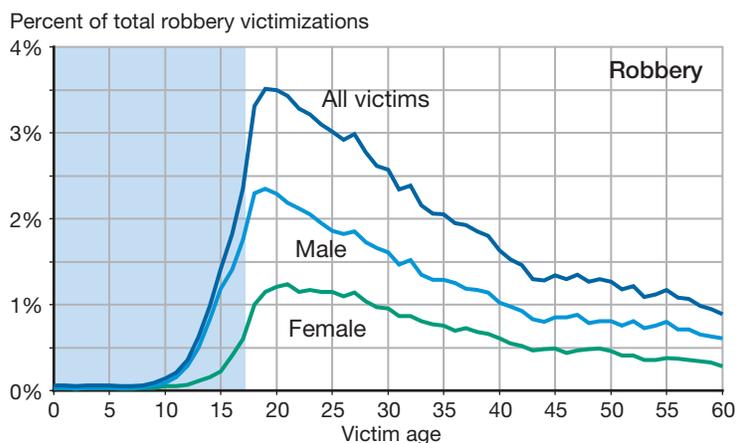
In sexual assaults known to law enforcement, 55% of female and 74% of male victims were younger than 18



- The modal age for sexual assault victims was age 15 for female victims and age 5 for male victims.
- Overall, female child victims of sexual assault outnumbered male victims by nearly 5 to 1. However, among older child victims, those age 12–17, female victims outnumbered male victims by 9 to 1.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

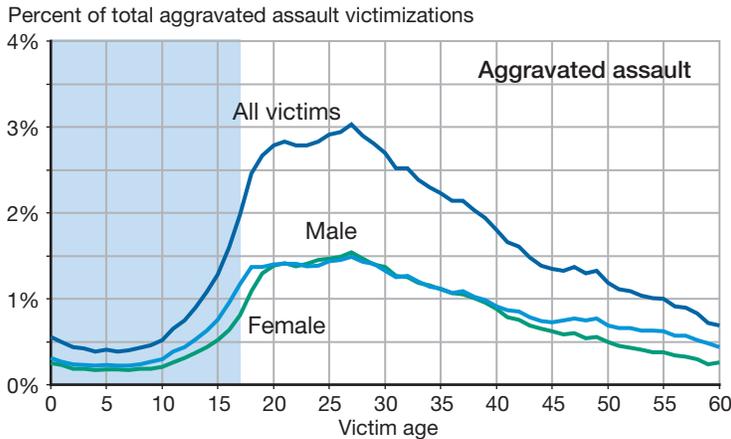
Robbery victimization increased through the childhood years to reach a peak at age 19 for male victims and age 21 for female victims



- Children under age 18 accounted for 10% of all male robbery victims and 6% of all female robbery victims.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

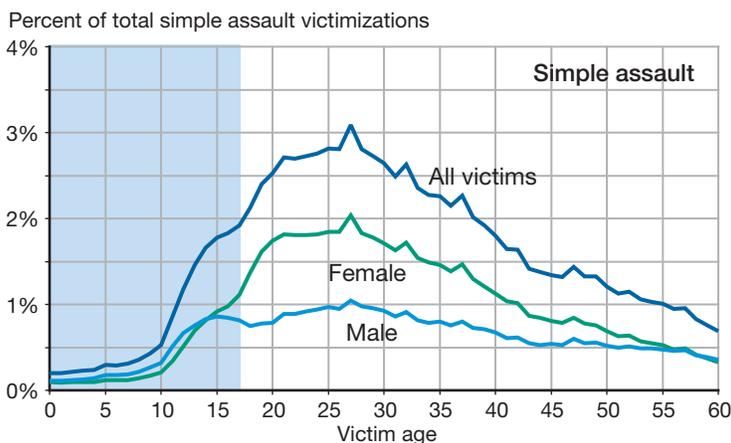
Male victims of aggravated assault outnumbered female victims from ages 9 through 18, after which the number of victims were about the same through age 20



- The number of male and female victims of aggravated assault were about the same through age 8.
- In aggravated assaults reported to law enforcement, 14% of male and 12% of female victims were under age 18.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

Until age 14, more simple assault victims were male than female; by age 19, twice as many females as males were simple assault victims



- Unlike the pattern for aggravated assault, more females than males were victims of simple assault from age 15 through age 50.
- Among male victims of simple assault, 18% were younger than 18, compared with 11% of female victims.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

than 1 in 4 males were victims of sexual assault

The majority (63%) of the youth victims of serious violent crimes known to law enforcement in 2018 and 2019 were female. Victims under age 18 accounted for 26% of all female victims of serious violent crime but only 17% of all male victims. The types of serious violence committed against male and female child victims differed. For female youth, 74% of the serious violent crimes were sexual assaults, 23% were aggravated assaults, 3% were robberies, and less than 0.5% were murders. In contrast, for male youth, 56% of serious violent crimes were aggravated assaults, 27% were sexual assaults, 16% were robberies, and about 1% were murders.

Among both male and female child victims of sexual assault, forcible fondling was the most common offense.

Offense profile of juvenile sexual assault victims, 2018–2019:

Offense	Male	Female
Sex offense	100%	100%
Rape	6	35
Sodomy	30	7
Sexual assault with an object	3	4
Fondling	61	54

More than 40% of child victims of serious violence were younger than age 12

NIBRS data for 2018 and 2019 show that 17% of the child victims of serious violent crime were younger than 6, 24% were ages 6–11, 25% were ages 12–14, and 35% were ages 15–17. Victims younger than 12 represented 51% of all youth murder victims, 43% of youth sexual assault victims, and 42% of youth aggravated assault victims.

As youth age, those who violently victimize them are less likely to be family members

Youth victims of violence are likely to be harmed by adults

Analyses of the 2018 and 2019 NIBRS data files provide an understanding of the persons who victimize youth in violent crime incidents known to law enforcement. Although these data are not nationally representative, the NIBRS sample, which includes incidents on more than 490,000 youth victims of violent crime (murder, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault), is large enough to give credence to patterns derived from NIBRS data.

Based on NIBRS data, more than half (57%) of all youth violent crime victims known to law enforcement were harmed by an adult (i.e., a person over age 17). The proportion of youth victims harmed by adults varied by offense. Adults were more commonly involved in murders (83%), aggravated assaults (72%), and sexual assaults (62%) against youth than in robberies (52%) and simple assaults (52%) against youth.

The proportion of youth victimized by an adult varied with the youth's age. Overall, youth younger than age 6 and those ages 6–11 were more likely to experience violence by an adult than were youth age 12 or older, a pattern that held for murder, aggravated, and simple assault. For violent sex offenses, youth ages 15–17 were most likely to be victimized by an adult, followed by youth younger than age 6.

Among youth sexual assault victims, those younger than age 12 were more likely to be harmed by a family member than were victims age 12 or older

Victim-offender relationship	Relationship profile						Victim ages 0–17	
	Age of victim					Male	Female	
	0–17	0–5	6–11	12–14	15–17			
Violent crime	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Family	40	69	54	32	29	39	41	
Acquaintance	53	26	41	62	62	52	54	
Stranger	7	5	5	6	9	9	5	
Sexual assault	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Family	44	66	60	35	24	50	42	
Acquaintance	53	32	38	61	71	47	54	
Stranger	3	2	2	4	5	3	3	
Robbery	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Family	1	*	2	1	1	1	2	
Acquaintance	44	*	31	48	46	45	41	
Stranger	54	*	67	51	53	54	56	
Aggravated assault	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Family	42	64	52	37	27	40	45	
Acquaintance	43	24	34	50	56	44	42	
Stranger	15	13	14	13	17	16	13	
Simple assault	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Family	39	73	51	30	32	39	40	
Acquaintance	55	23	45	65	62	55	56	
Stranger	5	3	4	5	6	6	4	

■ In crimes known to law enforcement, the youngest victims (younger than age 6) are far more likely than the oldest victims (ages 15–17) to be assaulted by a family member: sexual assault (66% vs. 24%), aggravated assault (64% vs. 27%), and simple assault (73% vs. 32%).

*Too few victims in sample to obtain reliable percentage.

Notes: Violent crime includes murder, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. In this data set, the term "offender" is used to describe the person identified by law enforcement as having committed the crime. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System: Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

Across violent crimes against youth, males were more likely to be victimized by a juvenile than were females

Offense	Percent of youth victims victimized by youth ages 0–17						
	Age of victim					Victim ages 0–17	
	0–17	0–5	6–11	12–14	15–17	Male	Female
Violent crime	43%	15%	38%	58%	43%	46%	40%
Sexual assault	38	37	41	42	33	47	37
Robbery	48	11	47	66	44	52	34
Aggravated assault	28	5	24	45	34	31	24
Simple assault	48	6	39	65	48	49	46

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System: Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

Violence involving youth victims is most common at the end of the school day

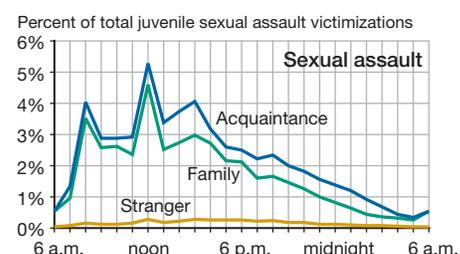
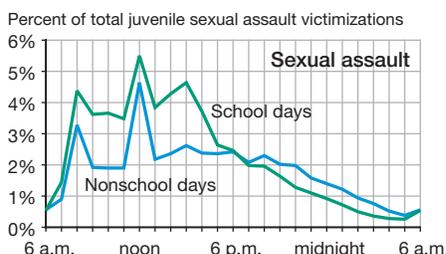
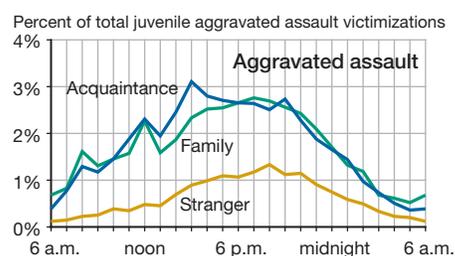
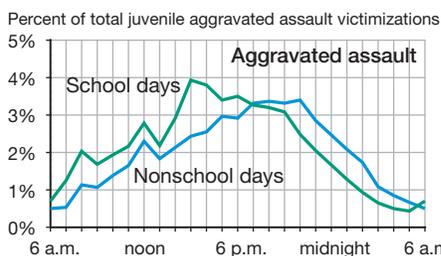
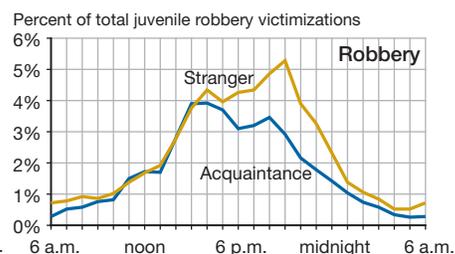
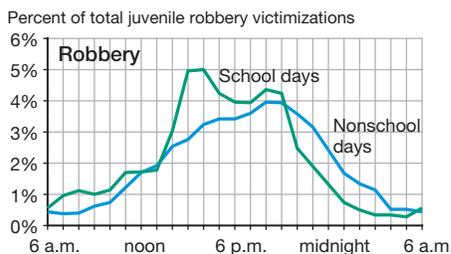
The risk of violence varies over a 24-hour period

To understand the nature of youth victimization, it helps to study when different types of crimes occur. To this end, the authors analyzed the FBI's NIBRS data for the years 2018 and 2019 to study the date and time of day that crimes known to law enforcement occurred. Consistent with prior analyses, the daily timing of violent crimes (i.e., murder, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault) differed for youth and adult victims. In general, the number of violent crimes with adult victims increased hourly from morning through the evening hours, peaking around 9 p.m. In contrast, violent crimes with youth victims peaked at 3 p.m., fell to a lower level in the early evening hours, and declined substantially after 8 p.m.

The 3 p.m. peak reflected a unique situational characteristic of youth violence and was similar for both male and female victims. This situational component was clarified when the hourly patterns of violent crimes on school and nonschool days were compared. For adult victims, the school and nonschool-day patterns were similar. On nonschool days, the youth victimization pattern mirrored the general adult pattern, with a peak in the late evening hours. But on school days, the number of youth violent crime victimizations spiked at 8 a.m. and at noon, and reached a peak in the afterschool hours between 3 and 4 p.m.

Based on violent crimes reported to law enforcement, youth were more than twice as likely to be victimized between 3 and 4 p.m. on school days as in the same time period on nonschool days (i.e., weekends and the summer months). On school days, youth were nearly twice as likely to be the victims of violence in the 4 hours between 3 and 7 p.m. as they were in the 4 hours between 8 p.m. and midnight.

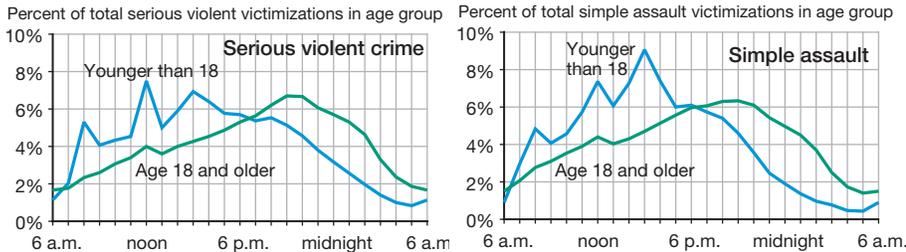
The timing of violence against youth varies on school and nonschool days and varies with the youth's relationship to who harmed them



- Time-of-day patterns of robberies with youth victims increase steadily on nonschool days, reaching a peak between 8 and 10 p.m. On school days, however, robberies involving youth victims peak between 3 to 5 p.m. and increase again between 8 and 10 p.m.
- While the risk of sexual assault victimization peaked at noon on school and nonschool days, the risk of victimization was relatively high at 8 a.m. on both days, and at 3 p.m. on school days.
- Unlike robberies against youth victims, sexual assaults and aggravated assaults against youth are less likely to involve strangers.
- Sexual assaults by acquaintances or family members are most common at 8 a.m. and noon, and in the hour after school (3 p.m.).
- Aggravated assaults committed by family members or acquaintances follow a similar pattern through the middle of the day, but victimizations by an acquaintance peak at 3 p.m. while the risk of victimization by a family member continues to increase, reaching a peak at 7 p.m.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

The timing of violent crime with youth victims differs from that of crimes with adult victims



- Serious violent crime against youth peaked at noon while simple assault with youth victims peaked at 3 p.m. For adults, the risk of adult victimization increases throughout the day, peaking at 9 p.m. for both offenses.

Note: Serious violent crime includes murder, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.

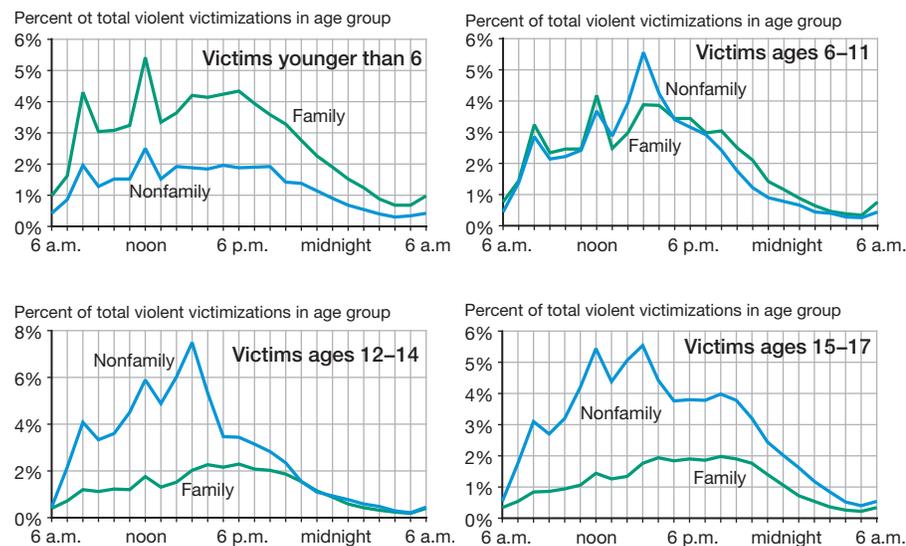
Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

Peak hours for youth victimization varied with victim age. For victims ages 6–11 and 12–14, violent crime victimization peaked at 3 p.m., the hour associated with the end of the school day. Conversely, for older victims ages 15–17, noon and 3 p.m. were the peak times for victimization. Among the youngest victims, those under age 6, the peak was at noon.

The timing of youth violence victimization is linked to their relationship with who harmed them

The daily timing of youth violence victimization varies with the relationship (i.e., family members, acquaintances, and strangers) between youth victims and those who harm them. Most of those who commit violence against youth were acquaintances of their victims. The timing of violent crimes by acquaintances reflected the afterschool peak, indicating the importance this time period (and probably unsupervised interactions with other youth) has for these types of crimes. Violent crimes by family members were most frequent at noon and in the hours between 3 and 7 p.m., although, unlike crimes committed by an acquaintance, there was no obvious 3 p.m. peak. Violent crimes committed by strangers peaked at 3 p.m. and remained at a relatively high level until 9 p.m.

Throughout the day, youth under age 6 are most likely to be victimized by family members



- The afterschool peak in victimizations for youth ages 6–17 is a result of crimes committed by nonfamily members.

Note: Violent crime includes murder, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

Nearly 6 in 10 violent crimes with youth victims occur in a residence

The location of youth violence varies with crime and victim age

The portrait of violence against youth requires an understanding of not only when these crimes occur but also where. Data from NIBRS includes the locations of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies. Data from 2018 and 2019 show that the location of violent crime against youth varies with the nature of the crime and the age of the victim.

Overall, 58% of youth victims of violence were harmed in a residence, 19% were victimized at school, 14% were harmed outdoors, and 8% in a commercial area. Most assaults occurred in a residence—79% of sexual assaults, 60% of aggravated assaults, and 50% of simple assaults—while nearly half (47%) of robberies occurred outdoors.

Location profile of juvenile victimizations, 2018–2019:

Location	Sexual assault		Aggravated assault	
	Robbery	Assault	Robbery	Assault
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Residence	79	21	60	60
Outdoors	6	47	23	23
Commercial	5	27	9	9
School	9	5	8	8

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

The location of youth violence also varied with victim age. For example, 81% of victims under age 6 were harmed in a residence, compared with 51% of victims ages 15–17. Youth ages 12–14 were more likely to be victimized at school than youth of other ages.

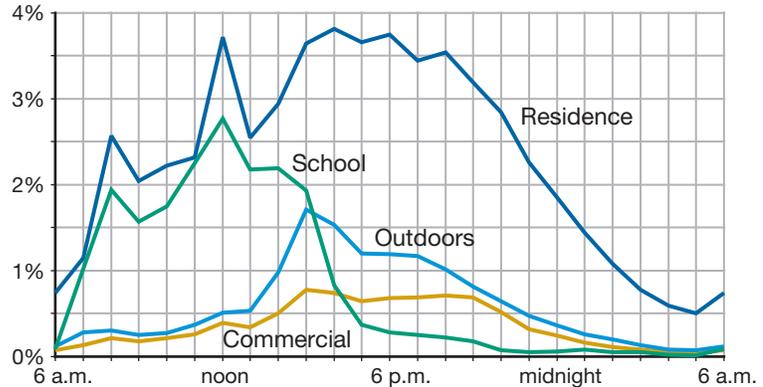
Location profile of juvenile victimizations, 2018–2019:

Location	Under age 6	Ages 6–11	Ages 12–14	Ages 15–17
	Total	100%	100%	100%
Residence	81	69	48	51
Outdoors	8	11	15	17
Commercial	7	5	7	12
School	4	14	30	19

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

Violent crime with youth victims peaked in residences at noon and again between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

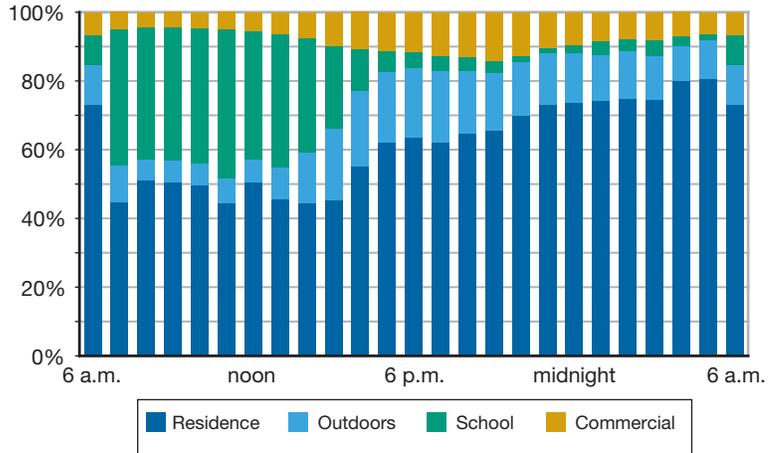
Percent of total juvenile violent crime victimizations



- Violent victimization of youth outdoors exhibited a distinct peak at 3 p.m., while victimizations in commercial areas were relatively high from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The hourly proportion of violent victimizations involving youth that occurred in residences was 60% or more from 5 p.m. through 6 a.m.

Percent of violent crimes with juvenile victims within hour



Note: The detailed NIBRS coding structure of location can be simplified for analyses into four general locations: a residence (the victim's, the offender's, or someone else's); the outdoors (streets, highways, roads, woods, fields, etc.); schools (including colleges); and commercial areas (parking lots, restaurants, government buildings, office buildings, motels, and stores).

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

On average, 1,334 youth under age 18 in the U.S. were murdered each year between 2010 and 2019

Homicide is one of the leading causes of death for youth younger than 18

In 2019, the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) reports that homicide was the fourth leading cause of death for children ages 1–11. Only deaths caused by unintentional injury, cancer, and congenital anomalies were more common for these youth. That same year, homicide was the third leading cause of death for youth ages 12–17, behind unintentional injury and suicide.

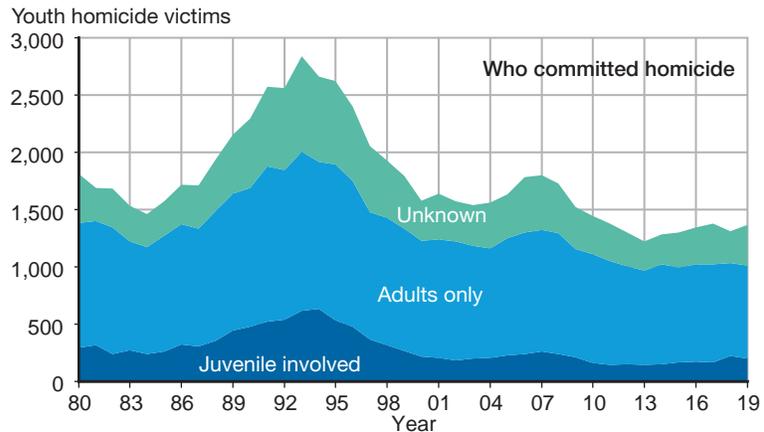
The FBI and NCHS maintain detailed records of murders

The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s (FBI’s) Uniform Crime Reporting Program asks local law enforcement agencies to provide detailed information on all homicides occurring within their jurisdictions. These Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) contain information on victim demographics and the method of death. Also, when known, SHR captures the circumstances surrounding the death, the demographics of the individual(s) who committed the act, as well as their relationship to the victim. Although not all agencies report every murder every year, for the years 1980 through 2019, the FBI received SHR records on 90% of all homicides in the U.S.

For 2019, the FBI reported that law enforcement identified who committed the crime in 68% of murders nationwide, which means that for many of these crimes, the person who committed the crime was not known to law enforcement.

Based on SHR data from 1980 through 2019, the person who committed the act was unknown to law enforcement in 22% of the murders of persons under age 18, in 32% of the

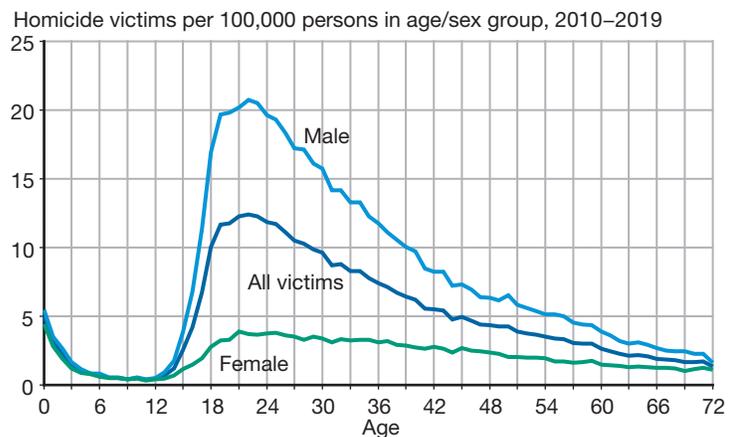
The number of youth homicide victims in 2019 was 52% below the peak year of 1993 and 12% above the 2013 low point



- Between 2010 and 2019, there were 13,340 youth homicide victims — an average of 1,334 per year, compared with an annual average of 1,638 in the 2000s and 2,375 in the 1990s.
- Among homicides committed by persons known to law enforcement, 17% of youth victims were killed by juveniles (acting alone or with other juveniles or adults) between 2010 and 2019. In 28% of youth homicides committed by juveniles, adults were also involved.

Source: Authors’ analyses of the FBI’s *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980 through 2019.

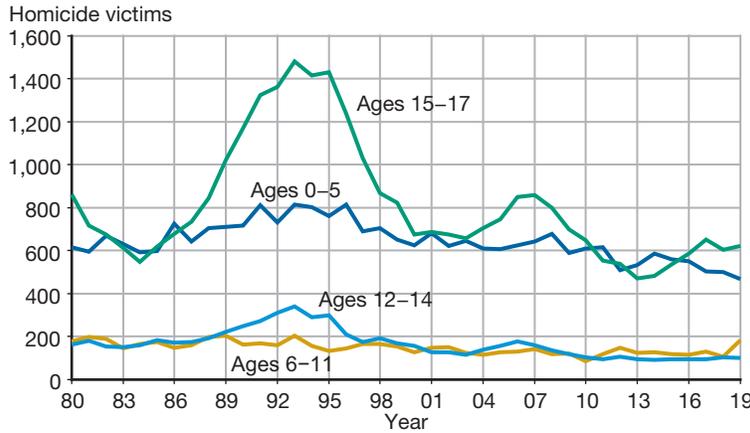
Between 2010 and 2019, the likelihood of being a murder victim peaked for persons in their early twenties, but for females, the first year of life was the most dangerous



- Girls and boys were equally likely to be homicide victims until their teenage years.

Source: Authors’ analysis of the FBI’s *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 2010 through 2019.

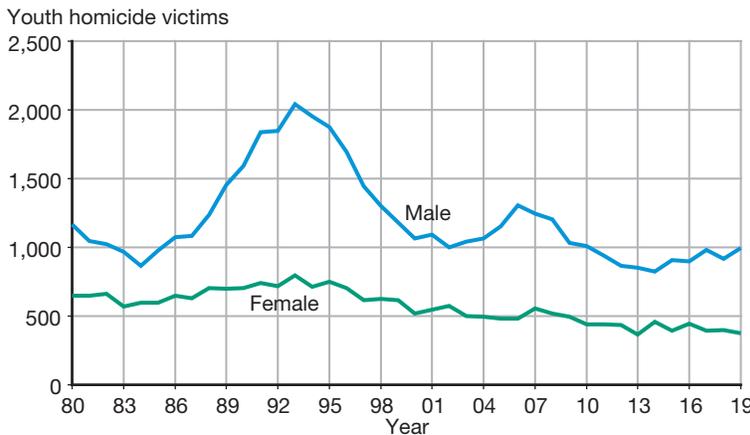
The large increase and subsequent decline in youth homicides was nearly all attributable to changes in homicides of older youth



- Victims ages 15–17 accounted for 68% of the increase of youth murdered between 1984 and 1993 and 58% of the decline between 1993 and 2019.
- Murder is most common among the oldest and youngest youth. Of the estimated 1,366 youth homicide victims in 2019, 34% were under age 6, 13% were ages 6–11, 7% were ages 12–14, and 45% were ages 15–17.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980 through 2019.

Homicides involving males accounted for 85% of the increase in youth homicides between 1984 and 1993 and 71% of the decline between 1993 and 2019



- Unlike the number of male victims, the annual number of female homicide victims was relatively stable between 1980 and 2019.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980 through 2019.

murders of adults, and in 31% of murders overall.

Within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) maintains the National Vital Statistics System. This system receives reports on homicides from coroners and medical examiners. Between 2010 and 2019, NCHS annual estimates of youth homicides tended to be about 18% higher than those from the FBI. The reasons for this difference are unclear but are probably related to inconsistent reporting and/or to differences in definitions, updating procedures, and/or imputation techniques.

An important component of this report is the delineation of the characteristics of homicide victims and those who commit homicide. Because the NCHS data do not capture information on those who commit homicide, the discussion that follows is based on the FBI's SHR data.

The likelihood of being a homicide victim has increased in recent years

According to FBI estimates, 16,669 murders occurred in the U.S. in 2019 — 5.1 murders for every 100,000 U.S. residents. During the 1980–2019 period, the number of murders reached a peak in 1991 at 24,703 victims, fell 37% through 1999, increased through 2006, then fell to a historic low in 2014, 43% below the 1991 peak. The period of decline was briefly interrupted as the number of homicides increased through 2016, and then declined. By 2019, the number of homicide victims was 33% below the 1991 peak and 18% above the 2014 low point.

The 2019 homicide victimization rate of 5.1 was 14% above the level in 2014 — the year with the lowest homicide rate (4.4) and the fewest homicides of

the 1980–2019 period — and nearly half the rate of the 1991 peak (10.1).

An estimated 1,366 youth homicide victims were reported in 2019 — about 4 per day

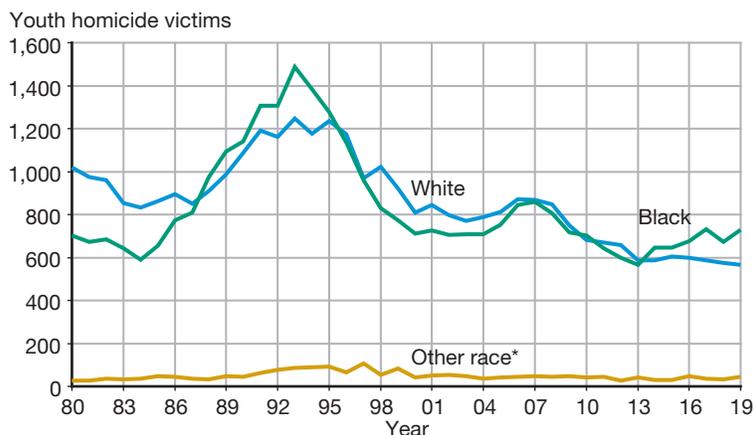
In 2019, there were an estimated 1,366 persons under age 18 murdered in the U.S. — 8% of all persons murdered that year. More than one-fourth (27%) of these youth victims were female. More than one-third (34%) of these victims were under age 6, 13% were ages 6–11, less than 1 in 10 (7%) were ages 12–14, and more than 4 in 10 (45%) were ages 15–17.

Black youth accounted for more than half (54%) of youth homicide victims in 2019, 42% were White, and 3% were either American Indian or Asian. By way of comparison, White youth constituted 75% of the U.S. resident youth population under age 18 in 2019 and Black youth 17%. The homicide rate for Black youth in 2019 was more than 5 times the White rate. This disparity was seen across victim age groups and increased with victim age.

Homicides per 100,000 youth, 2019:

Victim age	White	Black	Black to White rate ratio
0–17	1.0	5.9	5.6
0–5	1.4	4.8	3.5
6–11	0.5	1.8	3.5
12–14	0.5	2.2	4.6
15–17	2.1	20.1	9.8

Since 2013, the number of homicides of White youth fell 4% while homicides of Black youth increased 28%



- Black youth accounted for about 17% of the youth population between 2010 and 2019 but were the victims in half (50%) of youth homicides in the last 10 years.
- The disparity between murder rates for Black youth and White youth peaked in 1993, when the Black rate was 6 times the White rate. The relatively greater decline in homicides of Black youth between 1993 and 1999 (down 48%, compared with a 26% decline for White youth) dropped the disparity in Black-to-White homicide rates to 4 to 1. However, since 2013, homicides of Black youth have been on the rise, while the homicides of White youth declined. As a result, the 2019 homicide rate for Black youth was nearly 6 times the White rate.

* Other race includes American Indian/Alaskan Native and Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980 through 2019.

Between 2010 and 2019, nearly half (49%) of all homicide victims under age 6 were killed by a parent, while parents were rarely involved in the killing of youth ages 15–17

Relationship between victim and person committing homicide	Age of victim					Victim ages 0–17	
	0–17	0–5	6–11	12–14	15–17	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Known	60	80	56	51	44	56	69
Parent/stepparent	24	49	30	12	1	20	33
Other family member	5	6	7	5	2	4	7
Acquaintance	24	23	12	21	28	24	23
Stranger	7	2	6	12	12	8	5
Unknown	40	20	44	49	56	44	31

- During the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019, female victims were far more likely than male victims to have been killed by a parent/stepparent or other family member.
- Strangers were involved in at least 7% of the murders of youth between 2010 and 2019. This figure is probably greater than 7% because strangers are likely to account for a disproportionate share of crimes in which information about who committed the crime is unknown.

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

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980 through 2019.

In 2019, 9 of every 10 murder victims ages 15–17 were killed with a firearm

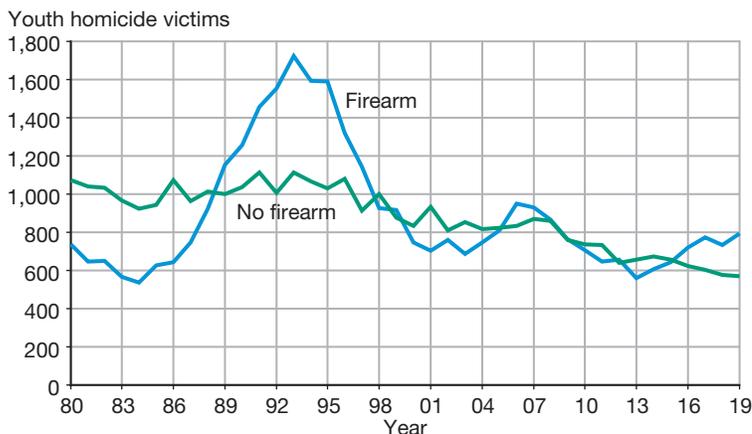
Trends in the number of youth homicides are tied to homicides involving firearms

More than half (58%) of all youth homicide victims in 2019 were killed with a firearm, 14% were killed by the offender's hands or feet (e.g., beaten/kicked to death or strangled), and 7% were killed with a knife or blunt object. The remaining 20% of victims were killed with another type of weapon, or the type of weapon used was unknown.

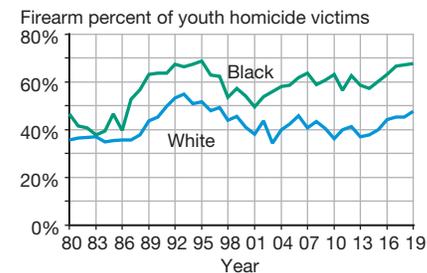
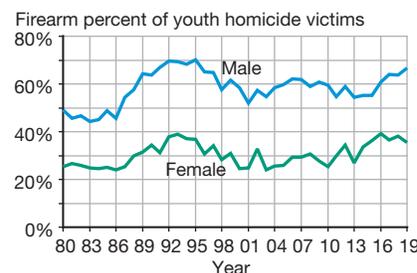
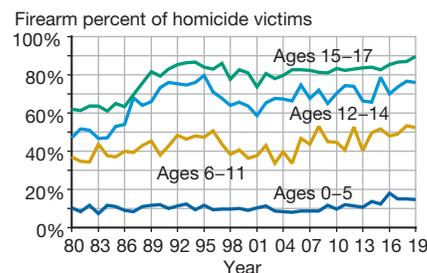
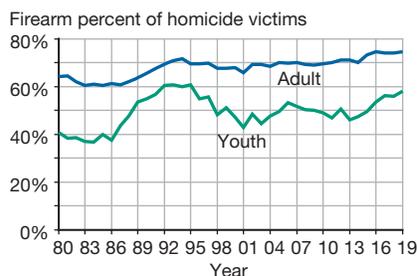
Firearms were used less often in the killings of young children. In 2019, firearms were used in 15% of murders of youth under age 6 but in 76% of the murders of youth ages 12–14, and 90% involving youth ages 15–17. In 2019, a greater percentage of Black than White youth murder victims were killed with a firearm (68% vs. 48%), and homicides of male youth were more likely to involve a firearm than those involving female youth (67% and 35%, respectively).

Across the 40-year period between 1980 and 2019, the deadliest year for youth was 1993, with an estimated 2,840 youth victims. A relatively large proportion of youth were killed with a firearm in the early 1990s: 60% of youth homicide victims were killed with a firearm each year from 1992 to 1995. In fact, over the 40-year period, the annual number of youth killed by means other than a firearm generally declined — a remarkable pattern when compared with the large increase and subsequent decline in the number of firearm-related murders of youth. Except for homicides of children under age 6 and of youth by family members, homicide trends in all demographic segments of the youth population between 1980 and 2019 were related to killings with firearms.

Since 2013, youth homicides increased 12% but the number involving a firearm increased 42%



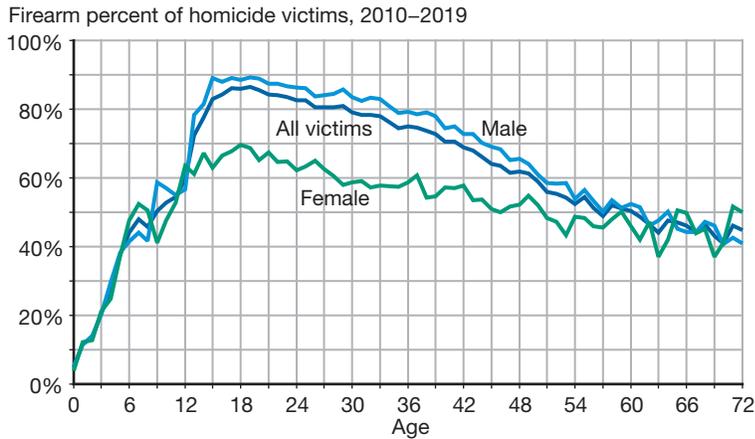
The proportion of homicides involving firearms varied by demographics



- While firearms were involved in a greater proportion of adult than youth homicides, youth ages 15–17 were more likely than adults to be killed by a firearm.
- Trends in the proportions of firearm-related murders of male and female youth showed similar growth and decline patterns over the period.
- Firearms were involved in a greater proportion of Black than White youth homicides each year since 1980, and between 2010 and 2019, Black youth were about 50% more likely than White youth to be killed by a firearm.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980 through 2019.

Between 2010 and 2019, 16- and 17-year-old murder victims were among the most likely to be killed with firearms, regardless of gender



- Boys and girls under age 6 were equally likely to be killed with a firearm. In the teen years, however, boys were considerably more likely to be killed with a firearm: 88% of boys ages 14–17 were killed with a firearm, compared with 66% of females in the same age group.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980 through 2019.

Children under 6 are killed by family members—older youth are killed by acquaintances

In the 2019 SHR data, information about who committed the crime is missing for 24% of youth homicide victims either because the information about who committed the crime is unknown or because the information was not recorded on the data form. The proportion of unknown offenders in 2019 generally increased with victim age: ages 0–5 (9%), ages 6–11 (12%), ages 12–14 (13%), and ages 15–17 (40%).

Considering only murders in 2019 for which information about who committed the crime is known, a stranger killed about 2% of murdered children under age 12, while family members killed 75% and acquaintances 23%. Older youth were far more likely to be killed by nonfamily members: 7% of victims ages 15–17 were killed by family members, 27% by strangers, and 66% by acquaintances.

Differences in the characteristics of the murders of male and female youth are linked to the age profiles of the victims. Between 2010 and 2019, the annual numbers of male and female victims were very similar for victims at each age under 13. However, older victims were disproportionately male. For example, since 2010, 86% of 17-year-old homicide victims were male. In general, therefore, a greater proportion of female murder victims were very young. While it is true that female victims were more likely to be killed by family members than were male victims (59% vs. 42%), this difference goes away within specific age groups. For example, between 2010 and 2019, for victims under age 6, 68% of males and 71% of females were killed by a family member.

More than half of the 13,340 youth homicide victims between 2010 and 2019 were killed with a firearm

Weapon	Age of victim					Victim ages 0–17	
	0–17	0–5	6–11	12–14	15–17	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Firearm	51	13	49	73	85	60	34
Knife/blunt object	11	12	16	11	8	9	13
Personal*	19	42	10	3	1	16	25
Other/unknown	19	34	26	13	5	15	28

- More than 4 in 10 (42%) homicide victims under age 6 were killed by offenders using only their hands, fists, or feet (personal).
- More than 8 in 10 (85%) victims ages 15–17 were killed with a firearm.
- Overall, males were more likely than females to be killed by a firearm (60% vs. 34%), while personal weapons were more common in the killing of females (25%) than males (16%).

*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 1980 through 2019.

Since 2009, suicides have outnumbered homicides among youth ages 10–17

Suicide was the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10–17

The National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) within the Centers for Disease Control collects information from death certificates filed in state vital statistics offices, including causes of death of children. NVSS indicates that 35,805 youth ages 10–17 died by suicide in the U.S. between 1990 and 2019. For all youth ages 10–17, suicide was the second leading cause of death between 2015 and 2019, trailing only unintentional injury, while homicide was the third leading cause of death for youth ages 10–17 during the same period. Since 2015, suicide was the leading cause of death for Asian/Pacific Islander youth, the second leading cause of death for male, female, White, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaskan Native youth, and third for Black youth (homicide was first).

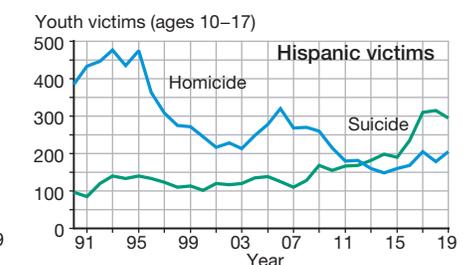
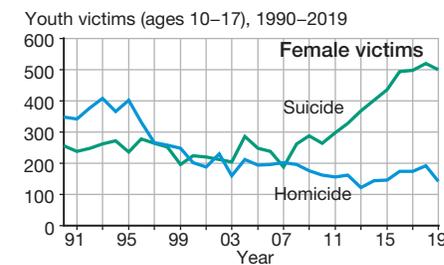
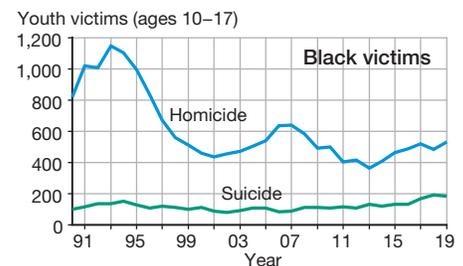
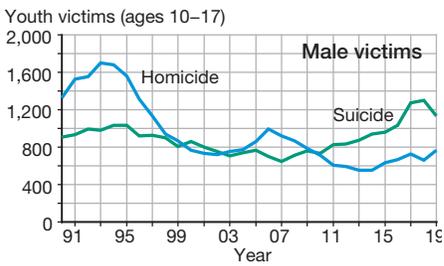
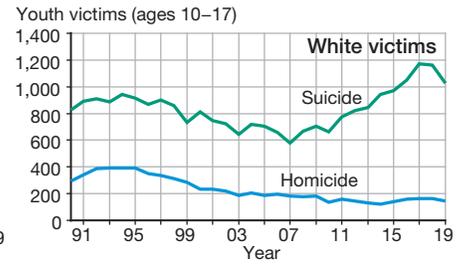
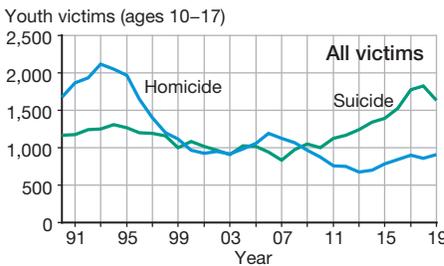
Since 1990, males have outnumbered females among youth suicide victims, but the female proportion of suicide victims has grown in recent years. For example, through 2009, female youth accounted for 22% of suicide victims; since 2010, however, females accounted for 29% of youth suicide victims.

The method of suicide has changed

Between 1990 and 2000, most youth suicides (62%) involved a firearm; each year since, suicides by suffocation have outnumbered those involving a firearm. During the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019, for example, half of all youth suicides involved suffocation, while firearms were involved in 40%. Firearm-related suicides in 2019 were more common among male (49%) than female youth (21%), and suicides among White youth were more likely to involve a firearm (46%) than were those of Black (35%) or Hispanic (27%) youth.

The method of suicide varies considerably by gender, with suffocation being

Since 1990, suicide was more prevalent than homicide for non-Hispanic White youth but the reverse was true for non-Hispanic Black youth

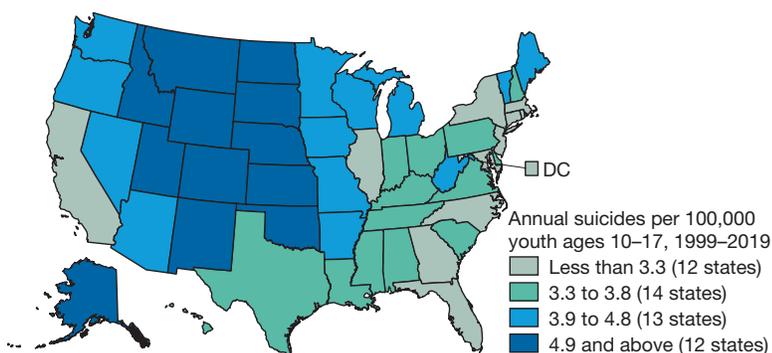


- Youth homicide victims (ages 10–17) outnumbered youth suicide victims through 1999. More recently, however, the trend reversed as suicide victims outnumbered homicide victims annually since 2009. In 2019, the number of suicide victims was 80% above the number of homicide victims.
- Suicide and homicide victimizations have been on the rise in recent years for both males and females, but the increase in suicides started earlier (2010) than the increase in homicides (2013). Since 2010, the number of suicides increased 54% for males and 89% for females. Comparatively, since 2013, the number of homicide victims increased 38% for males and 17% for females.
- The annual number of White suicide victims exceeded the annual number of homicide victims each year since 1990, and the gap has grown in recent years. The ratio of suicides to homicides was 2.5 to 1 in the 1990s, but grew to more than 6 to 1 in the last 5 years. Conversely, the annual number of Black homicide victims exceeded the annual number of suicide victims each year since 1990, but the gap has narrowed in recent years. The ratio of homicides to suicides was 7 to 1 in the 1990s but fell to 3 to 1 in the last 5 years.
- Since 2015, suicides outnumbered homicides among Hispanic youth by a ratio of 1.5 to 1, while homicides outnumbered suicides by more than 3 to 1 in the 1990s.

Source: Authors' analyses of the Centers for Disease Control's WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System).

Between 1999 and 2019, youth suicide victims outnumbered youth homicide victims in 38 states

State	1999–2019		State	1999–2019	
	Suicide rate	Suicide/homicide ratio		Suicide rate	Suicide/homicide ratio
U.S. total	3.5	1.3	Missouri	4.6	1.2
Alabama	3.3	0.9	Montana	8.5	6.6
Alaska	12.1	4.0	Nebraska	5.0	2.7
Arizona	4.8	1.6	Nevada	4.7	1.5
Arkansas	4.7	1.8	New Hampshire	3.6	NA
California	2.2	0.6	New Jersey	1.8	1.0
Colorado	6.9	3.8	New Mexico	8.3	2.3
Connecticut	2.3	1.6	New York	2.1	0.9
Delaware	3.4	1.4	North Carolina	3.2	1.2
Dist. of Columbia	2.0	0.1	North Dakota	7.8	8.3
Florida	2.7	0.9	Ohio	3.8	1.6
Georgia	3.2	1.0	Oklahoma	5.3	2.0
Hawaii	3.3	NA	Oregon	4.5	4.4
Idaho	7.2	11.2	Pennsylvania	3.4	1.3
Illinois	2.9	0.6	Rhode Island	2.4	1.5
Indiana	3.8	1.3	South Carolina	3.7	1.2
Iowa	4.8	4.6	South Dakota	11.7	10.2
Kansas	4.9	2.7	Tennessee	3.6	1.1
Kentucky	3.7	2.0	Texas	3.7	1.5
Louisiana	3.7	0.6	Utah	6.5	8.2
Maine	4.0	6.0	Vermont	4.3	5.8
Maryland	2.7	0.6	Virginia	3.5	1.5
Massachusetts	2.2	1.6	Washington	4.2	2.5
Michigan	4.2	1.4	West Virginia	4.0	2.6
Minnesota	4.6	3.7	Wisconsin	4.5	2.3
Mississippi	3.4	0.9	Wyoming	9.5	5.0



NA: Too few homicides to calculate a reliable ratio.

Notes: The suicide rate is the average annual number of suicides of youth ages 10–17 divided by the average annual population of youth ages 10–17 (per 100,000). The suicide/homicide ratio is the total number of suicides of youth ages 10–17 divided by the total number of homicides of youth ages 10–17. A ratio of more than 1.0 indicates that the number of suicides was greater than the number of homicides.

Source: Authors' analyses of the Centers for Disease Control's WISQARS (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System).

more likely for females than for males. While firearms were involved in the majority of female suicides through 1999, suffocation has been more common each year since. For example, since 2010, 61% of youth female suicides involved suffocation, compared with 45% for males. Conversely, during the same period, 48% of male suicides involved a firearm, compared with 21% of female suicides.

Method of suicide, 2010–2019:

Method	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%
Firearm	48	21
Suffocation	45	61
Poisoning	3	11
Other	6	6

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

After reaching a low point in 2007, the youth suicide rate has been on the rise

Following a period of relative stability through the mid-1990s, the youth suicide rate fell 44% between 1994 and 2007. Since the 2007 low point, the youth suicide rate grew substantially, increasing 124% to reach a new peak in 2018, then declined 10% through 2019. This general pattern of decline followed by considerable growth was reflected in the trends of White, Black, and Hispanic youth as well as males and females. Between 2007 and 2018, the male youth suicide rate more than doubled, the female rate nearly tripled, and the rate for White, Black, and Hispanic youth more than doubled; across all groups, these increases were followed by a one year decline through 2019.

American Indians have the highest youth suicide rate

Beginning with the 1990 data, NVSS distinguished fatalities by the victim's Hispanic ethnicity, enabling racial and ethnic comparisons of youth suicides. The risk of suicide was highest for American Indian/Alaskan Native youth

each year since 1990, and the disparity has grown in recent years. During the 1990s, the average annual suicide rate (i.e., suicides per 100,000 persons ages 10–17) for American Indian/ Alaskan Native youth (8.1) was nearly twice the rate for White youth (4.3), and about three times the rates for Black (2.7), Hispanic (3.0), and Asian (2.5) youth. By the 2010s, the average annual rate for American Indian/Alaskan Native youth increased to 13.1, more than twice the rate for White youth (5.1), and more than four times the rates for Black (2.8), Hispanic (2.8), and Asian (2.9) youth.

Nearly 10% of high school students indicated they attempted suicide in the past year

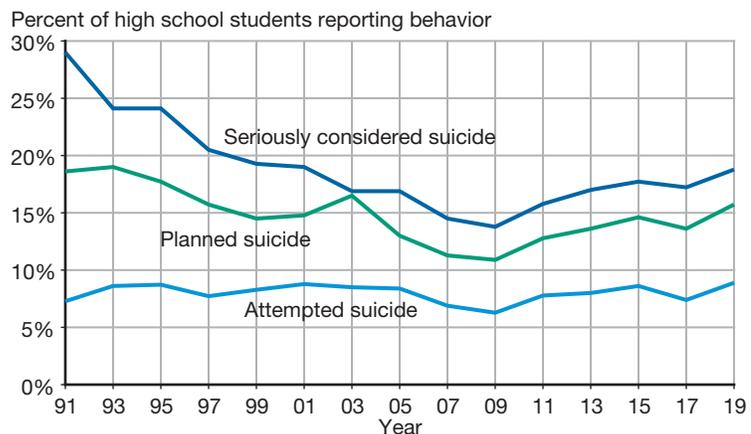
The national Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) monitors priority health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. The YRBSS is administered by the Centers for Disease Control in odd-numbered years to a nationally representative sample of high school students in public and private high schools throughout the United States. Among the range of self-reported behaviors captured by YRBSS are four questions related to suicide. In particular, respondents are asked if they considered suicide, made a plan about committing suicide, attempted suicide, and were injured by such an attempt. Based on the 2019 YRBSS, about 1 in 5 (19%) high school students indicated they had “seriously considered attempting” suicide in the past year, and about 1 in 10 (9%) indicated they attempted suicide in the past year.

Since 2009, the proportion of high school students who report attempting suicide increased

The percent of high school students who seriously considered attempting suicide fell significantly between 1991 and 2009 (from 29.0% to 13.8%), then increased to 18.8% in 2019. Despite the recent increase, the percent of high school students who considered at-

tempting suicide in 2019 was well below the 1991 level. The percent of high school students who attempted suicide reached a low point in 2009 (6.3%), then increased through 2019 (8.9%) to its highest level since 1991, while the percent of high school students who attempted suicide that resulted in injury stayed within a limited range (1.7% to 2.9%) during this period.

After reaching a low in 2009, the percent of high school youth who considered, planned, or attempted suicide increased significantly through 2019



- The percent of high school students who seriously considered attempting suicide fell significantly between 1991 and 2009 (from 29% to 14%). Despite the recent increase, the percent of high school students who considered suicide in 2019 was well below the 1991 level.
- The percent of high school students who attempted suicide fluctuated between 6% and 9% between 1991 and 2019, and the percent of high school students who attempted suicide that resulted in injury stayed within a limited range (1.7% to 2.9%) during this period.

Source: Authors' analysis of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's 1991–2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data.

In 2019, female high school students were more likely to report suicide-related behaviors than their male peers

Youth characteristics	In the last 12 months:			
	Considered suicide	Planned suicide	Attempted suicide	Injured after an attempt
All high school students	18.8%	15.7%	8.9%	2.5%
Gender				
Male	13.3	11.3	6.6	1.7
Female	24.1	19.9	11.0	3.3
Race/ethnicity*				
White	19.1	15.7	7.9	2.1
Black/African American	16.9	15.0	11.8	3.3
Hispanic or Latino	17.2	14.7	8.9	3.0
American Indian/Alaska Native	34.7	24.2	25.5	NA
Asian	19.7	16.1	7.7	1.7
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	NA	NA	NA	NA
Multiple race	25.7	22.3	12.9	4.1
Grade				
9th	17.7	14.8	9.4	2.3
10th	18.5	15.4	8.8	2.7
11th	19.3	16.4	8.6	2.3
12th	19.6	16.2	8.5	2.7
Sexual identity				
Heterosexual	14.5	12.1	6.4	1.7
Gay, lesbian, bisexual	46.8	40.2	23.4	6.3
Not sure	30.4	23.9	16.1	5.2

■ In 2019, Black high school students were less likely to have considered suicide than White students, but more likely to have attempted suicide than White students; White youth were less likely than American Indian/Alaskan Native and multi-racial youth to have considered or attempted suicide.

■ The proportion of high school students reporting suicide-related behaviors did not vary by grade in 2019.

■ Students who identify as heterosexual were significantly less likely to report suicide-related behaviors than students who identify as gay, lesbian, and bisexual, and those who are not sure of their sexual orientation.

* Racial categories (White, Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and multiple race) do not include persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be any race.

NA = Too few respondents to develop a reliable estimate.

Notes: The reference period for each question was 12 months prior to the survey. Survey questions asked:

Did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?

Did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?

How many times did you actually attempt suicide?

Did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdoses that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?

Source: Authors' analyses of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's 1991–2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data.

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Bureau of Justice Statistics. *School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, selected years, 2005 through 2019*. Table 230.45. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being bullied at school during the school year, by type of bullying and selected student and school characteristics: Selected years, 2005 through 2019. Available at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_230.45.asp.

Bureau of Justice Statistics. *School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2019*. Table 230.50. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being bullied at school during the school year and, among bullied students, percentage who reported being bullied in various locations, by selected student and school characteristics: 2019. Available at https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_230.50.asp.

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National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education*. Table 228.20: Number of nonfatal victimizations against students ages 12–18 and rate of victimization per 1,000 students, by type of victimization, location, and year: 1992 through 2019. Available from nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_228.20.asp.

National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education*. Table 228.25. Number of nonfatal victimizations against students ages 12–18 and rate of victimization per 1,000 students, by type of victimization, location, and selected student characteristics: 2019. Available from nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d20/tables/dt20_228.25.asp.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Stopbullying.gov website. Available at www.stopbullying.gov.

Chapter 3

Offending by youth

Highly publicized—often violent—events tend to shape public perceptions of offending by youth. It is important for the public, the media, elected officials, and juvenile justice professionals to have an accurate view of (1) the crimes committed by youth, (2) the proportion and characteristics of youth involved in law-violating behaviors, and (3) trends in these behaviors. This understanding can come from studying self reports of offending behavior, victim reports, and official records.

As documented in the following pages, many youth who commit crimes (even serious crimes) never enter the juvenile justice system. Consequently, developing a portrait of youth law-violating behavior from official records gives only a partial picture. This chapter presents what is known about the prevalence and incidence of offending by youth prior to the youth entering the juvenile justice system. It relies on self-report and victim data developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey, the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse's Monitoring the Future Study. Official data on offending by youth are presented from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Supplementary Homicide Reports and its National Incident-Based Reporting System.

In this chapter, readers can learn the answers to many commonly asked questions: What proportion of youth are involved in crime at school? Is it common for youth to carry weapons to school? Are students fearful of crime at school? How prevalent is drug and alcohol use? How many homicides are committed by youth, and whom do they murder? When are crimes committed by youth most likely to occur? Are there gender and racial/ethnic differences in the law-violating behaviors of youth?

Official statistics on offending by youth as it relates to law enforcement, juvenile and criminal courts, and correctional facilities are presented in subsequent chapters in this report.

Self reports and official records are the primary sources of information on offending by youth

Self-report studies ask participants to report on their experiences and behaviors

Much of what is known about the prevalence and characteristics of offending by and against youth is derived from self-report studies and official statistics. Self-report studies can capture information on behavior that never comes to the attention of the justice system. Compared with official data, self-report studies tend to find a higher proportion of the youth population involved in law-violating 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 under age 12. Some respondents are also unwilling to disclose law violations com-

mitted by or against them. 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 document what comes to the attention of the justice system

Official records underrepresent offending by youth. Many crimes committed by youth are never reported to authorities. Many youth who commit offenses are never arrested or are not arrested for all of their law violations. As a result, official records systematically underestimate the scope of offending by youth. In addition, to the extent that other factors may influence the types of crimes or youth that enter the justice system, official records may distort the attributes of juvenile crime.

Official statistics can yield multiple interpretations

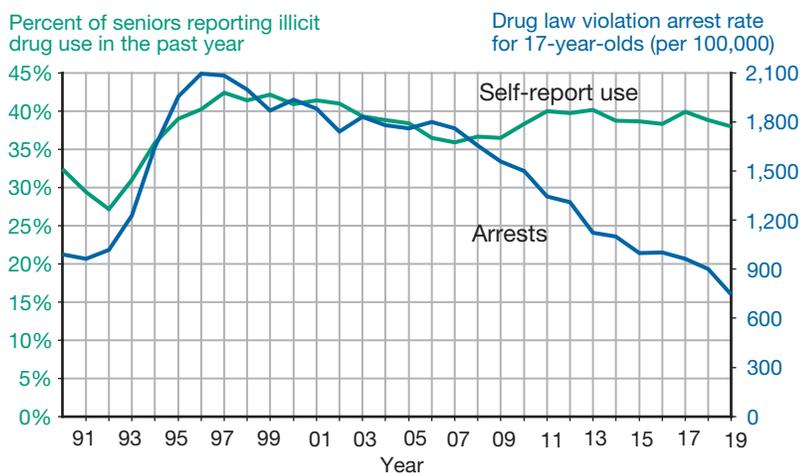
Relying on official statistics alone can lead to an incomplete understanding of offending by youth. Consider the trends in youth arrests for drug abuse violations. Since reaching a peak in the late 1990s, youth arrests for drug abuse violations have declined considerably. One interpretation of these official statistics could be that youth today are simply less likely to violate drug laws than were youth in the 1990s. National self-report studies, such as Monitoring the Future, however, find that illicit drug use changed little since the mid-2000s. If drug use is relatively stable, the declining youth arrest rate for drug crimes may represent societal tolerance of such behavior and/or an unwillingness to bring these youth into the justice system for treatment or punishment.

Although official records may be inadequate measures of the level of offending by youth, they are good indicators of justice system activity. Analysis of variations in official statistics across time and jurisdictions provides an understanding of justice system caseloads.

Used together, self-report and official statistics provide insight into offending and victimization

Delbert Elliott, founding director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence and lead research investigator of the National Youth Survey, has argued that 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." Elliott stated that a full understanding of the etiology and development of youth law-violating behavior is enhanced by using and integrating both self-report and official data.

Trends in self-report drug use and official records of drug arrest rates have diverged in recent years



- Self-report and official data sources send a mixed message regarding youth drug use. According to self-report data, the proportion of high school seniors reporting use of any illicit drug (including marijuana) in the past year changed little since 2008, ranging from 36% to 40% through 2019. Conversely, the arrest rate for drug law violations involving 17-year-olds has declined 55% since 2008 (from 1,655 per 100,000 youth to 745 in 2019).

Source: Authors' adaptation of Miech et al.'s *Monitoring the Future National Survey on Drug Use, 1975–2010. Volume I: Secondary School Students* and authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

In 2019, about 1 in 8 high school students carried a weapon in the past month, and 1 in 36 carried a weapon to school

National survey monitors youth health risk behaviors

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) monitors health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, injury, and social problems among youth in the U.S. Every 2 years, YRBSS collects data from a representative sample of 9th–12th graders in public and private schools nationwide. The 2019 survey included responses from 13,677 students from 44 states and 27 large cities.

In 2019, 3% of students carried a weapon to school

The 2019 YRBSS found that 13% of high school students said they had carried a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club) anywhere in the past 30 days and 3% said they carried a weapon on school property. Additionally, 4% of high school students said they carried a gun (anywhere) at least once in the past 12 months.

About 1 in 13 high school students were threatened or injured with a weapon at school

The proportion of students reporting weapon-related threats or injuries at school during the year was 7% in 2019.

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

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	7.4%	8.0%	6.5%
9th grade	8.1	8.9	7.2
10th grade	8	8.3	7.3
11th grade	7.1	8.6	5.3
12th grade	5.9	5.9	5.7
White*	7.1	7.6	6.4
Black*	8.8	10.2	7.2
Hispanic	6.9	7.3	6.4
American Indian*	12.6	N/A	N/A
Asian*	3.2	4.7	1.6
Multiple race*	11.4	12.2	10.6

* Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

In 2019, male high school students reported carrying a weapon at least one day in the past month at higher rates than females, and White students reported carrying a weapon at higher rates than Black, Hispanic, and Asian youth

Demographic	Percentage of students reporting activity:		
	Carried a weapon	Carried a weapon on school property	Carried a gun
Total	13.2%	2.8%	4.4%
Male	19.5	3.7	6.7
Female	6.7	1.7	2.0
9th grade	12.5	2.0	3.9
10th grade	12.2	2.2	4.4
11th grade	12.9	3.3	4.5
12th grade	14.9	3.3	4.7
White	15.0	2.1	3.3
Black/African American	9.4	4.2	7.1
Hispanic/Latino	11.7	3.1	5.6
American Indian/ Alaska Native	NA	10.8	NA
Asian	5.2	1.3	0.9
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	NA	NA	NA
Multiple race	17.5	3.3	5.7

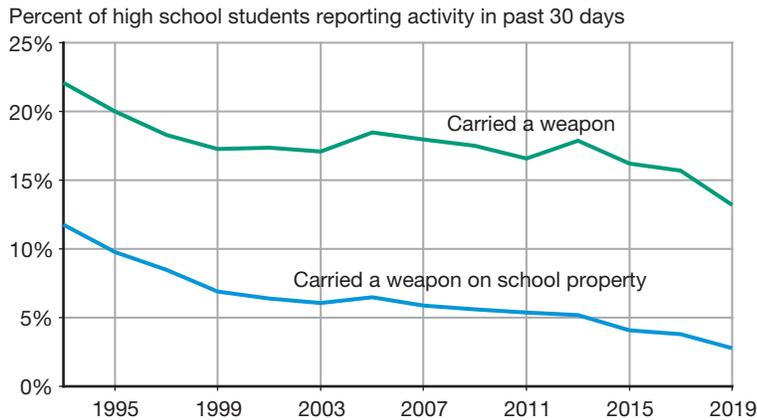
- Male high school students were more likely to report carrying a weapon than females (19.5% vs. 6.7%) and were more likely to carry a weapon on school property (3.7% vs. 1.7%) in 2019.
- White (15.0%) students were more likely than their Hispanic (11.7%), Black (9.4%), and Asian (5.2%) peers to carry a weapon in the last 30 days. However, American Indian/Alaskan Native youth were more likely than white, Hispanic, and Asian youth to report carrying a weapon on school property in the last 30 days.
- High school juniors and seniors were more likely to report carrying a weapon in the past 30 days than high school freshman.
- Males (6.7%) were more likely than females (2.0%) to report carrying a gun in the past 12 months, and Black (7.1%), Hispanic (5.6%) and white (3.3%) students were more likely to report carrying a gun than Asian (0.9%) students.

NA = Too few respondents to develop a reliable estimate.

Notes: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Persons of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race. Respondents were asked to consider the last 30 days when reporting whether they had 1) carried a weapon or 2) carried a weapon on school property, and the last 12 months when reporting about carrying a gun (which did not include days when the youth carried a gun solely for hunting or for a sport). Weapon includes a gun, knife, or club.

Source: Author’s adaptation of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s *1991–2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data*.

In 2019, about 1 in 8 (13%) high school students said they carried a weapon in the past 30 days, down from more than 1 in 5 (22%) in 1993



■ Roughly 1 in 35 (3%) high school students reported carrying a weapon on school property in 2019, down from about 1 in 8 (12%) in 1993.

Notes: For each behavior, respondents were asked if they had done so at least one day in the past 30 days. Weapon includes a gun, knife, or club.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1991–2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data.

Overall, males were more likely than females to report being threatened or injured at school while Asian youth were less likely than White, Black, or Hispanic students to report being threatened or injured.

Fear of school-related crime kept 9 in 100 high schoolers home at least once in the past month

Nationwide in 2019, 9% 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, up from 6% in 2011. Females were more likely than males to miss school because of safety concerns. Regardless of gender, Hispanic students were more likely than White students to have missed school because they felt unsafe. Black males were more like than White males to stay home, while there was no statistically significant difference between Black and White females.

Percent of students who felt too unsafe to go to school in the past month:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	8.7%	7.5%	9.8%
9th grade	8.8	7.6	10.0
10th grade	8.1	7.1	9.2
11th grade	9.5	8.1	10.7
12th grade	8.1	7.0	8.8
White*	6.7	5.2	8.1
Black*	11.5	12.2	10.8
Hispanic	10.9	9.9	11.8
American Indian*	24.7	N/A	N/A
Asian*	5.1	4.9	5.4
Multiple race*	11.1	8.1	13.7

* Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

More than 1 in 5 high school students were in a physical fight—2 in 25 were in a fight at school

In 2019, 22% of high school students said they had been in one or more physical fights during the past 12 months, and 8% reported being in a fight at school. This is down 11 percentage points from the 2011 survey. Regardless of grade level or race/eth-

nicity, males were more likely than females to engage in fighting.

Percent of students who were in a physical fight in the past year:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	21.9%	28.3%	15.3%
9th grade	25.8	32.3	18.6
10th grade	23.3	29.2	17.3
11th grade	20.0	26.7	13.4
12th grade	17.6	24.2	10.9
White*	19.8	26.6	12.7
Black*	30.2	36.9	22.7
Hispanic	22.6	27.7	17.8
American Indian*	40.2	N/A	N/A
Asian*	12.0	17.6	6.1
Multiple race*	28.7	40.6	18.3

* Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Regardless of gender, fighting was more common among Black students than White students. Hispanic females were more likely than their white peers to be involved in a fight, however there was no difference between Hispanic males and their white counterparts.

Nationwide, 8% of high school students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey, down from 12% in 2011. Male students were substantially more likely to fight at school than female students at all grade levels and across racial/ethnic groups. Regardless of gender, Black students were more likely to fight at school than White students. Hispanic females were more likely to fight than their White counterparts.

Percent of students who were in a physical fight on school property in the past year:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	8.0%	11.4%	4.4%
9th grade	11.0	15.8	5.6
10th grade	8.3	11.4	5.1
11th grade	6.4	9.2	3.5
12th grade	5.8	8.5	2.8
White*	6.4	10.2	2.2
Black*	15.5	18.8	11.7
Hispanic	7.8	10.2	5.6
American Indian*	18.9	N/A	N/A
Asian*	4.9	6.8	3.0
Multiple race*	11.0	17.6	4.5

* Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Across reporting states, the proportion of high school students who carried a weapon on school property in 2019 ranged from 1% (Pennsylvania) to about 9% (Alaska)

State	Percent reporting they carried a weapon on school property in the last 30 days			Percent reporting they were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the last year		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
U.S. total	2.8%	1.7%	3.7%	7.4%	6.5%	8.0%
Alabama	3.8	5.4	1.8	8.2	9.4	6.0
Alaska	8.5	12.0	3.8	NA	NA	NA
Arizona	3.9	5.1	2.2	6.7	8.5	4.4
Arkansas	5.3	6.9	3.3	8.1	7.5	8.3
California	2.7	3.1	2.3	12.3	13.9	10.6
Colorado	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Connecticut	3.5	4.6	2.4	6.8	7.4	6.1
Delaware	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dist. of Columbia	4.9	3.5	6.1	9.4	7.0	11.1
Florida	2.3	3.0	1.4	8.2	9.2	6.9
Georgia	5.2	6.8	3.0	6.0	7.2	3.8
Hawaii	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Idaho	7.1	10.9	3.1	7.9	9.6	6.0
Illinois	2.7	3.4	1.5	8.0	9.6	6.0
Indiana	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Iowa	3.8	5.4	2.1	7.3	8.1	6.0
Kansas	4.2	6.4	1.6	8.2	10.0	5.8
Kentucky	2.7	4.0	0.9	7.1	7.9	5.8
Louisiana	3.8	5.5	1.9	12.4	12.9	10.6
Maine	4.6	6.3	2.3	5.8	6.9	4.3
Maryland	5.7	7.3	3.4	7.8	8.9	5.7
Massachusetts	1.8	2.8	0.7	4.5	5.5	2.9
Michigan	2.5	3.6	1.1	7.4	8.3	6.1
Mississippi	3.4	4.5	2.1	9.8	9.6	9.3
Missouri	4.6	5.9	3.0	NA	NA	NA
Montana	7.0	10.4	3.3	7.9	10.1	5.2
Nebraska	4.1	5.3	2.2	8.0	7.7	7.9
Nevada	NA	NA	NA	7.8	8.4	7.0
New Hampshire	2.8	4.0	1.4	6.4	7.0	5.5
New Jersey	2.1	2.4	1.6	7.6	8.9	6.1
New Mexico	4.0	5.2	2.8	NA	NA	NA
New York	NA	NA	NA	8.1	10.1	5.3
North Carolina	2.7	2.9	1.9	7.2	8.8	5.1
North Dakota	4.9	6.5	3.0	NA	NA	NA
Ohio	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Oklahoma	5.2	7.5	2.7	6.1	7.5	4.4
Pennsylvania	1.3	1.5	1.1	7.6	8.6	6.4
Rhode Island	3.7	4.3	2.5	NA	NA	NA
South Carolina	3.2	4.7	1.6	10.2	12.5	6.7
South Dakota	5.3	7.3	2.6	8.1	8.6	6.8
Tennessee	NA	NA	NA	8.6	10.6	6.5
Texas	3.3	4.5	2.1	6.7	7.3	5.7
Utah	6.9	9.8	3.9	6.5	9.2	3.8
Vermont	4.9	7.1	2.6	7.0	7.6	6.3
Virginia	2.1	2.8	1.4	7.9	9.0	6.7
West Virginia	2.8	4.2	1.2	7.5	7.6	6.6
Wisconsin	NA	NA	NA	7.2	8.1	5.9
Median	3.8	5.2	2.2	7.7	8.6	6.0

NA = Data not available.

Notes: Weapon includes a gun, knife, or club. Totals include responses from students for whom gender was unknown. Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming did not participate in the data collection.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1991–2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data.

Most teens report concern about school shootings

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 453 school shootings occurred at K-12 schools in the U.S. between the 2009–10 and 2018–19 school years. More than 4 in 10 (45%) incidents resulted in injuries but no deaths, 30% resulted in fatalities, and 25% resulted in no injury or deaths. The 453 school shooting incidents produced 649 casualties (persons injured or killed in the course of the shooting), one-third (33%) of which were fatalities (including the death of the shooter); the remaining casualties involved injuries. The majority (62%) of school shootings occurred at high schools, 22% at elementary schools, and 12% at middle schools.

A 2018 survey of high school students conducted by the PEW Research Center found that more than half (57%) of youth ages 13–17 stated they were either “very worried” (25%) or “somewhat worried” (32%) that a shooting may occur at their school. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Hispanic and 6 in 10 (60%) of Black youth expressed such concern, compared with half (51%) of White youth; nearly two-thirds (64%) of females were concerned a shooting may occur at their school, compared with half (51%) of boys.



In 2019, nearly half of high school seniors reported they had used an illicit drug at least once—more had used alcohol

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

Each year, the Monitoring the Future (MTF) Study asks a nationally representative sample of more than 40,000 secondary school students in nearly 400 public and private schools to describe their drug use patterns through self-administered questionnaires. Surveying seniors since 1975, the study expanded in 1991 to include 8th and 10th graders. By design, MTF excludes dropouts and institutionalized, homeless, and runaway youth.

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug among students

In 2019, nearly half (47%) of high school seniors said they had at least tried illicit drugs in their lifetime (including marijuana), as did nearly four in ten (37%) 10th graders and one in five (20%) 8th graders. Marijuana is by far the most commonly used illicit drug, and influences the proportion of students reporting illicit drug use. In 2019, 44% of high school seniors said they had tried marijuana, as did 34% of 10th graders and 15% of 8th graders. The prevalence of illicit drug use falls considerably when marijuana is removed: in 2019, 18% of seniors, 14% of 10th graders, and 11% of 8th graders reported using an illicit drug other than marijuana in their lifetime.

More than one-third (36%) of high school seniors had used marijuana in the past year, and 22% used it in the previous month. MTF also asked students if they had used marijuana on 20 or more occasions in the previous 30 days (daily use). In 2019, 6% of high school seniors reported daily use of marijuana.

In 2019, 8% of high school seniors reported using amphetamines at least once, making amphetamines the second most prevalent illicit drug after marijuana. Two percent of seniors re-

ported using amphetamines in the past month. Hallucinogens and tranquilizers were the next most prevalent drugs after amphetamines, with 7% and 6%, respectively, of seniors reporting use at least once in their lifetime. A small proportion of seniors reported using hallucinogens (2%) or tranquilizers (1%) in the past month.

In 2019, 4% of seniors said they had used cocaine at least once in their life. Half of this group (2% of all seniors) said they used it in the previous year, and less than one-quarter of users (1% of seniors) had used it in the preceding 30 days. About 2% of seniors reported previous use of crack cocaine: 1% in the previous year, and less than 1% in

the previous month. Heroin was the least commonly used illicit drug, with less than 1% of seniors reporting they had used it at least once. More than half of seniors who reported heroin use said they used it only without a needle.

Alcohol use and vaping nicotine are widespread at all grade levels

In 2019, nearly 6 in 10 (58%) high school seniors said they had tried alcohol at least once, and nearly three in ten (29%) said they used it in the previous month. Even among 10th graders, the use of alcohol was common: 48% had tried alcohol and almost one-fifth used it in the month prior to the survey.

More high school seniors report daily use of marijuana than alcohol or cigarettes

Substance	Proportion of seniors in 2019 who used			
	in lifetime	in last year	in last month	daily*
Alcohol	58.5%	52.1%	29.3%	1.7%
Been drunk	40.8	32.8	17.5	1.1
Cigarettes	22.3	NA	5.7	2.4
Vaping nicotine	40.8	35.3	25.5	11.6
Any illicit drug**	47.4	38.0	23.7	NA
Marijuana/hashish	43.7	35.7	22.3	6.4
Vaping marijuana	23.7	20.8	14.0	3.5
Amphetamines	7.7	4.5	2.0	0.3
Hallucinogens	6.9	4.6	1.8	0.1
Tranquilizers	6.1	3.4	1.3	0.1
LSD	5.6	3.6	1.4	0.1
Narcotics, not heroin	5.3	2.7	1.0	0.1
Inhalants	5.3	1.9	0.9	0.1
Sedatives	4.2	2.5	1.2	0.1
Cocaine	3.8	2.2	1.0	0.1
MDMA (ecstasy, molly)	3.3	2.2	0.7	0.1
Crack cocaine	1.7	1.0	0.7	0.2
Steroids	1.6	1.0	0.7	0.2
Methamphetamine	0.8	0.5	0.3	0.1
Crystal methamphetamine	1.3	0.6	0.4	0.1
Heroin	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.1

■ More than 1 in 4 seniors report vaping nicotine at least once in the past month, and more than 1 in 10 do so on a daily basis.

NA = Not included in the survey.

* Used on 20 or more occasions in the last 30 days or had 1 or more cigarettes per day in the last 30 days.

** Including marijuana

Source: Author's adaptation of Miech et al's *Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975–2019, Volume 1: Secondary Students*.

MTF also asks youth about heavy drinking (defined as five or more drinks in a row) in the preceding 2 weeks. Fourteen percent (14%) of seniors, 9% of 10th graders, and 4% of 8th graders reported recent heavy drinking.

Information about vaping was added to the MTF survey in 2017. In 2017, one in four (25%) seniors said they had tried vaping nicotine at least once. That proportion grew and in 2019, vaping nicotine was the most likely substance to be used by students on a daily basis. In 2019, 41% of 12th grad-

ers, 37% of 10th graders, and 20% of 8th graders had tried vaping nicotine, and 26% of seniors, 20% of 10th graders, and 10% of 8th graders vaped nicotine in the preceding month. In addition, 12% of seniors, 7% of 10th graders, and 2% of 8th graders reported currently vaping nicotine daily. While vaping nicotine has been on the rise, the prevalence of cigarette use has decreased since the 1990s. In 1997, 65% of seniors said they tried cigarettes; that proportion fell to 22% by 2019. Similarly, 25% of seniors, 18% of 10th graders, and 9% of 8th graders reported smoking cigarettes daily in

1997; those proportions decreased to 2% for seniors, 1% each for 10th and 8th graders in 2019.

Prevalence rates for most drugs were similar for males and females

Among seniors, 30% of males and 28% of females in 2019 reported alcohol use in the past 30 days, and 16% of males and 12% of females said they had five or more drinks in a row in the previous 2 weeks. Males were twice as likely as females to report daily alcohol use (2% vs. 1%).

Males were equally as likely as females to have used marijuana in the previous year (35% each) but more likely in the previous month (23% vs. 21%), and

For most drugs, a larger proportion of males reported use than females, and a larger proportion of White youth reported use than Black or Hispanic youth

Reference period/ substance	Proportion of seniors reporting use				
	Male	Female	White	Black	Asian/ Pacific Islander
Past month					
Alcohol	29.8%	28.5%	34.9%	19.4%	24.4%
Been drunk	17.2	17.4	21.9	10.5	11.6
Marijuana/hashish	23.0	21.1	21.3	23.8	20.4
Vaping marijuana	14.7	13.0	13.9	8.0	14.0
Cigarettes	6.9	4.0	7.9	3.2	4.5
Vaping nicotine	28.1	22.9	32.4	10.1	13.9
Past year					
Any illicit drug use*	37.5	37.7	38.1	38.3	35.9
Marijuana/hashish	35.2	35.5	35.6	35.7	33.4
Amphetamines	4.9	3.8	5.7	2.7	3.6
Hallucinogens	6.1	2.7	4.5	1.9	4.0
Tranquilizers	3.2	3.4	4.0	2.3	3.0
LSD	4.9	2.1	3.4	1.6	3.2
Narcotics, not heroin	3.4	1.8	3.3	1.7	2.5
Inhalants	2.2	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.3
Sedatives	2.5	2.3	2.6	2.0	2.4
Cocaine	2.6	1.7	2.2	0.9	2.7
MDMA (ecstasy, molly)	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.2	1.5
Steroids	1.4	0.6	0.8	1.8	1.4
Methamphetamine	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.5
Crystal methamphetamine	0.7	0.4	0.3	1.5	0.6
Heroin	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.7	0.5

* Including marijuana

Notes: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Male and female proportions are for 2019. Race proportions are for the current year and the prior year (2019 and 2018) to increase the subgroup sample size and provide more stable estimates.

Source: Author's adaptation of Johnston et al's Demographic Subgroup Trends Among Adolescents in the Use of Various Licit and Illicit drugs, 1975–2019, *Monitoring the Future Occasional Paper No. 94*.

Vaping use rose quickly and substantially

The two largest single year increases in substance use recorded by MTF involve vaping. The 9.9 percentage point increase in past month vaping nicotine by seniors between 2017 and 2018 was the largest one-year increase in the history of MTF, and the 6.5 percentage point increase in past month vaping of marijuana between 2018 and 2019 was the second largest one-year increase. Across grade levels, past month vaping of nicotine and marijuana increased annually since 2017.

Past month vaping use:

Grade/ substance	2017	2018	2019
8th grade			
Nicotine	3.5%	6.1%	9.6%
Marijuana	1.6	2.6	3.9
10th grade			
Nicotine	8.2	16.1	19.9
Marijuana	4.3	7.0	12.6
12th grade			
Nicotine	11.0	20.9	25.5
Marijuana	4.9	7.5	14.0

daily during the previous month (8% vs. 5%).

The proportions of male and female high school seniors reporting overall use of illicit drugs other than marijuana in the previous year were also similar (12% and 10%), but there are variations across drugs. The annual prevalence rate for methamphetamines among 12th grade males was more than three times the rate for 12th grade females, while the male rates for hallucinogens, LSD, heroin, OxyContin, Ritalin, rohypnol, and steroids were more than twice the rates for females.

Black high school seniors had lower tobacco, alcohol, and drug use rates than their White or Hispanic peers

In 2019, 10% of Black seniors said they had vaped nicotine in the past 30 days, compared with 32% of White seniors and 14% of Hispanic seniors. Similarly, past month cigarette use was lower for Black seniors (3%) than either Hispanic (4%) or White (8%) seniors. About one-fifth (19%) of Black seniors reported alcohol use in the past 30 days, compared with 35% of White seniors and 24% of Hispanic seniors. White seniors were more than twice as likely as Black seniors to have been drunk in the past month (22% vs. 10%), and nearly twice as likely as Hispanic seniors (12%).

For nearly all drugs, Black seniors reported lifetime, annual, 30-day, and daily prevalence rates that were lower than those of their White and Hispanic counterparts. For example, in 2019, annual prevalence rates for hallucinogens, LSD, cocaine, and ecstasy among White and Hispanic seniors were at least two times the rates for Black seniors, and amphetamine use among White seniors was twice that of their

Black peers. Conversely, past month marijuana use was higher among Black seniors (24%) than white (21%) or Hispanic (20%) seniors, as were annual prevalence rates for steroids, methamphetamine, crystal methamphetamine, and heroin.

More than 1 in 5 high school students were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug at school

According to the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, 22% of high school students said they were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property at least once during the past 12 months. The proportion was significantly higher for freshman males than their female counterparts, and the proportions for Black, Hispanic, and mixed race males were significantly

higher than the proportion for White males. Overall, Asian students were least likely to report being offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property than students of other races.

Percent of students who were offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property in the past 12 months, 2019:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	21.8%	22.8%	20.8%
9th grade	21.6	23.8	19.2
10th grade	23.7	25.1	22.1
11th grade	22.0	21.2	22.6
12th grade	19.6	20.6	18.6
White*	19.8	20.6	19.0
Black*	21.5	26.0	16.7
Hispanic	26.7	26.0	27.2
American Indian*	24.2	NA	NA
Asian*	14.5	15.6	13.2
Mixed race*	27.8	31.8	24.3

* Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
NA = Too few respondents to develop an estimate.

About 1 in 7 high school students tried alcohol before age 13 and about 1 in 17 tried marijuana

Demographic	Percent who had used before age 13					
	Alcohol			Marijuana		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	15.0%	16.9%	13.0%	5.6%	7.2%	4.0%
9th grade	18.7	20.1	17.4	6.0	7.2	4.8
10th grade	15.4	17.1	13.6	5.7	7.4	4.1
11th grade	13.3	14.9	11.6	6.0	8.2	3.8
12th grade	11.9	14.9	8.6	4.4	5.8	2.9
White*	13.0	15.3	10.6	4.6	5.9	3.2
Black*	17.4	20.7	13.9	8.3	11.0	5.4
Hispanic	18.4	20.3	16.4	6.3	7.9	4.8
American Indian*	18.7	NA	NA	12.6	NA	NA
Asian*	8.4	8.7	8.2	1.1	1.1	1.0
Mixed race*	16.2	13.7	18.5	9.7	12.9	6.7

■ Regardless of grade, males were significantly more likely than females to report marijuana use before age 13.

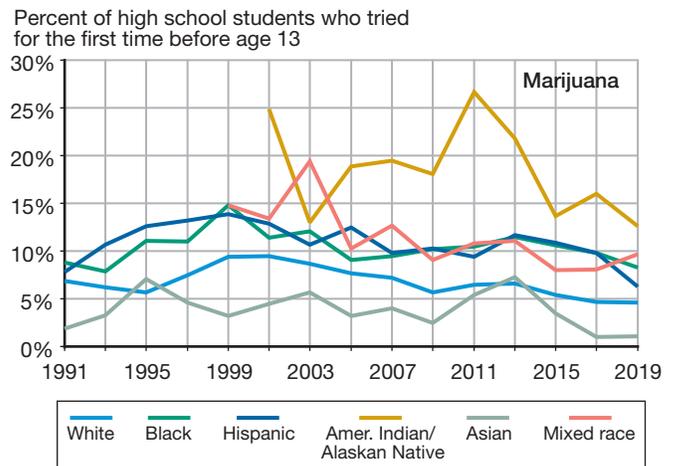
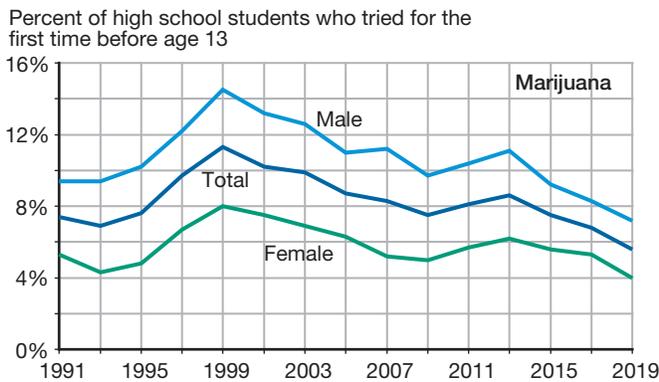
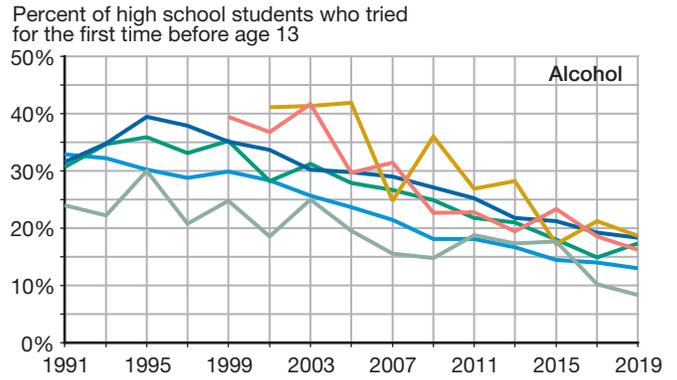
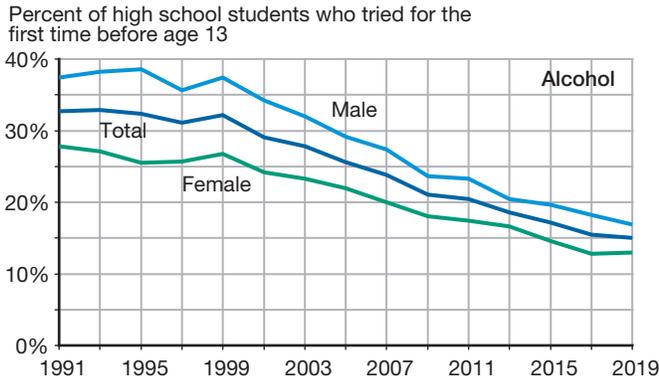
■ Overall, Black and Hispanic high school students were significantly more likely to report alcohol and marijuana use before age 13 than were White students.

NA = Too few respondents to develop an estimate.

* Excludes persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1991–2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data.

The proportion of high school students who first tried alcohol or marijuana before age 13 has been on the decline



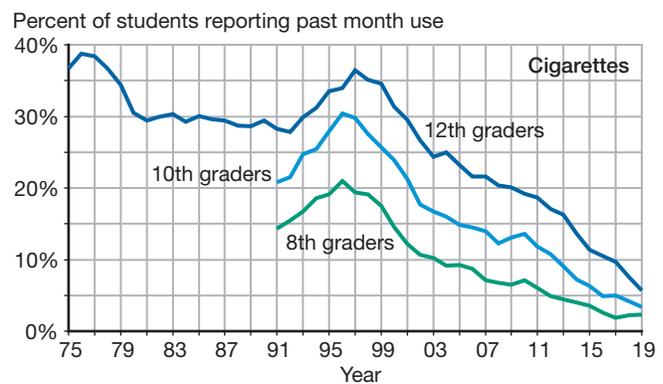
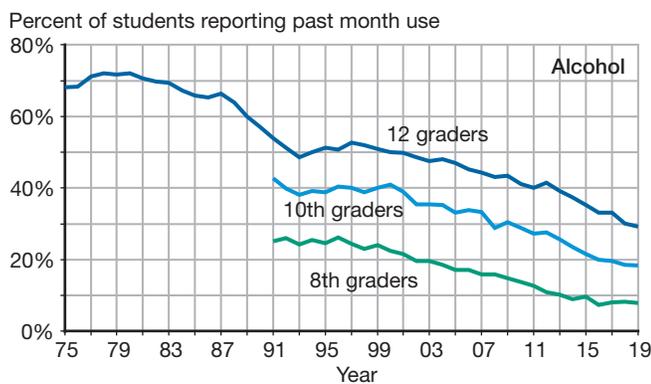
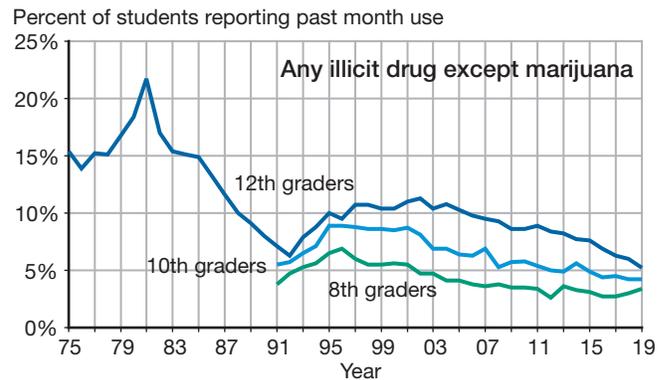
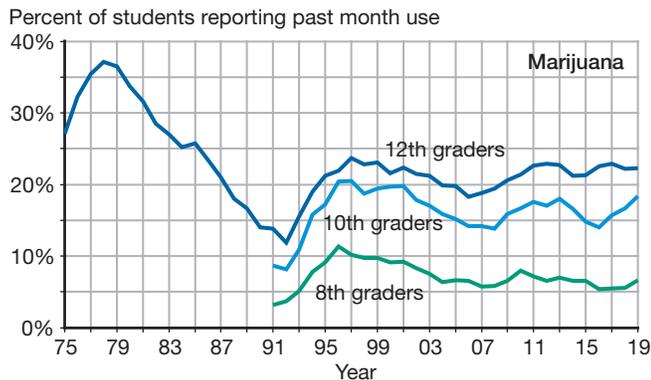
- A smaller proportion of students are trying alcohol or marijuana prior to entering high school. In 1991, 33% of high school students indicated they tried alcohol for the first time before they were 13 years old. By 2019, this proportion was cut in half, as 15% of high school students indicated they had tried alcohol before age 13.
- Onset of marijuana use followed a similar pattern. The proportion of high school students who tried marijuana before age 13 reached a peak in 1999, when 11% of high school students reported they had tried marijuana for the first time before age 13. By 2019, 6% of high school students reported they had tried marijuana for the first time before age 13.

Notes: Racial groups exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Hispanic youth can be of any race. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders were included in the Asian category prior to 1999. Due to a small number of sample respondents, estimates for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander youth are not available after 1998. The mixed race category was not introduced until 1999. Due to a small number of sample respondents, estimates for American Indian/Alaskan Native youth were not available prior to 2001.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *1991–2019 High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data*.

Use of illicit drugs other than marijuana has been on the decline, as has use of alcohol and cigarettes

Unlike marijuana use, the proportion of 10th and 12th graders reporting alcohol, cigarette, and illicit drug use reached historic lows in 2019



- Use of illicit drugs other than marijuana reported by 8th graders declined since the mid-1990s to reach a historic low in 2012; by 2019, the proportion of 8th graders reporting illicit drug use was about 1% above the 2012 low point. Similarly, illicit drug use reported by 10th and 12th graders declined since the mid-1990s; by 2019, the proportion of 10th and 12th graders reporting illicit drug use reached a historic low, 4% and 5%, respectively.
- While use of illicit drugs other than marijuana has declined, past month use of marijuana, the most widely used illicit drug, has increased in recent years particularly among older students. For example, the proportion of 10th and 12th graders reporting past month marijuana use increased 4 percentage points between 2006 and 2019. Among 8th graders, it was about the same in 2019 as in 2006.
- In 2019, the proportion of 12th graders who reported past month marijuana use was more than four times the proportion who reported past month use of illicit drugs (22% vs. 5%) but below the proportion who reported past month alcohol use (29%).
- For all three grades, past-month alcohol use fell steadily since the mid-1990s. The proportion of 10th and 12th graders reporting past month alcohol use reached a new low in 2019, while the proportion of 8th graders reporting past month alcohol use reached a low in 2017 and remained relatively steady through 2019.
- Similar to the trend in alcohol, past month cigarette use has declined for each grade since the mid-1990s. By 2019, the proportion of 10th and 12th graders reporting cigarette use reached an all-time low, while the proportion of 8th graders reporting cigarette use was about one-half of 1% above the 2017 low point. One caveat, however, is that while traditional cigarette use has declined, the proportion of students vaping nicotine has increased. For each grade, the proportion of students vaping nicotine in the past month more than doubled between 2017 and 2019.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Miech et al.'s *Monitoring the Future National Survey on Drug Use, 1975–2019. Volume I: Secondary School Students.*

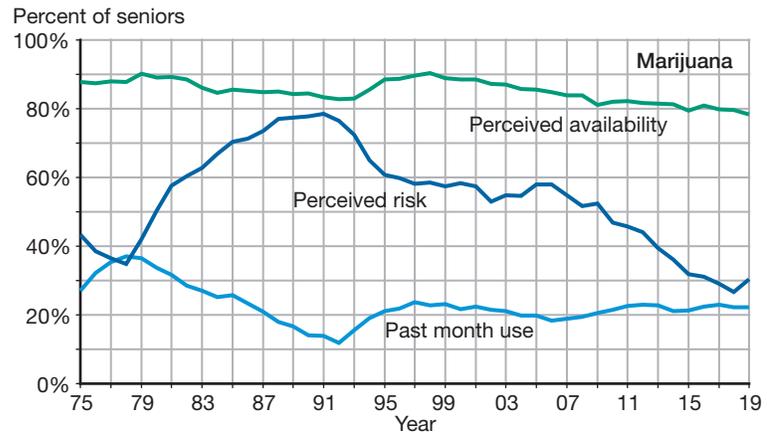
Change in students' use of marijuana and alcohol is tied to their perception of possible harm from use

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 2019, 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. After that, reported use increased through 1997, declined through 2006, and generally increased through 2019. When the perceived risk of harm (physical or other) from either regular or occasional use increased, marijuana use declined; when perceived risk declined, use increased. The perception that obtaining marijuana was "fairly easy" or "very easy" declined from 90% in 1998 to 78% in 2019.

Students' reported use of alcohol and perceptions of risk also shifted from 1975 to 2019. After 1978, alcohol use declined through the early 1990s, rose slightly through 1997, and then declined steadily to reach a historic low (29%) in 2019. As with marijuana, when the perceived risk of harm from weekend "binge" drinking increased, past month alcohol use declined; when perceived risk declined, use generally increased. Over the past 20 years, the proportion of seniors reporting that alcohol was "fairly easy" or "very easy" to obtain declined.

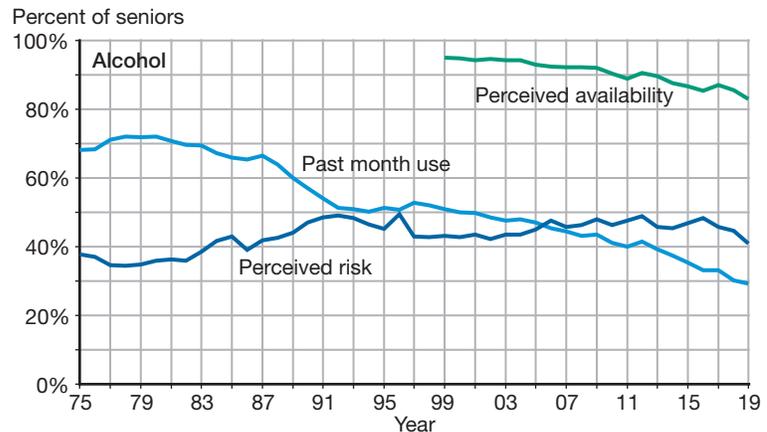
While perceived availability of marijuana and alcohol stayed within a limited range, changes in use reflected changes in perceived harm from use



Perceived availability: Percent saying fairly easy or very easy to get.

Perceived risk: Percent saying great risk or harm in regular use.

Past month use: Percent using once or more in the past 30 days.



Perceived availability: Percent saying fairly easy or very easy to get.

Perceived risk: Percent saying great risk of harm in having five or more drinks in a row once.

Past month use: Percent using once or more in the past 30 days. (The survey question on alcohol use was revised in 1993 to indicate that a "drink" meant "more than a few sips").

Source: Authors' adaptation of Miech et al.'s *Monitoring the Future National Survey on Drug Use, 1975–2019. Volume I: Secondary School Students*.



Serious violent crimes committed by youth declined substantially since the mid-1990s

National survey collects data on victims of crime and the assailant

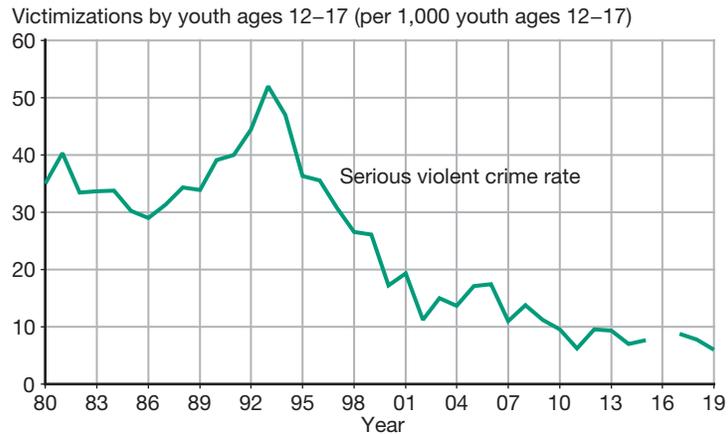
The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) asks a nationally representative sample of persons ages 12 and older about crimes in which they were the victim. Administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCVS is the primary source of information on the characteristics of nonfatal criminal victimizations and on the number and types of crimes not reported to law enforcement. Violent crimes captured by NCVS include rape/sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

While NCVS focuses on victims, it also collects information about the alleged perpetrator in crimes reported by victims. As a result, NCVS data can be used to monitor trends in offending by youth ages 12–17.

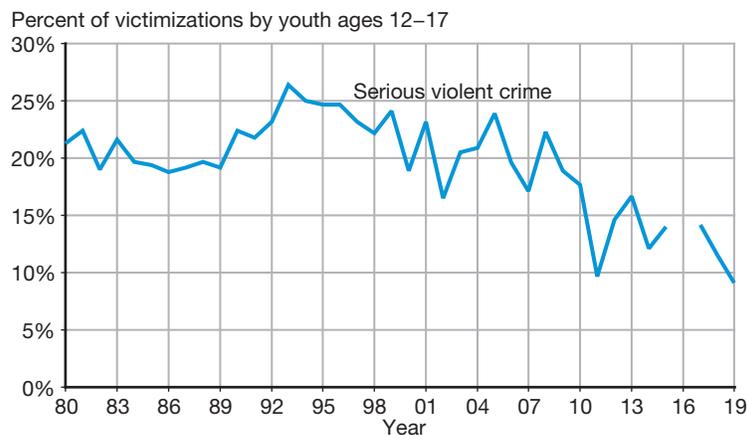
Serious violent crime committed by youth peaked in 1993

NCVS self-report data for rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault are often combined with data from the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports, which reports murders committed, to monitor trends in serious violent crime—murder, rape/sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault. The number of serious violent crimes committed by youth ages 12–17 peaked at 1.1 million in 1993; in that year, more than one-fourth (26%) of all serious violent crimes were committed by youth ages 12–17. By 2019, youth ages 12–17 were involved in 146,000 serious violent crimes—about one-tenth (9%) of all serious violent crimes in that year—and the rate in 2019 was 87% below the 1993 peak.

The rate at which youth ages 12–17 committed serious violent crimes peaked in 1993 then generally declined through 2019



- The rate at which youth ages 12–17 committed serious violent crimes increased 49% from 1980 to its 1993 peak, then decreased 78% from 1993 to 2002. The rate increased slightly through 2006, then generally declined. The rate in 2019 was 66% below the 2006 rate.



- The proportion of serious violent crimes committed by youth ages 12–17 peaked in 1993 at 26%, then decreased to 11% in 2011. The proportion increased in 2013 before decreasing to the lowest level in 2019. In 2019, 9% of all serious violent victimizations were committed by youth ages 12 to 17.
- The proportion of serious violent victimizations involving multiple youth ages 12–17 ranged from a high of 65% in 1982 to a low of 30% in 2019.

Notes: Serious violent crime includes aggravated assault, rape, and robbery reported to the NCVS that involved at least one offender perceived by the victim to be 12–17 years of age, plus the number of homicides reported to the police that involved at least one perpetrator age 12–17. Homicide data were not available for 2019 at the time of publication; therefore, the number of homicides for 2018 is included in the overall total for 2019. Due to a sample increase and redesign in 2016, estimates in 2016 are not comparable to estimates for other years. Due to methodological changes in the 2006 National Crime Victimization Survey, use caution when comparing 2006 criminal perpetration estimates to those for other years. Because of changes made in the victimization survey, data prior to 1992 are adjusted to make them comparable with data collected under the redesigned methodology.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics' *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*. Table BEH5.

After reaching a historic low in 2013, the number of homicides by youth increased 27% through 2019

More than 1 of every 3 murders in the U.S. are not solved

In 2019, the FBI reported that 16,400 persons were murdered in the U.S. In an estimated 10,100 (61%) of these murders, the incident was cleared by arrest or by exceptional means—that is, either a person was arrested and turned over to the court for prosecution or was identified but law enforcement could not place formal charges (e.g., death of the perpetrator). In the remaining 6,300 murders (36%) in 2019, law enforcement did not identify who committed the crime and their demographic characteristics are not known.

Estimating the demographic characteristics of these unknown individuals is difficult. Their attributes likely differ from those known to have committed murder. For example, it is likely that a greater proportion of those known to law enforcement have family ties to their victims and that a larger proportion of homicides committed by strangers go unsolved. An alternative to estimating characteristics of those responsible for unattributed murders is to trend only murders committed by known individuals. Either approach creates its own interpretation problems. In this section, all analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* (SHR) focus solely on individuals known to have committed a murder and, therefore, juveniles known to have committed a murder.

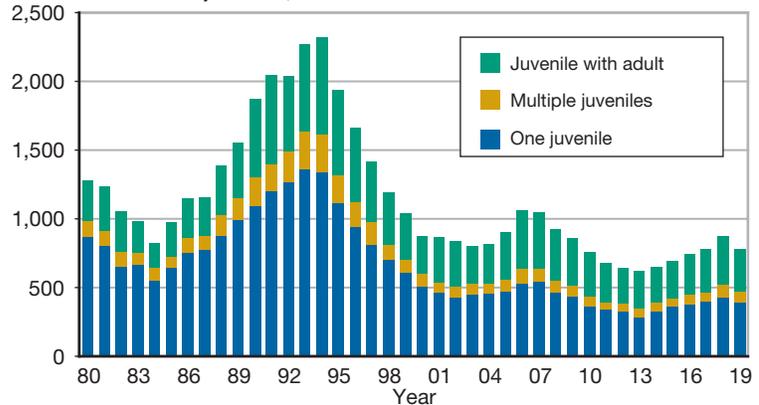
Juveniles were involved in 1 in 14 homicides in 2019

Youth under the age of 18 were involved in an estimated 780 murders in the U.S. in 2019—7% of all murders. In half of these murders (50%), the juvenile acted alone, in 11% they acted with one or more other youth, and in 39% they acted with at least one adult.

In 2019, 86% of the homicide victims of juveniles were male, 42% were

The number of homicides committed by juveniles reached a historic low in 2013—74% below the 1994 peak—then increased 27% through 2019

Homicide victims of juveniles, known to law enforcement

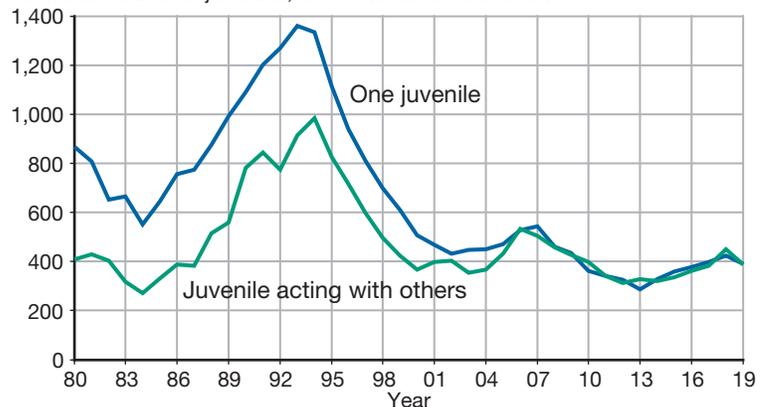


- In the 1980s, one-fourth (25%) of the murders committed by juveniles also involved an adult. The proportion grew to 31% in the 1990s, 38% in the 2000s, and reached 41% for the years 2010–2019.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980–2019.

The number of murders committed by a juvenile acting alone increased between 2013 and 2019

Homicide victims of juveniles, known to law enforcement



- Murders involving a juvenile acting alone peaked in 1993, then fell 79% through 2013. Since reaching this historic low, the number of murders involving a lone juvenile increased 36% through 2019.
- The proportion of murders involving a juvenile acting alone has gradually declined, from 66% in the 1980s to 59% in the 1990s, and to 50% in the 2010s.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980–2019.

White, and 55% were Black. The overwhelming majority (88%) of homicide victims of juveniles were killed with a firearm. More than half (57%) of the victims of juveniles were acquaintances, strangers (i.e., no personal relationship to the juvenile) accounted for 27% of victims, and 16% of victims were family members.

The proportion of murders committed by a juvenile that involved at least one other individual gradually increased since 1980. In the 1980s, about one-third of all murders committed by juveniles involved at least one other individual; this proportion grew to 47% in the 2000s, and reached 50% in 2019.

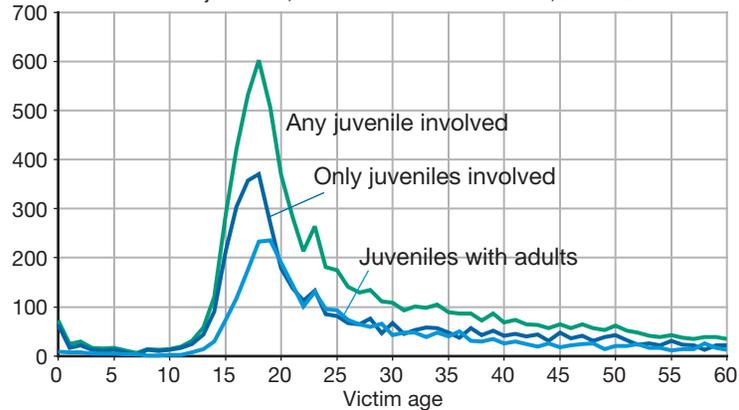
The overwhelming majority of murders committed by juveniles acting with other individuals involved an adult, rather than a youth. Between 2010 and 2019, an adult was involved in 81% of all murders committed by youth that involved multiple individuals.

Fewer juveniles were involved in murder in 2019 than in the 1990s

The increase in youth violence through the mid-1990s resulted in a number of changes in state legislation that exposed more youth to prosecution in the adult criminal justice system. Much of the concern was fueled by the dramatic rise in murders committed by youth between 1984 and 1994. However, the decade-long increase in homicides committed by youth was followed by a long period of decline: the number of murders committed by youth fell 72% between 1994 and 2013, reaching its lowest level since at least 1980. Despite a 27% increase since 2013, juveniles in 2019 were considerably less likely to be implicated in murder than youth in the 1990s: the number of murders involving youth in 2019 was 66% below the 1994 peak.

Between 2010 and 2019, most victims of homicide committed by youth were under age 25

Homicide victims of juveniles, known to law enforcement, 2010–2019

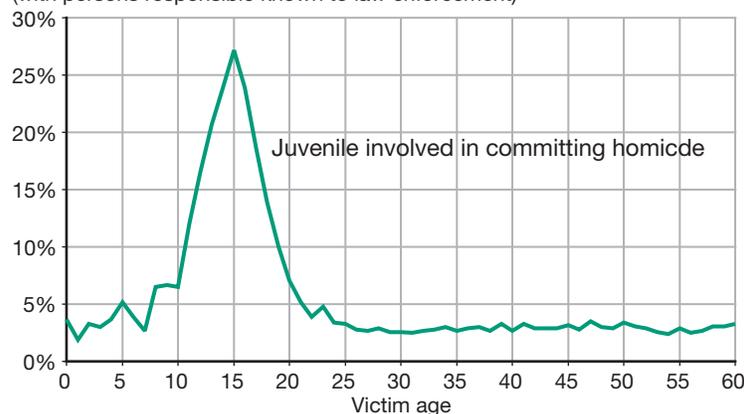


- Nearly 6 in 10 (58%) victims of homicide committed by juveniles were under age 25: 24% were under age 18 and 34% were ages 18–24. Conversely, 4% of victims of homicide committed by juveniles were over age 64.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 2010–2019.

Between 2010 and 2019, youth age 15 were most likely to be killed by a youth

Percent of all homicide victims in age group, 2010–2019 (with persons responsible known to law enforcement)



- Among all murder victims between 2010 and 2019, the proportion killed by juveniles dropped from 27% for victims age 15 to 3% for victims age 24 and then remained at or near 3% for all victims older than 25.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 2010–2019.

Trends in murders by juveniles are driven by several factors

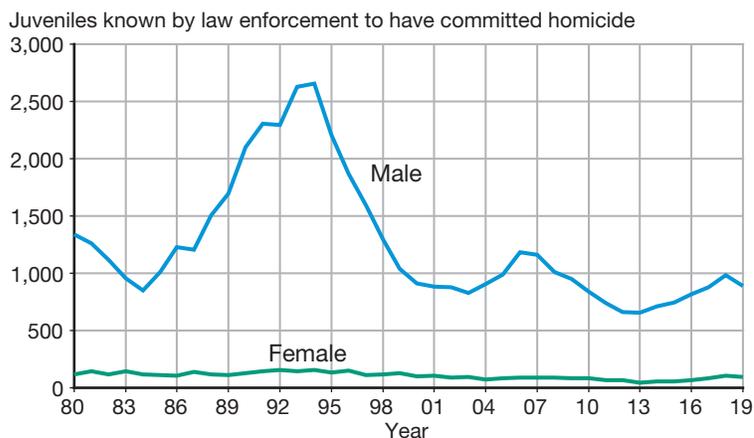
The dramatic rise in murders by juveniles between 1984 and 1994 was influenced by specific types of murders. Overall, the number of juveniles identified by law enforcement to have committed homicide nearly tripled during this period. However, the number of male juveniles implicated in homicides increased more than 200%, while the number of females increased less than 40%. Firearms also contributed to the increase: the number of juveniles who committed murder with a firearm quadrupled during this period, while the number committing murder without a firearm increased less than 30%. Finally, the number of juveniles who killed a family member increased about 20%, while the number of juveniles who killed an acquaintance or a stranger both increased about 220% during this period.

In short, the historic rise in juvenile murder offending between 1984 and 1994 was the result of a growth in murders by male juveniles who committed their crime with a firearm and whose victims were nonfamily members. These factors combined to account for 74% of the increase in homicides by juveniles between 1984 and 1994.

Nearly all of the growth in homicides committed by juveniles was erased by the early 2000s, and by 2013, the number of juveniles known to have committed homicide reached a historic low. Two-thirds (66%) of the overall decline was attributable to the drop in murders of nonfamily members by juvenile males with a firearm.

Since reaching a historic low in 2013, the number of juveniles known to have committed homicide increased through 2019, but the increase was not as substantial as the increase 3 decades prior. The number of juveniles known to have committed homicide in 2019 was 40% above the 2013 low-point, and 65% below the 1994 peak.

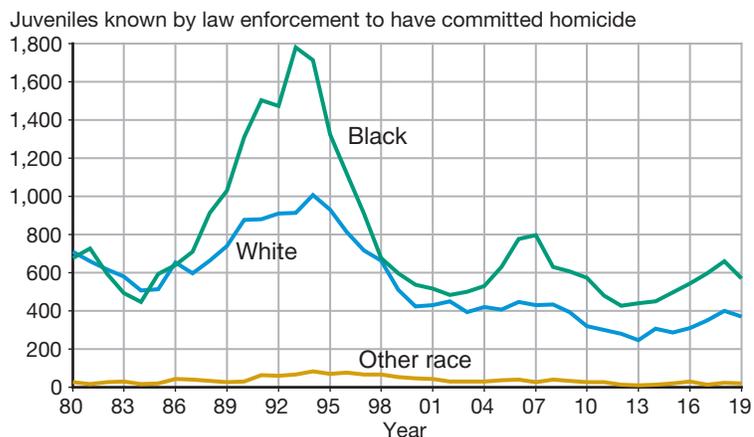
After reaching a historic low in 2013, the number of known male and female juveniles who committed homicide increased through 2019



- While the relative increase in female juveniles who committed homicide outpaced that of males between 2013 and 2019 (116% vs. 35%), females account for a small share of juveniles who commit homicide; since 2004, females accounted for 10% or less of juveniles who committed homicide.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980–2019.

Despite recent increases, the number of juveniles who committed homicide in 2019 was well below the mid-1990s peak for both White and Black juveniles



- The number of juveniles who committed homicide peaked in 1993 for Black youth and 1994 for White youth. Since their respective peaks, the number of juveniles who committed homicide declined for both race groups through the mid-2010s and then increased. By 2019, the number of White juveniles who committed homicide was 51% above their 2013 low point and 63% below the 1994 peak. Similarly, the number of known Black juveniles who committed homicide in 2019 was 33% above their 2013 low point and 55% below the 1993 peak.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980–2019.

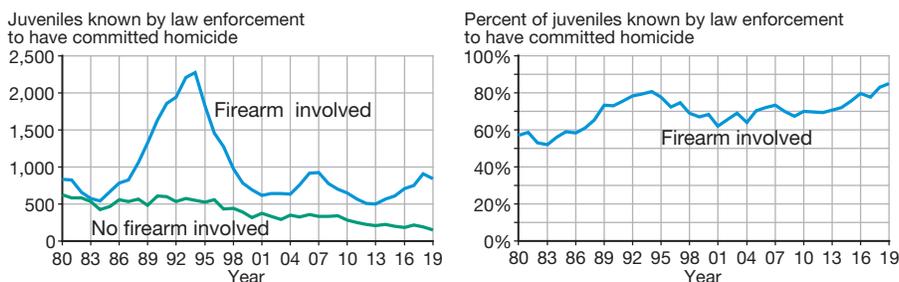
Compared with the 1994 peak, the 2019 profile of youth known to have committed homicide included larger proportions of females and White youth. Additionally, a larger proportion of juveniles used a firearm in 2019 than in 1994, and a larger proportion of victims were either family members or acquaintances.

Profile of juveniles known by law enforcement to have committed homicide:

Characteristic	2013	2019
Age	100%	100%
Younger than 15	11	12
Age 15	14	17
Age 16	26	28
Age 17	50	43
Gender	100%	100%
Male	94	91
Female	6	9
Race	100%	100%
White	35	39
Black	63	59
American Indian	1	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1
Weapon	100%	100%
Firearm	71	85
No firearm	29	15
Relationship to victim	100%	100%
Family	12	12
Acquaintance	50	59
Stranger	38	29

Note: 2013 was the year with the fewest number of juveniles known to have committed homicide. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

The number of juveniles who committed homicide with a firearm reached a historic low in 2013 and has since increased

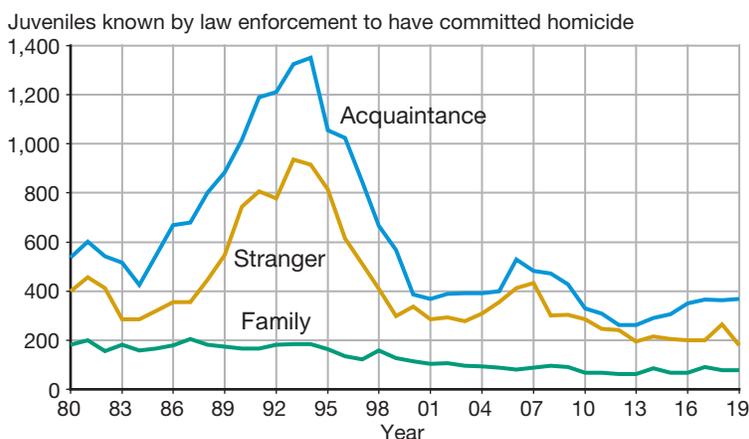


- The number of juveniles who committed homicide with a firearm increased between 2001 and 2007, then declined 46% through 2013, reaching its lowest level since at least 1980. Since the 2013 low point, the number of juveniles who committed homicide with a firearm increased 68% through 2019.

- While the number of juveniles who committed homicide with a firearm in 2019 was well below the 1994 peak, the proportion who committed homicide with a firearm was higher in 2019 (85%) than in 1994 (81%).

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980–2019.

Victims of juveniles known to have committed homicide were more likely to be acquaintances or strangers than family members



- Annually since 1980, juveniles killed more acquaintances than strangers. For example, in the 10-year period from 2010 through 2019, 52% juveniles killed an acquaintance, 36% killed a stranger, and 12% killed a family member.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980–2019.

The characteristics of homicides committed by juveniles varied with the age, gender, and race of the juvenile

Juveniles known to law enforcement to have committed homicide, 2010–2019

Characteristic	All	Male	Female	Younger than			White	Black
				age 16	Age 16	Age 17		
Victim age	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Younger than 13	3	3	10	7	2	2	4	3
13 to 17	20	21	14	23	23	17	21	20
18 to 24	34	34	32	25	33	39	33	35
Older than 24	43	43	44	45	43	42	42	43
Victim gender	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Male	87	88	73	82	88	88	84	88
Female	13	12	27	18	12	12	16	12
Victim race	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	45	45	52	49	46	43	83	23
Black	51	52	45	48	51	54	14	75
American Indian	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1
Victim/offender relationship*	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Family	12	11	24	21	10	8	17	7
Acquaintance	52	52	53	46	53	55	53	51
Stranger	36	37	23	34	38	37	30	41
Firearm used	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	76	78	55	71	74	79	64	83
No	24	22	45	29	26	21	36	17
Number of offenders*	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
One	38	38	30	42	38	36	42	35
More than one	62	62	70	58	62	64	58	65

- Between 2010 and 2019, a greater proportion of homicides committed by female juveniles involved child victims under age 13 than those committed by male youth (10% vs. 3%).
- A larger proportion of victims of juveniles under age 16 were younger than age 18 (30%) than were the victims of juveniles age 16 (25%) or age 17 (19%).
- Female juveniles who commit homicide were more likely to involve female victims than homicides by males (27% vs. 12%) and to have victims who were family members (24% vs. 11%).
- While the overwhelming majority of homicides committed by juveniles are intraracial, homicides committed by Black youth were more likely than those by White youth to involve victims of another race (25% vs. 17%).
- Firearms were more likely to be involved in murders by male juveniles than females (78% vs. 55%) and in murders by Black juveniles than White juveniles (83% vs. 64%).
- The victims of White juveniles who committed homicide were more likely to be a family member than were the victims of Black juveniles (17% vs. 7%).
- Juveniles younger than age 16 who committed homicide were more likely to commit their crimes alone (42%), than juveniles age 16 (38%) or age 17 (36%), as were White juveniles compared with Black juveniles (42% vs. 35%). Conversely, female juveniles were more likely to commit their crimes with others than were males (70% vs. 62%).

* In this dataset, the term “offender” is used to describe the person identified by law enforcement as having committed the homicide. This could mean either that the person was arrested and turned over to the court for prosecution, or was identified but not placed under formal charges (e.g., because they were deceased).

Note: Data for American Indian and Asian are not shown due to the small number of these youth involved in homicide. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Source: Authors’ analyses of the FBI’s *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for 1980–2019.

The daily timing of violent crime committed by youth differs on school and nonschool days

Youth and adults commit violent crimes at different times

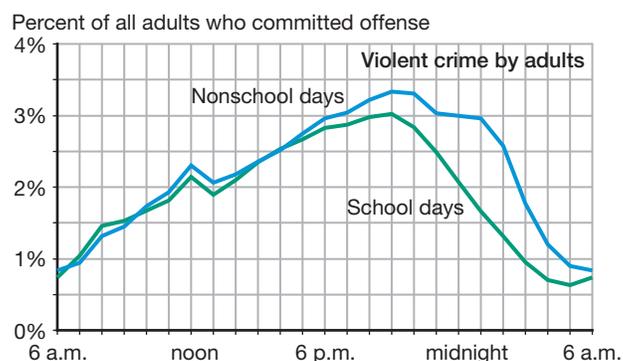
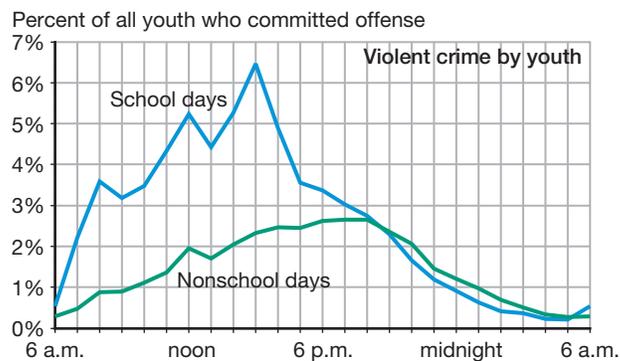
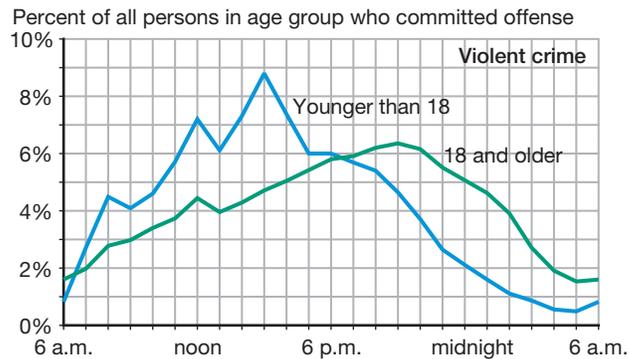
The FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) collects information on each crime reported to contributing law enforcement agencies, including the date and time of day the crime occurred. For calendar years 2018 and 2019, agencies in 45 states and the District of Columbia provided information on the time of day of reported crimes. Analyses of these data show that for many offenses, youth commit crimes at different times than adults, and the youth patterns vary on school and nonschool days.

Violent crimes (murder, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault) committed by adults increased hourly throughout the day, peaking around 9 p.m., then declining to a low point by 5 a.m. In contrast, violent crimes committed by youth peaked at 3 p.m. (the hour at the end of the school day) and then generally declined hour by hour until the low point at 5 a.m. At 9 p.m. when the number of adult violent crimes peaked, the number of violent crimes committed by youth was about half the number at 3 p.m.

The importance of the afterschool period in youth violence is confirmed when the days of the year are divided into two groups: school days (Mondays through Fridays in the months of September through May, excluding holidays) and nonschool days (every day from June through August, including holidays). A comparison of the school- and nonschool-day violent crime patterns finds that the 3 p.m. peak occurs only on school days and only for youth. The timing of adult violent crimes is similar on school and nonschool days, with one exception: the peak occurs later on non-school days (i.e., weekends and summer days).

Finally, the temporal time pattern of violent crimes committed by youth on nonschool days is similar to that of

Violent crime committed by youth peaks in the afterschool hours on school days



- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of violent crime committed by youth occurred on school days, while 53% of violent crime by adults took place on nonschool days.
- While the number of juveniles who committed homicide with a firearm in 2019 was well below the 1994 peak, the proportion who committed homicide with a firearm was higher in 2019 (85%) than in 1994 (81%).

Notes: Violent crime includes murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

adults (but peaks an hour earlier than that of adults).

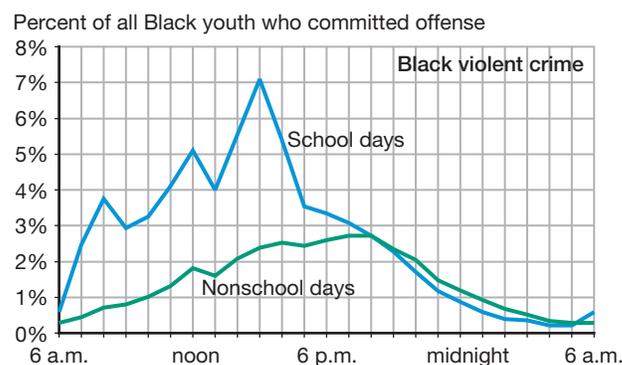
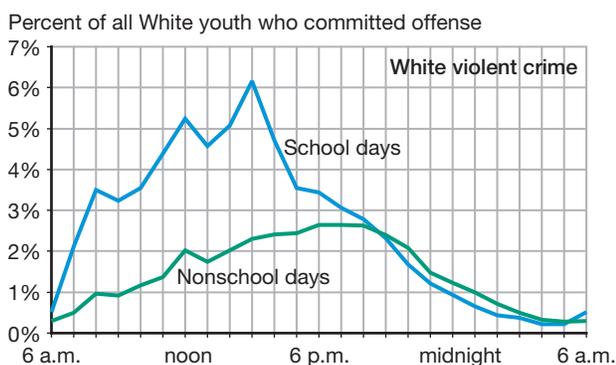
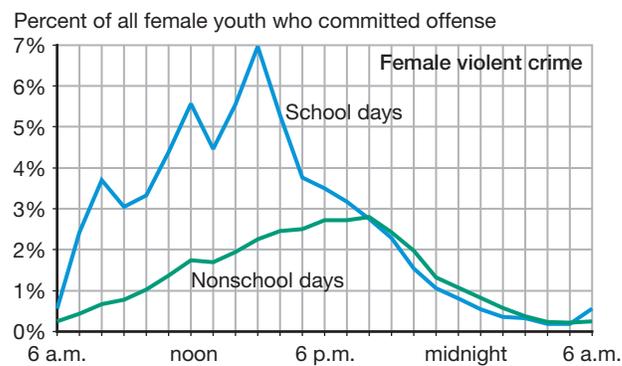
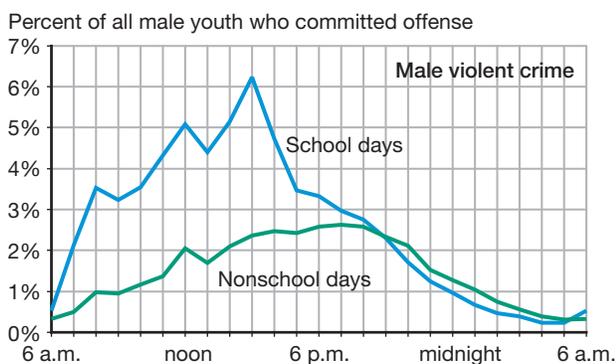
Crime reduction efforts should focus on the after school and early evening hours

The number of school days in a year is essentially equal to the number of non-school days in a year. Based on 2018–2019 NIBRS data, 64% of all violent

crimes by youth occurred on school days, and nearly 1 of every 5 (18%) of these crimes occurred in the 4 hours between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. A smaller proportion of violent crime committed by youth (14%) occurred during the standard youth 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 in the year) is 4 times greater than the number of hours

in the 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. period on school days (i.e., 4 hours in half of the days in the year). Therefore, the rate of violence by youth in the afterschool period was more than 5 times the rate in the juvenile curfew period. Consequently, efforts to reduce offending by youth after school would appear to have greater potential to decrease a community’s violent crime rate than curfews.

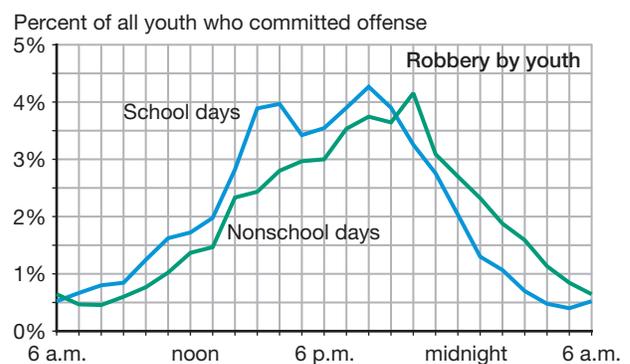
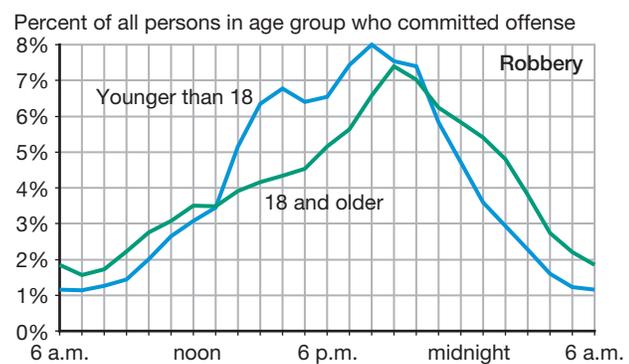
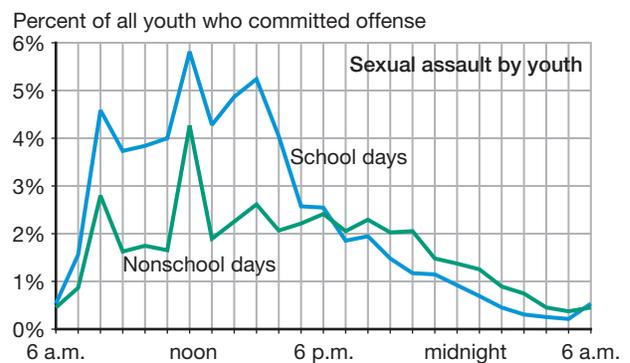
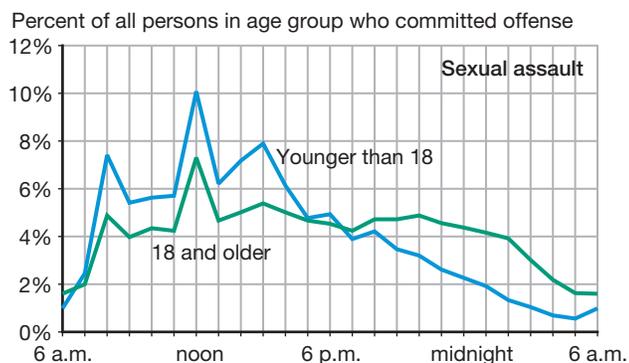
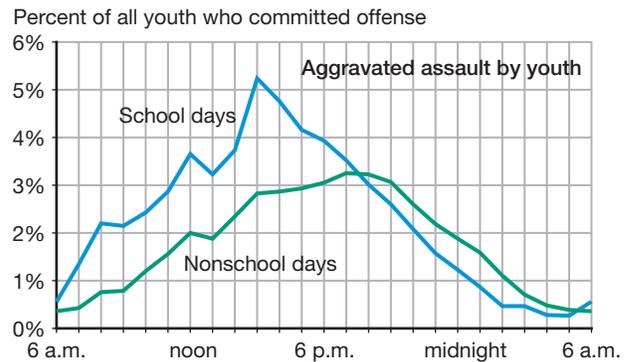
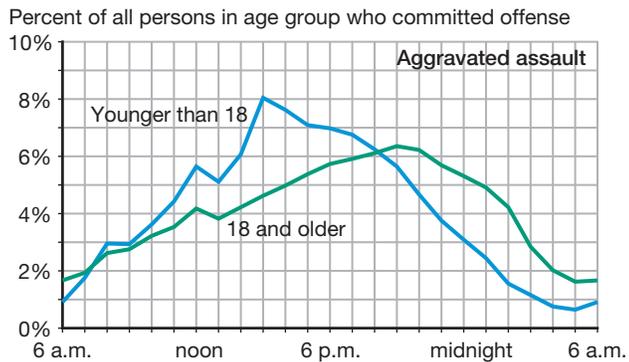
The time-of-day patterns of violent crime committed by youth are similar for males and females and for White youth and Black youth on school and nonschool days



Notes: Violent crime includes murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

Source: Authors’ analysis of the FBI’s *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

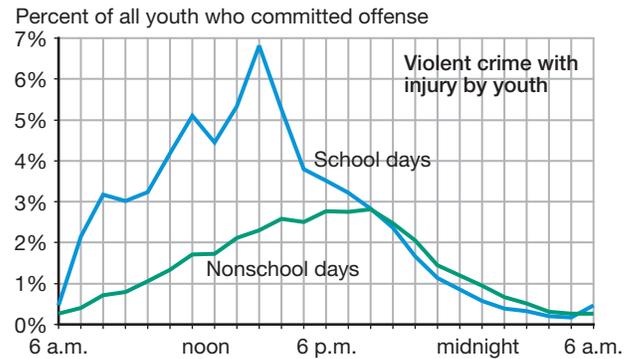
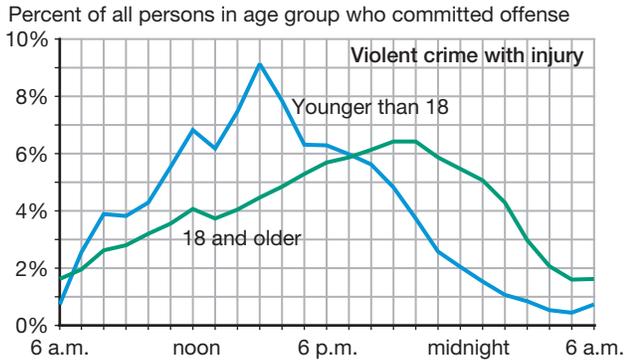
The daily timing of aggravated assault and sexual assault committed by youth vary for school days and nonschool days



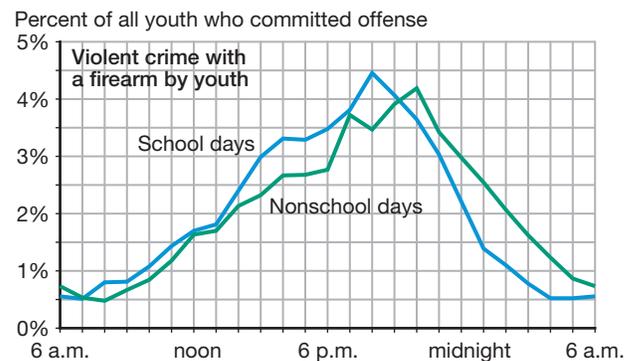
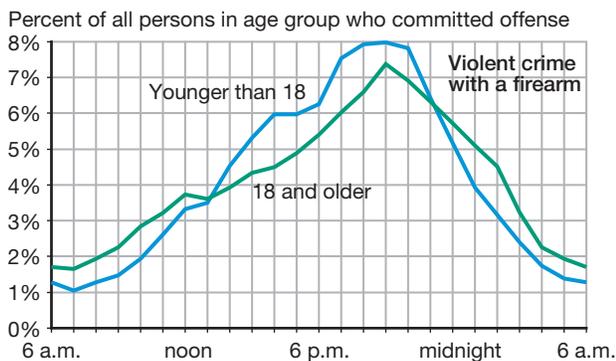
- Aggravated assault committed by youth peaked at 3 p.m. on school days, coinciding with the end of the school day, while sexual assaults committed by youth spiked at 8 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m. on school and nonschool days.
- Unlike the pattern for aggravated assault and sexual assault, the daily timing of robbery by youth is similar to the adult pattern, peaking in the evening hours on both school and nonschool days.
- Aggravated assault committed by youth is more likely before 8 p.m. on school days than on nonschool days (i.e., weekends and all summer days).

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

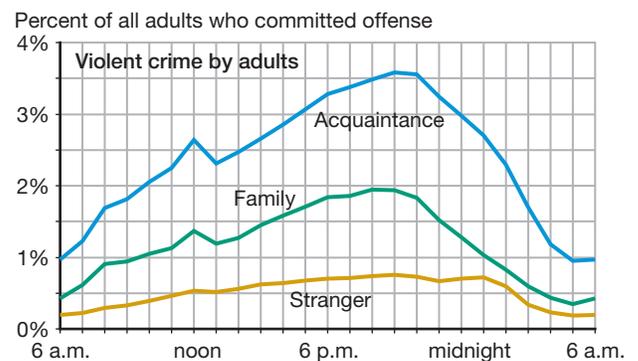
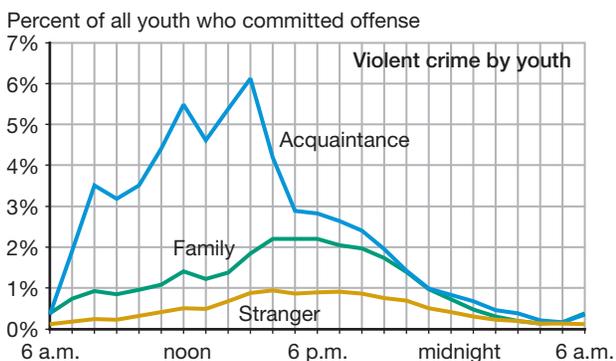
Youth injure more victims in the hours around the close of school than at any other time



Similar to adults, youth are most likely to commit a violent crime with a firearm between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.



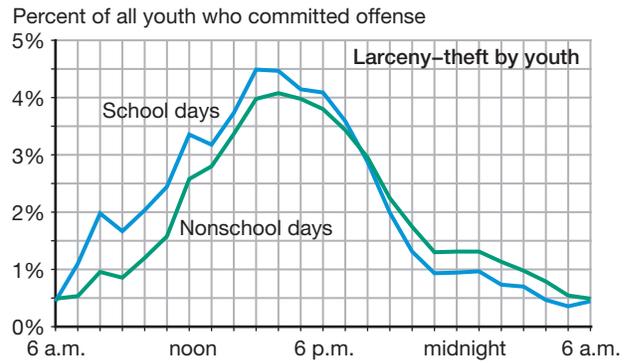
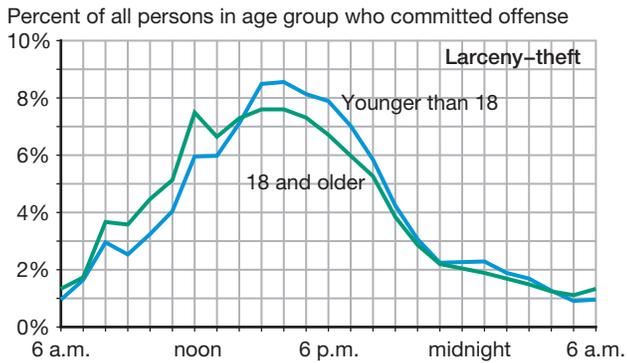
The after school peak in violent crime by youth largely involves victims who are acquaintances



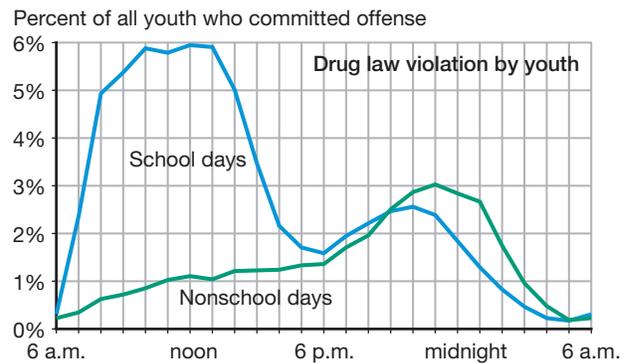
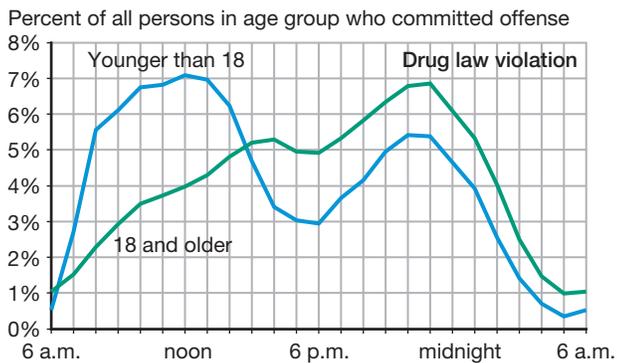
Notes: Violent crime includes murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault. However, violent crime with a firearm excludes simple assault (a firearm is not applicable to simple assault because the offense would become aggravated assault).

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

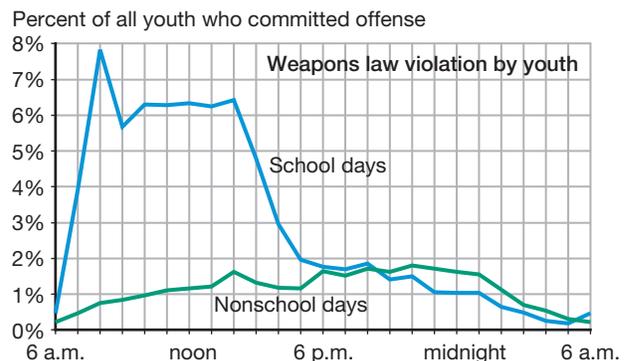
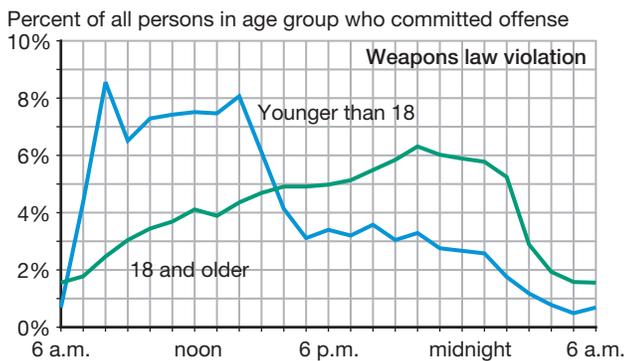
Unlike the daily pattern for violent crime, larceny-theft follows a similar pattern for youth and adults, and for youth on school and nonschool days



The daily timing of drug law violations known to law enforcement indicate how often schools are a setting for such offenses and their detection



Similar to the pattern for drug law violations, the time and day of weapons law violations by youth reflect the role schools play in bringing these matters to the attention of law enforcement



Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System Master Files* for 2018 and 2019.

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Miech, R., Johnston, L., O'Malley, P., Bachman, J., Schulenberg, J., and Patrick, M. 2019. *Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975–2018: Volume I, Secondary School Students*. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, the University of Michigan.

Miech, R., Johnston, L., O'Malley, P., Bachman, J., Schulenberg, J., and Patrick, M. 2020. *Monitoring the Future National Survey Results on Drug Use, 1975–2019: Volume I, Secondary School Students*. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, the University of Michigan. Available online: monitoringthefuture.org/results/publications/monographs.

Arrest rate source note

Arrest estimates developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics for 1990–2014 were retrieved from their *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [available online at www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=datool&surl=/arrests/index.cfm, retrieved December 12, 2018]; the National Center for Juvenile Justice developed arrest estimates for 2015–2019 based on data published in the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for the respective years; population data for 1990–1999 is from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau with support from the National Cancer Institute), *Bridged-Race Intercensal Estimates of the July 1, 1990–July 1, 1999, United States Resident Population by County, Single-Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, released July 26, 2004]; population data for 2000–2009 is from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau), *Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United*

States for July 1, 2000–July 1, 2009, by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, as of October 26, 2012, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the revised unbridged intercensal estimates by 5-year age group on October 9, 2012]; and population data for 2010–2019 are from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau), *Vintage 2019 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019), by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, as of July 9, 2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged vintage 2019 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group, retrieved on July 29, 2020].

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Chapter 4

Juvenile justice system structure and process

The first juvenile court in the United States was established in Chicago in 1899, nearly 125 years ago. But in the long history of law and justice, juvenile justice is a relatively new development. The juvenile justice system has experienced several distinct periods of change. After the establishment of

juvenile courts around the country there was a period where the emphasis was on rehabilitation rather than punishment, on the child rather than the crime. But over time the notion of rehabilitation lost its allure. By the late 1960s, juvenile court had become more punitive and critics argued that its informality and secrecy should not deny youth the due process protections afforded adults. This led to several landmark Supreme Court decisions, federal legislation, and changes in state statutes that made juvenile courts more like criminal courts.

In the early 1990s, perceptions of a juvenile crime epidemic focused the public's attention on the juvenile justice system's ability to effectively control youth who commit violent offenses. As a reaction, states adopted numerous legislative changes in an effort to crack down on juvenile crime. In fact, through the mid-1990s, nearly every state made it easier to expose more youth to criminal court prosecution. Although the juvenile and criminal justice systems had grown similar, the juvenile justice system has remained unique, guided by its own

philosophy—with an emphasis on individualized justice and serving the best interests of the child—and legislation, and is implemented by its own set of agencies.

During the 2000s there has been a distinct shift away from the harshness of the 1990s. Several states have changed their jurisdictional boundaries to keep youth in the juvenile system. There is less reliance on correctional placements and an emphasis on system responses being developmentally appropriate and evidence-based.

This chapter describes the structure and process of the juvenile justice system, focusing on delinquency and status offense matters. (Chapter 2 discusses the handling of child maltreatment matters.) Parts of this chapter provide an overview of the history of juvenile justice in the United States, including significant Supreme Court decisions that have shaped the juvenile justice system, and generally describe case processing in the juvenile justice system. Also summarized in this chapter are state variations in key aspects of the juvenile justice system. Much of this information was drawn from National Center for Juvenile Justice analyses of juvenile codes in each state. (Note: the District of Columbia is often referred to as a state.)

This chapter also includes information on juveniles processed in the federal justice system.



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 adults

Throughout the late 18th century, “infants” below the age of reason (traditionally age 7) were presumed to be incapable of criminal intent and were exempt from prosecution and punishment. Children as young as 7, though, could stand trial in criminal court, and if found guilty, could be sentenced to prison or even given a death sentence.

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 reforms that 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 established a facility specifically for the housing, education, and rehabilitation of children who commit offenses. Soon, facilities exclusively for children were established in most major cities. By mid-century, these privately operated child “prisons” were under criticism for various abuses. Many states then took on the responsibility of operating such facilities.

The first juvenile court in the United States was established in Cook County, Illinois, in 1899

Illinois passed the Juvenile Court Act in 1899, which established the nation’s first separate 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 dealt with 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 child accused of law violations 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 youth for their crimes, juvenile courts sought to turn these wayward youth into productive citizens—through rehabilitation and treatment. The mission to help children in trouble was stated clearly in the laws that established juvenile courts. This mission led to procedural and substantive differences between the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

In the first 50 years of the juvenile court’s existence, most juvenile courts had exclusive original jurisdiction over all youth younger than age 18 who were charged with violating criminal laws. However, in some states the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction was lower in certain cities or counties or was different for boys than for girls. 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.

The focus on individuals and not offense, on rehabilitation and not punishment, changed procedures

Unlike the criminal justice system, where prosecutors selected 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 altogether.

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 to criminal defendants were deemed unnecessary. In the early juvenile courts, attorneys for the state and the youth were 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 1950s and 1960s, society came to question the ability of the juvenile court to succeed in rehabilitating youth who violated the law. The treatment techniques available to juvenile justice professionals often failed to demonstrate 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 youth institutionalized indefinitely in the name of treatment.

In a series of decisions beginning in the 1960s, the U.S. Supreme Court changed the juvenile court process. Formal hearings were now required if the juvenile court was going to waive its jurisdiction, and youth facing possible confinement were given Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination and rights to receive notice of the charges against them, to present

The first case in juvenile court

After years of development and months of compromise, the Illinois legislature passed, on April 14, 1899, a law permitting counties in the state to designate one or more of their circuit court judges to hear all cases involving children younger than age 16 for neglect, dependency, or delinquency. The legislation stated that these cases were to be heard in a special courtroom that would be designated as “the juvenile courtroom” and referred to as the “Juvenile Court.” Thus, the first juvenile court opened in Cook County on July 3, 1899, was not a new court, but a division of the circuit court with original jurisdiction over juvenile cases.

The judge assigned to this new division was Richard Tuthill, a Civil War veteran who had been a circuit court judge for more than 10 years. The first case heard by Judge Tuthill in juvenile court was that of Henry Campbell, an 11-year-old who had been arrested for larceny. The hearing was a public event. While some tried to make the juvenile proceeding secret, the politics of the day would not permit it. The local papers carried stories about what had come to be known as “child saving” by some and “child slavery” by others.*

At the hearing, Henry Campbell’s parents told Judge Tuthill that their son was a good boy who had been led into trouble by others, an argument consistent with the underlying philosophy of the court—that individuals (especially juveniles) were not solely

responsible for the crimes they commit. The parents did not want young Henry sent to an institution, which was one of the few options available to the judge. Although the enacting legislation granted the new juvenile court the right to appoint probation officers to handle juvenile cases, the officers were not to receive publicly funded compensation. Thus, the judge had no probation staff to provide services to Henry. The parents suggested that Henry be sent to live with his grandmother in Rome, New York. After questioning the parents, the judge agreed to send Henry to his grandmother’s in the hope that he would “escape the surroundings which have caused the mischief.” This first case was handled informally, without a formal adjudication of delinquency on Henry’s record.

Judge Tuthill’s first formal case is not known for certain, but the case of Thomas Majcheski (handled about 2 weeks after the Campbell case) might serve as an example. Majcheski, a 14-year-old, was arrested for stealing grain from a freight car in a railroad yard, a common offense at the time. The arresting officer told the judge that the boy’s father was dead and his mother (a washerwoman with nine children) could not leave work to come to court. The officer also said that the boy had committed similar offenses previously but had never been arrested. The boy admitted the crime. The judge then asked the nearly 300 people in the courtroom if they had anything to say. No one responded. Still

without a probation staff in place, the judge’s options were limited: dismiss the matter, order incarceration at the state reformatory, or transfer the case to adult court. The judge decided the best alternative was incarceration in the state reformatory, where the youth would “have the benefit of schooling.”

A young man in the audience then stood up and told the judge that the sentence was inappropriate. Newspaper accounts indicate that the objector made the case that the boy was just trying to obtain food for his family. Judge Tuthill then asked if the objector would be willing to take charge of the boy and help him become a better citizen. The young man accepted. On the way out of the courtroom, a reporter asked the young man of his plans for Thomas. The young man said “Clean him up, and get him some clothes and then take him to my mother. She’ll know what to do with him.”

In disposing of the case in this manner, Judge Tuthill ignored many possible concerns (e.g., the rights and desires of Thomas’s mother and the qualifications of the young man—or more directly, the young man’s mother). Nevertheless, the judge’s actions demonstrated that the new court was not a place of punishment. The judge also made it clear that the community had to assume much of the responsibility if it wished to have a successful juvenile justice system.

* Beginning in the 1850s, private societies in New York City rounded up so called “street children” from the urban ghettos and sent them to farms in the Midwest. Child advocates were concerned that these home-finding agencies did not properly screen or monitor the foster homes, pointing out that the societies were paid by the county to assume responsibility for the children and also by the families who received the children. Applying this concern to the proposed juvenile court, the Illinois legislation stated that juvenile court hearings should be open to the public so the public could monitor the activities of the court to ensure that private organizations would not be able to gain custody of children and then “sell” them for a handsome profit and would not be able to impose their standards of morality or religious beliefs on working-class children.

Source: Authors’ adaptation of Tanenhaus’ *Juvenile Justice in the Making*.

witnesses, to question witnesses, and to have an attorney. The burden of proof was raised from “a preponderance of evidence” to a “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard 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 youth charged with noncriminal offenses (behavior that is a law violation only because of the youth’s status as a juvenile) be handled outside the court system. A few years later, Congress 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 nonoffenders and the separation of youth charged with delinquency offenses from adults charged with or convicted of a crime. Much of the Act’s compliance focus has been related to youth in justice system confinement facilities (see box). Community-based programs, diversion, and deinstitutionalization became the banners of juvenile justice policy.

In the 1980s, the pendulum began to swing toward law and order

During the 1980s, the public perceived that serious juvenile crime was increasing and that the system was too lenient on youth charged with breaking the law. Although there was a substantial misperception regarding increases in juvenile crime, many states responded by passing more stringent laws. Some laws removed certain age youth charged with certain offenses from the juvenile justice system in favor of the criminal justice system. Others required the juvenile justice system to be more

like the criminal justice system in the handling of certain juvenile court cases.

As a result, youth charged with certain offenses were excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction or faced mandatory, automatic waiver to criminal court. In several states, concurrent jurisdiction provisions gave prosecutors the discretion to file certain juvenile cases directly in criminal court.

State legislatures continued to crack down on juvenile crime in the 1990s

Five areas of change emerged as states passed laws designed to combat juvenile crime. These laws generally involved 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 youth from the juvenile justice system to the criminal justice system including lowering the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction (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 pendulum swings again in the 2000s with a focus on brain science and doing what works

The 1980s and 1990s saw significant change in terms of processing more youth younger than 18 through the criminal justice system. However, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate had already peaked (in 1994) before much of the punitive legislation was enacted, and the rate continued to decline through the 1990s. By 2001, the entire spike in juvenile violent crime arrest rates had been erased and experts had begun to evaluate the consequences of the new “tough on crime” policies.

Research in adolescent development and brain science confirmed what everyone knew all along, that children and adolescents are different from adults. Adolescents are more impulsive and take more risks than adults. They are less able to think about consequences and more influenced by peer pressure. This is not to imply that adolescent brains are somehow defective, but that they are still developing. New brain imaging showed that development of the frontal lobe (the decision center of the brain) continues into the mid-20s. As Laurence Steinberg commented, “There is a time lag between the activation of brain systems that excite our emotions and impulses and the maturation of brain systems that allow us to check these feelings and urgings—it’s like driving a car with a sensitive gas pedal and bad brakes.” Adolescence is also a time of what scientists call neuroplasticity—when the brain has tremendous potential to change through experience. This means that adolescents have capacity to change, to be rehabilitated when matched to the most appropriate, effective interventions. In fact, most youth grow out of their delinquent behavior.

In 2005 the U.S. Supreme Court referenced the science of adolescent brain development in its *Roper v. Simmons* decision that barred the death penalty for youth younger than 18 (see section on U.S. Supreme Court decisions).

This information has had an impact on many aspects of juvenile justice. Since 2000, 12 states have passed laws to raise the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction for delinquency offenses.

Several states have passed sweeping juvenile justice reforms or have had task forces or commissions make recommendations for reform legislative packages. Most resulting legislation has included roll-backs of at least some transfer provisions to keep more youth out of criminal court. For example, California eliminated its concurrent jurisdiction provision in 2016 that had since the early 2000s allowed prosecutors to file certain offenses directly in criminal court. New Jersey raised the minimum age for transfer to criminal court across its provisions from age 14 to age 15.

The National Academies of Sciences' National Research Council's 2013 *Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach* outlined a framework for juvenile justice reform that was grounded in adolescent development research and called for evidence-based and developmentally informed policies, programs, and practices. State juvenile justice reforms in the 2000s have generally been founded on adolescent development and doing what works to reduce youth offending behavior based on research evidence.

Some states' juvenile justice reforms emphasized the use of diversion and community-based programs—staples of juvenile justice for decades. A growing body of research is showing these approaches to be more effective in reducing youths' subsequent offending than more punitive responses.

Several core requirements of the Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act address custody issues

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (the Act) sets four custody-related requirements.

The “deinstitutionalization of status offenders and nonoffenders” requirement (1974) specifies that youth not charged with acts that would be crimes for adults “shall not be placed in secure detention facilities or secure correctional facilities.” This requirement does not apply to youth charged with violating a valid court order or possessing a handgun, or those held under interstate compacts.

The “sight and sound separation” requirement (1974) specifies that “juveniles ... shall not be detained or confined in any institution in which they have contact with adult inmates.” This requires that incarcerated juveniles and adults cannot see each other and no conversation between them is possible.

The “jail and lockup removal” requirement (1980) states that youth of juvenile age shall not be detained or confined in adult jails or lockups. There are, however, several exceptions. There is a 6-hour grace period that allows adult facilities to hold youth temporarily while awaiting transfer to a juvenile facility or making court appearances. Under certain conditions, jails and lockups in rural areas may hold youth awaiting initial court appearance up to 24 hours plus weekends and holidays. Some jurisdictions have obtained approval for juvenile detention centers that are collocated with an adult facility; in addition, staff who work with both youth and adults must be trained and certified to work with youth. Until recently, youth being tried as adults in criminal court were exempt from this requirement.

Revisions passed in 2018 require that, as of December 21, 2021, even youth charged as adults must be removed from adult jails to juvenile fa-

cilities. The definition of “adult” in the new statute is tied to each state’s age of criminal responsibility and extended age of jurisdiction. There is an exception if a court holds a hearing and finds that holding the youth in an adult facility is “in the interest of justice.” The court must consider the youth’s age; physical and mental maturity; present mental state, including risk of self-harm; and offending history as well as the nature and circumstances of the charges; the relative ability of the available adult and juvenile facilities to meet the needs of the youth and protect other youth in their custody and the public; and “any other relevant factor.” If the court allows the youth held in jail, a review hearing must be held every 30 days with a 180-day maximum.

The “racial and ethnic disparities” (R/ED) requirement (2018) means that states must assess and address racial and ethnic disparities at key points in the juvenile justice system—from arrest to detention to confinement and work to reduce them. This requirement was previously known as the “disproportionate minority confinement” (DMC) (1988) and later (2002) as the disproportionate minority contact (DMC) requirement.

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 these and other statutory requirements. Noncompliance with core requirements results in the loss of at least 20% of the state’s annual Formula Grants Program allocation per requirement. For fiscal year 2020, 4 states/territories were not participating in the Formula Grants Program and an additional 3 were ineligible to receive an award that year because they did not meet the state plan requirements.

Some juvenile codes emphasize prevention and treatment goals, some stress punishment, but most still seek a balanced approach

States vary in how they express the purposes of their juvenile courts—not just in the underlying assumptions and philosophies but also in the approaches they take to the task. Some declare their goals in great detail; others mention only the broadest of aims. Many juvenile court purpose clauses have been amended over the years, reflecting philosophical or rhetorical shifts and changes in emphasis in the states’ overall approaches to juvenile delinquency. Some have been relatively untouched for decades. Given the changes in juvenile justice in recent decades, it is remarkable how many states still declare their purposes in language first developed in the 1950s and 1960s.

Developmental Approach. These states retain elements of other categories, but have purpose clauses that mention the use of adolescent development or other research and/or require evidence based practices or data to assist the juvenile justice system.

Balanced and Restorative Justice. Most common in state purpose clauses are components of Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ). BARJ advocates that juvenile justice systems give balanced attention to three primary interests: public safety, development of skills to help youth live law-abiding and productive lives, and individual accountability to victims and the community for harm caused.

Due process era. Refers to the period of reform of the 1960’s and 1970’s where federal laws, model acts, and Supreme Court cases influenced the addition of due process protections.

Parens patriae. This Latin phrase meaning “father of the nation” applies to state clauses that reflect the juvenile court judge’s earliest role as the state’s designated protector of children.

States juvenile code purpose clauses vary in their emphasis					
State	Developmental approach	Balanced and restorative justice	Due process	Parens patriae	None
Alabama		■			
Alaska		■			
Arizona					■
Arkansas			■		
California		■			
Colorado		■			
Connecticut	■				
Delaware				■	
Dist. of Columbia		■			
Florida	■				
Georgia		■			
Hawaii			■		
Idaho	■				
Illinois		■			
Indiana		■			
Iowa				■	
Kansas		■			
Kentucky	■				
Louisiana			■		
Maine		■			
Maryland		■			
Massachusetts				■	
Michigan				■	
Minnesota		■			
Mississippi		■			
Missouri				■	
Montana		■			
Nebraska		■			
Nevada				■	
New Hampshire			■		
New Jersey		■			
New Mexico	■				
New York			■		
North Carolina		■			
North Dakota					■
Ohio		■			
Oklahoma		■			
Oregon		■			
Pennsylvania		■			
Rhode Island				■	
South Carolina		■			
South Dakota				■	
Tennessee	■				
Texas			■		
Utah		■			
Vermont		■			
Virginia		■			
Washington		■			
West Virginia	■				
Wisconsin		■			
Wyoming		■			

Source: Authors’ adaptation of OJJDP’s *Statistical Briefing Book*.

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 delinquency proceedings rarely come before the U.S. Supreme Court. Beginning in the late 1960s, 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 charges 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 dismissal of the criminal indictment, 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 widespread. The Court raised a potential constitutional challenge to *parens patriae* as the foundation of the juvenile court. Previously, the Court had interpreted the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth 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 youth. The Court referred to evidence that this compensating benefit may not exist in reality and that youth 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 prank telephone call to an adult neighbor. 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 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 core 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 Fourteenth 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)

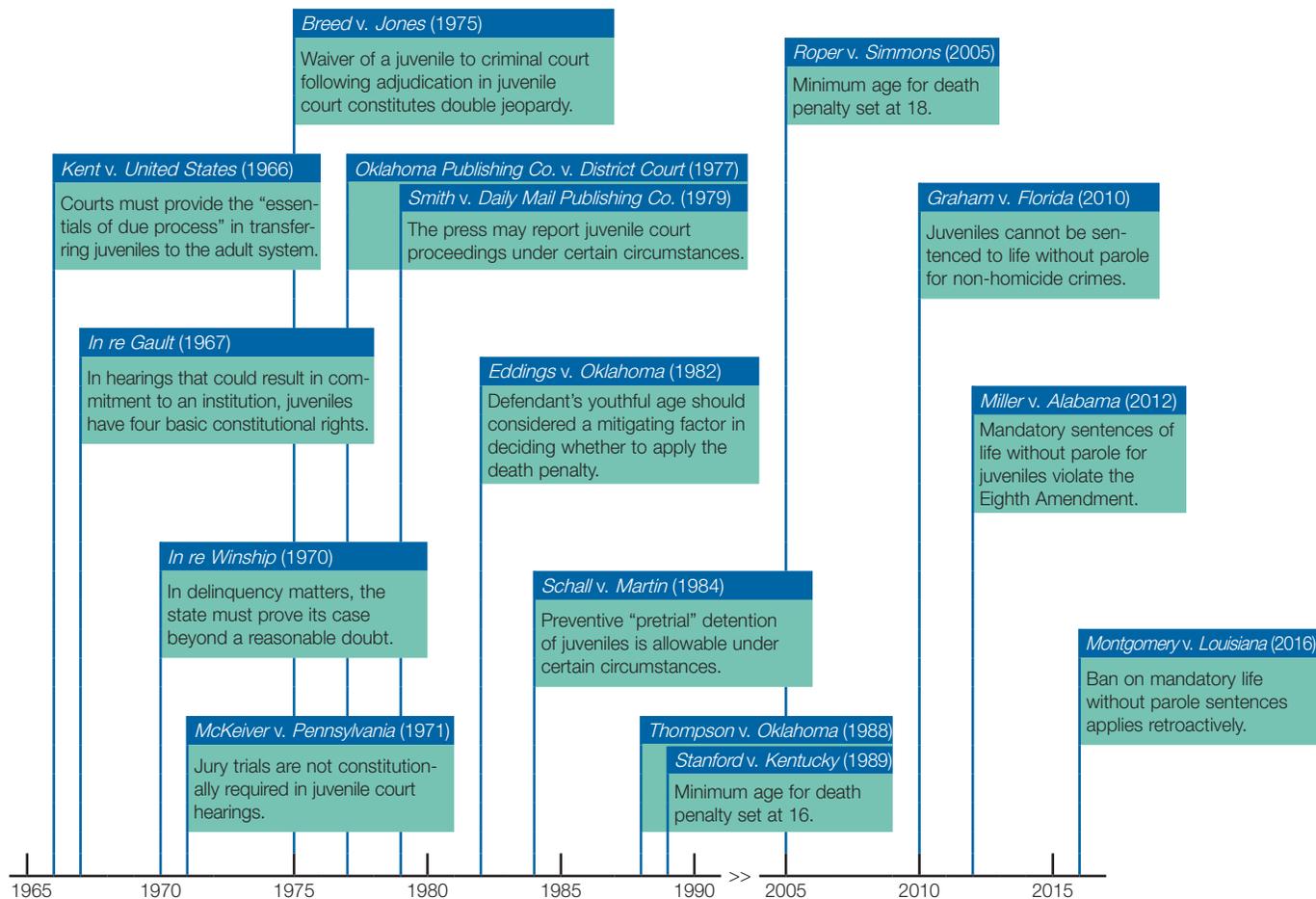
Joseph McKeiver, age 16, was charged with robbery, larceny, and receiving stolen goods. He and 20 to 30 other youth allegedly chased 3 youth and took 25 cents from them. McKeiver met with his attorney for only a few minutes before his adjudicatory hearing. At the hearing, his attorney’s request for a 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 Four-

A series of U.S. Supreme Court decisions have shaped juvenile justice over the decades



teenth 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, making 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 and two other robberies.

At the dispositional hearing, the judge waived 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 said 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 publishing 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 youth'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.

Eddings v. Oklahoma
455 U.S. 104 (1982)

The Supreme Court 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 did not address whether the Eighth and Fourteenth 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.

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 court 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 youth and society from pretrial crime and is not intended to punish the youth. The Court found that enough procedures were in place to protect youth 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.

Thompson v. Oklahoma
487 U.S. 815 (1988)

The issue before the U.S. Supreme Court was whether imposing the death penalty on a youth who was 15 at the time of the murder violated constitutional protections against cruel and unusual punishment. The Court concluded

ed that the Eighth Amendment prohibited application of the death penalty to a person who was younger than 16 at the time of the crime.

Stanford v. Kentucky
492 U.S. 361 (1989)

In *Stanford* the U.S. Supreme Court decided that the Eighth Amendment does not prohibit the death penalty for crimes committed at age 16 or 17.

Roper v. Simmons
543 U.S. 551, 125 S. Ct. 1183 (2005)

In *Roper*, the U.S. Supreme Court noted that several states had abolished their juvenile death penalty since *Stanford* and none had established or reinstated it. The objective evidence of “consensus in this case—the rejection of the juvenile death penalty in the majority of states; the infrequency of its use even where it remains on the books; and the consistency in the trend toward abolition of the practice—provide sufficient evidence that today our society views juveniles, in the words Atkins used respecting the mentally retarded, as ‘categorically less culpable than the average criminal’.” Thus, the Court affirmed the Missouri Supreme Court judgment that set aside the death sentence imposed on Christopher Simmons, concluding that the “Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments forbid imposition of the death penalty on offenders who were under the age of 18 when their crimes were committed.”

Graham v. Florida
560 U.S. 48, 130 S. Ct. 2011 (2010)

Terrance Graham, age 16, was arrested and charged with the crimes of burglary and robbery. Graham accepted a plea deal, requiring 12 months in county jail followed by a 3-year proba-

tionary period. Graham was released from jail after 6 months.

Not 6 months later, Graham was arrested for armed robbery. The state of Florida charged him with violations of the terms and conditions of his probation. The trial court held a hearing on these violations and passed down a sentence of life imprisonment. Florida had abolished their system of parole; Graham could only be released by executive pardon.

Graham filed an appeal claiming that his Eighth Amendment rights against cruel and unusual punishment were being violated by the length of the sentence. The Supreme Court agreed, ruling that the sentencing of a youth of juvenile age to life without parole for a nonhomicidal case was a violation of the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment. The Court found that there was no national consensus for life without parole sentences, youth of juvenile age had limited culpability, and life sentences were extremely punitive for youth in nonhomicide cases.

Miller v. Alabama
567 U.S. 460, 132 S. Ct. 2455 (2012)

Evan Miller was 14 when he and a friend beat his neighbor with a baseball bat and set fire to his trailer, killing him in the process. Miller was tried as a juvenile at first, but was then transferred to criminal court, pursuant to Alabama law. He was charged by the district attorney with murder in the course of arson, a crime with a mandatory minimum sentence of life without parole. The jury found Miller guilty, and he was sentenced to a life without parole term.

Miller filed an appeal claiming that his sentence was in violation of the Eighth

Amendment clause against cruel and unusual punishment. The Supreme Court held that the Eighth Amendment forbids a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole for a juvenile convicted of homicide. The Court based their reasoning on prior rulings in *Roper*, which had prohibited capital punishment for children, and *Graham*, which prohibited life without parole sentences for nonhomicide offenses. Combining the rationales, the Court ruled that juveniles could not be sentenced to serve mandatory life without parole.

Montgomery v. Louisiana
136 S. Ct. 718 (2016)

Henry Montgomery was a 17-year-old 11th-grade student in 1963, when he was arrested for the murder of a sheriff’s deputy. Montgomery, a Black youth, was tried and convicted for the murder of the White law enforcement officer. He originally received an automatic death sentence. In 1966, his original conviction was overturned by the Louisiana Supreme Court but he was re-tried and again convicted of murder. The sentence in his second trial was mandatory life without parole.

Following the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Miller*, Montgomery filed a post-conviction motion to “correct” his sentence but the Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that *Miller* did not apply retroactively.

The Supreme Court held that *Miller* did indeed apply retroactively. The Court based the decision on the principle that “children are different”—they are less culpable than adults and more likely to be reformed. Any individuals whose sentences were made before *Miller* was decided were entitled to re-sentencing or parole eligibility consideration.

State statutes define who is under the jurisdiction of juvenile court

Statutes set age limits for 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 younger than age 18 at the time of the offense, arrest, or referral to court. Between 1975 and 2000, four states changed their upper age: Alabama raised its upper age to 16 in 1976 and to 17 in 1977; Wyoming lowered its upper age to 17 in 1993; and New Hampshire and Wisconsin lowered their upper age to 16 in 1996.

Since 2000, 10 states have passed laws raising their upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction: Connecticut raised its upper age from 15 to 17 by July 2012; Massachusetts raised its age to 17 in 2013; Illinois made the age 17 for all but the most violent felonies by 2014; New Hampshire's age became 17 in 2015; South Carolina's change to 17 passed in 2016 but it did not take effect until 2019; New York raised its age from 15 to 16 in 2018 and to 17 in 2019; North Carolina also raised its age from 15 to 17 at the end of 2019; Louisiana raised its age to 17 for all but the most violent felonies by 2019 (and for all crimes by 2020); Michigan's law passed in 2019 raising the age to 17, but did not take effect until 2020; and Missouri's law passed in 2018 raising the age to 17, but the effective date was not until 2021.

Oldest age for original juvenile court jurisdiction in delinquency matters, 2019:

Age	State
16	Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, Texas, Wisconsin
17	All other states and the District of Columbia

Vermont has gone further raising its upper age to 18 in 2020, and through age 19, effective in 2022. Though the implementation is pending, the definition of a juvenile proceeding in Vermont under another law will allow juvenile jurisdiction to be sought through youthful offender provisions

(blended sentencing) for youth through age 21.

Many states have higher upper ages of juvenile court jurisdiction in status offense, abuse, neglect, or dependency matters—typically through age 20. The juvenile court may have original jurisdiction over young adults who committed offenses before they became adults.

As of the end of the 2019 legislative session, 30 states and the District of Columbia set no minimum age for delinquency matters in statute and 20 states had statutes that set the lowest age of juvenile court delinquency jurisdiction. Four of these are states that previously had no lower age set and one state, Massachusetts, raised its lower age from 7 to 12. States without a set minimum age rely on case law or common law. Children younger than a certain age are presumed to be incapable of criminal intent and are exempt from prosecution and punishment.

Youngest age for original juvenile court jurisdiction in delinquency matters, 2019:

Age	State
6	North Carolina
7	Connecticut, Maryland, New York
8	Arizona
10	Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Wisconsin
11	Nebraska
12	California, Massachusetts

States often have statutory exceptions to basic age criteria, such as excluding married or otherwise emancipated youth from juvenile court jurisdiction. Other 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 states, the prosecutor has the authority to decide which court will initially handle the case.

Juvenile court authority over youth may extend beyond the upper age of original jurisdiction

Through extended jurisdiction provisions, legislatures enable the court to provide services and sanctions for a period of time that is in the best interests of the youth and the public, even for youth who have reached the age at which original juvenile court jurisdiction ends. As of the end of the 2019 legislative session, statutes in 34 states extend juvenile court jurisdiction in delinquency cases to the 21st birthday.

Oldest age over which the juvenile court may retain jurisdiction for disposition purposes in delinquency matters, 2019:

Age	State
18	Oklahoma, Texas
19	Alaska, Mississippi, North Dakota
20	Alabama, Arizona,* Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada,** New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming
21	South Carolina, Vermont
22	Kansas, New York
24	California, Montana, Oregon, Wisconsin
***	Connecticut, Colorado, Hawaii, New Jersey

Notes: Extended jurisdiction may be restricted to certain offenses or youth.

*Arizona statute extends jurisdiction through age 20, but the state Supreme Court held in 1979 that juvenile court jurisdiction ends at 18.

**Until the full term of the disposition order for sex offenders.

***Until the full term of the disposition order.

In some states, juvenile courts may impose adult correctional sanctions on certain youth adjudicated delinquent that extend the term of confinement well beyond the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction—this is known as blended sentencing.

Law enforcement agencies refer most of the youth entering the juvenile justice system for law violations

Local processing of youth charged with delinquency or status offenses varies

From state to state, case processing of youth who have violated the law varies. Even within states, case processing may vary from community to community, reflecting local practice and tradition. Any description of juvenile justice processing in the U.S. must, therefore, be general, outlining common decision points.

Law enforcement agencies divert many youth out of the juvenile justice system

A youth's entry into the juvenile justice system often begins with a victim, school, or citizen contacting law enforcement about an incident or troublesome behavior. Once contacted, police decide either to send the matter further into the justice system or to divert the youth away from the system, often into alternative programs. Law enforcement generally makes this decision after talking with the victim, the youth, and the parents, and after reviewing the youth's prior contacts with the juvenile justice system. Police may

9-8-8 hotline intended to divert mental health crises away from 9-1-1 law enforcement responders

The National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020 jumpstarted implementation of a nationwide non-police mental health crisis response system so people in crisis are diverted from involvement in the justice system and connected to appropriate services and supports. The Federal Communications Commission formally designated 9-8-8 as a nationwide 3-digit number for mental health crisis and suicide prevention services with a two-year timeline to make 9-8-8 operational nationwide by mid-year 2022.

decide on pre-arrest diversion (also known as deflection) or may arrest the youth, but decide not to refer the youth to court intake. In 2019, just over one-quarter of juvenile arrests were handled within the police department and resulted in release of the youth. The remaining arrests were referred to juvenile court (6 in 10) or for criminal prosecution (<1 in 10) or to other agencies (<1 in 10).

Most delinquency cases are referred to juvenile court by law enforcement agencies

Law enforcement accounted for 82% of all delinquency cases referred to juvenile court in 2019. The proportion referred by law enforcement was as high as 88% in the early 1990s. The remaining referrals were made by others, such as parents, victims, school personnel, and probation officers. In contrast, police referred just 18% of status offense cases; schools referred 62%.

Intake departments screen cases referred to juvenile court for diversion or 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 file a petition requesting 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 to divert the youth or if formal intervention is necessary. Historically, the goal has been to identify the "least restrictive" response, i.e., to intervene only as much as necessary.

Nearly half of all delinquency cases referred to juvenile court intake are han-

dled without a petition. Four in 10 delinquency cases that are not petitioned are dismissed. Even in cases that are diverted from formal handling, intake can issue a warning, refer the youth to community-based programs or services, or offer the youth an agreement—to specific conditions for a specific time period—in exchange for dismissal. 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.

Diversion can be offered with or without "strings attached"

In most jurisdictions, a youth may be offered an informal disposition only if he or she admits to committing the act. The youth's compliance with the informal agreement often is monitored by a probation officer. Thus, this process is sometimes labeled "informal probation."

If the youth successfully complies with the informal disposition, the case is dismissed. If, however, the youth fails to meet the conditions, the case is referred for formal processing and proceeds as it would have if the initial decision had been to petition the case for an adjudicatory hearing.

In some communities the intake approach is to only use services and case management for those youth that need it and only refer them to services that are necessary for positive behavior change. The diversion is "without strings" attached—noncompliance with diversion does not result in court-imposed consequences except in serious cases. Failure in diversion does not result in placement or detention.

The petition requests a court 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 petition requesting a waiver hearing to transfer the case to criminal court.

A delinquency petition states the allegations and requests that the juvenile court 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 individual is convicted and sentenced.

In response to the delinquency petition, an adjudicatory hearing is scheduled. Even after a delinquency petition has been filed, court officials can order the case closed before it reaches adjudication and divert the youth out of

the system. If the case reaches an adjudicatory hearing (trial), witnesses are called and the facts of the case are presented. In nearly all adjudicatory hearings, a judge or judicial officer makes the determination that the youth was responsible for the offense(s); however, in some states, the youth has the right to a jury trial.

Youth may be held in a secure detention facility during their case

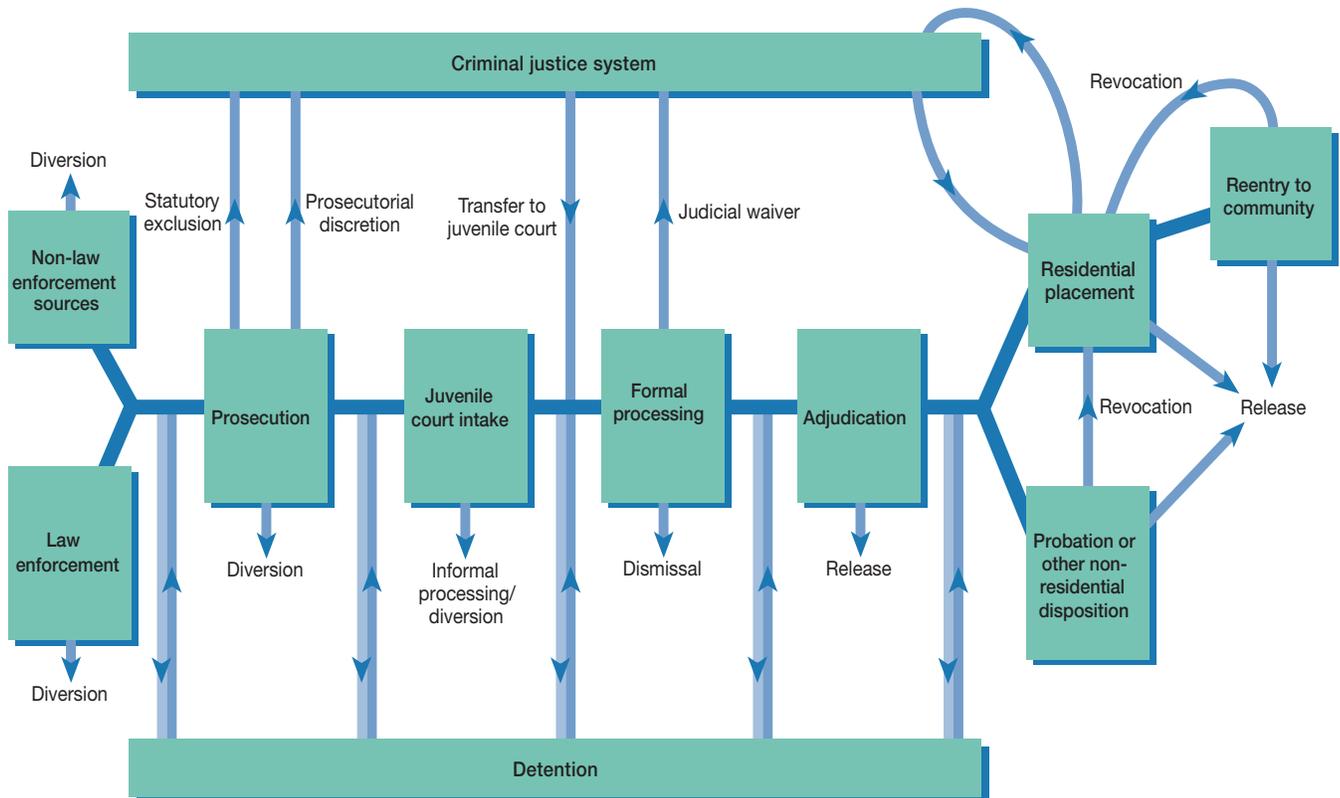
Juvenile courts may hold youth involved in delinquency cases in a secure juvenile detention facility while awaiting their hearing to protect the community, to protect the child, or both.

After arrest, law enforcement may request to bring the youth to the local

juvenile detention facility. A juvenile probation officer or detention worker reviews the case to decide whether the youth poses a risk to the community and should be detained pending a hearing before a judge. In many jurisdictions a detention risk assessment tool is used to inform and give structure to the decision.

Because the experience of secure detention may cause harm to the youth, the detention decision should be a thoughtful process that balances public safety and the best interests of the child. Ideally, secure detention is a last resort that is part of a continuum of care with several detention alternatives available for youth facing delinquency charges in the juvenile justice system.

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 may vary among jurisdictions.

In all states, if a youth is held in detention, a detention hearing must be held within a period defined by statute, generally within 24 hours. At the detention hearing, a judge reviews the case and determines if continued detention is warranted. In 2019, youth were detained, at least at some point, between referral to court and case disposition in 26% of juvenile court delinquency cases.

As part of efforts to reduce the use of detention, jurisdictions may take steps to reduce the length of stay in detention. The fact that a youth was detained initially doesn't mean they need to remain confined until their case is disposed. Efforts to find suitable alternatives to detention can enable the court to safely release the youth. De-

tention may extend beyond the adjudicatory and dispositional hearings. If residential placement is ordered but no placement beds are available, the youth may remain in detention until a bed elsewhere becomes available.

The juvenile court may transfer the case to criminal court

The prosecutor or intake officer files a waiver petition if they believe that a case under jurisdiction of the juvenile court would be more appropriately handled in criminal court. The juvenile 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 youth committed the act. With this established, the court decides whether juvenile

court 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 the youth's amenability to treatment in the juvenile justice system. The prosecution may argue that the youth has been adjudicated several times previously and that interventions ordered by the juvenile court have not kept the youth 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. In 2019, juvenile courts waived just under 1% of all formally processed delinquency cases. If the judge does not approve the waiver request, generally an adjudicatory hearing is scheduled in juvenile court.

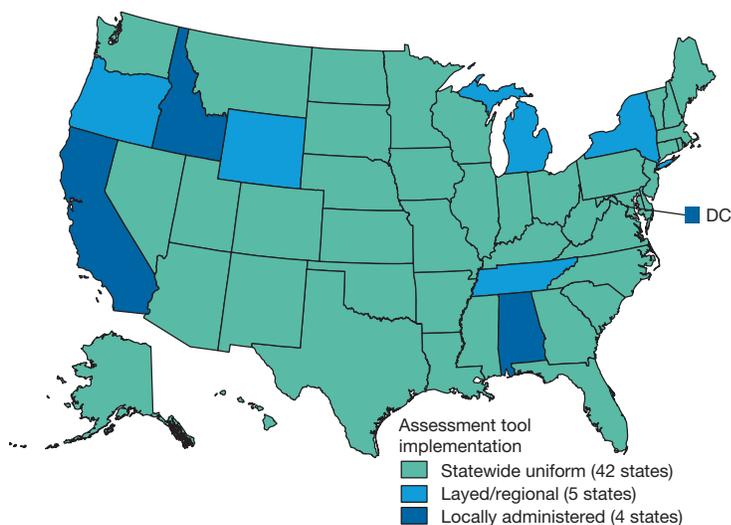
Some states let prosecutors file certain cases directly in criminal court

In more than half of the states, legislatures have decided that in certain cases (generally those involving serious offenses), youth should be tried in criminal court. The law excludes such cases from juvenile court; prosecutors must file them in criminal court. In a smaller number of states, legislatures have given both the juvenile and adult/criminal courts concurrent jurisdiction in certain cases. Thus, prosecutors have discretion to file such cases in either criminal or juvenile court.

After adjudication, probation staff prepare a disposition plan

Once the youth is adjudicated delinquent in juvenile court, probation staff develop a case disposition plan. To pre-

Most states have adopted a single risk/needs assessment tool statewide to measure the youth's risk of reoffending and their criminogenic needs



- **Statewide uniform assessment:** States adopt a single risk assessment tool statewide that is required or encouraged by the state or in progress toward this goal with a specific instrument.
- **Layered/regional assessment:** States do not achieve statewide implementation with a single tool due to layered probation (state and local) or due to regional differences.
- **Locally administered assessment:** States lack requirement to implement risk assessment tool allowing local policy to govern the use of risk assessment tools.

Source: Authors' adaptation of NCJJ's Juvenile Justice GPS, State Implementation of Risk/Needs Assessment Tools.

pare this plan, probation staff assess the youth, typically using a structured risk/needs assessment tool. Such tools are a key component of the Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) framework. The tools predict the likelihood that youth will reoffend and provide information on the youth's dynamic risk factors that need to change to reduce their law violating behavior (known as criminogenic needs) and how to tailor the intervention to the youth's learning style, motivation, abilities, and strengths.

In addition to assessing the youth, probation staff must identify available support systems, programs, and services in the community for the youth. The court may also order psychological evaluations, and diagnostic tests that may include 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 or the youth's defense counsel may also present dispositional recommendations. Some jurisdictions use a structured decisionmaking grid, known as a disposition matrix, which identifies the most effective responses to youth in various risk categories. After considering the recommendations, the judge orders a disposition in the case. Each disposition should be narrowly tailored to meet the specific interests and needs of each young person.

The majority of youth adjudicated delinquent are ordered to probation

Most juvenile dispositions are multifaceted and involve some sort of supervised probation. In fact, probation is the most frequent disposition ordered in juvenile court, however, it is only one of many options. In 2019, formal probation was the most severe disposition ordered in 65% of the cases in which the youth was adjudicated delinquent.

A probation order may include additional requirements such as drug counseling, or restitution to the community or victim. The term of probation may be for a specified period of time or it may be open-ended.

Research on adolescent development has ushered in substantial changes in how probation operates. There is a growing understanding that probation orders should not be uniform, and must address if probation will be supervised or unsupervised, for a limited time or open-ended, and include a limited number of "conditions" (rules the youth must follow while under probation supervision), if any, in the order. Some jurisdictions are using probation orders that do not include a long list of conditions, but rather direct the youth to work with probation on achieving the goals outlined in their case disposition or supervision plan.

Although it is not recommended practice, many jurisdictions confine youth in detention or longer term facilities for technical violations of their probation order. In 2019, technical violations of probation, parole, or valid court order accounted for 18% of youth in detention centers on any given day.

Review hearings may be held to monitor the youth's progress, either by the court or the probation department. After the judge is satisfied that the terms of the probation order have been met, the judge terminates the case.

The judge may order residential placement

In 2019, juvenile courts ordered residential placement in 27% 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 com-

What does good community supervision practice look like?

Community supervision has evolved and become less about short-term rule compliance—with probation officers as referees to catch youth doing something wrong (surveillance) and more like coaching youth to promote long-term success and behavior change.

Best practices for juvenile probation and reentry community supervision include tailored, youth- and family-centered supervision plans, achievable goals that support youth's ability to complete any conditions included in the supervision order, connection with prosocial activities and adults in the community, and referral to more intensive treatment only as needed for substance use, mental health, and other health needs.

mits a youth to the state department of juvenile corrections, the department determines where the youth will be placed and when the youth 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 youth's progress.

Juvenile reentry or aftercare is similar to adult parole

Upon release from residential placement, the youth is often ordered to a period of community supervision (reentry, aftercare, or parole). During this period, the youth is under supervision of the court, a probation or parole agency, or the juvenile corrections agency. Like probation supervision, reentry community supervision is changing. Youth will eventually return to their communities and research has shown that youth and their families need support to successfully make the transition. Many jurisdictions are pro-

viding help to strengthen families and provide youth with educational and vocational opportunities, employment and housing assistance, mental and physical healthcare, family programming, and substance use treatment to help youth overcome barriers to successful reentry.

If the youth does not follow the conditions of supervision, their release may be revoked and they may be recommitted to the same facility or committed to another facility. In 2019, technical violations of probation, parole, or valid court order accounted for 11% of youth in long-term secure facilities on a typical day.

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 that are law violations only for youth because of their juvenile status. These “status offenses” may include behaviors such

as running away from home, truancy, alcohol possession or use, incorrigibility, and curfew violations.

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 by providing social services. This approach is in line with the recommendations of the 1968 federal Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act.

Although many youth charged with status offenses enter the juvenile justice system through law enforcement, the

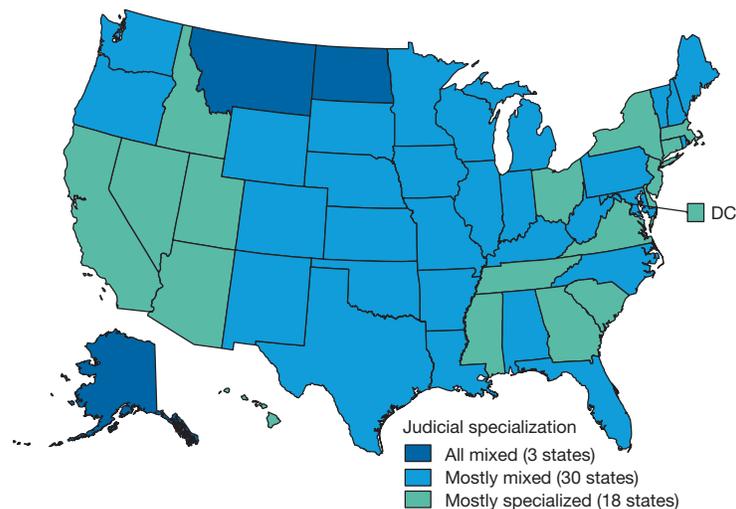
initial, official contact may be a school or child welfare agency. Fewer than 1 in 5 petitioned status offense cases were referred to juvenile court by law enforcement in 2019.

The federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act states that jurisdictions shall not hold 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 known as the valid court order exception: a status offender may be confined in a secure juvenile facility if they have violated a valid court order, such as a probation order requiring the youth to attend school or observe a curfew.

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.

Most judges who hear juvenile justice cases do not specialize; most carry a mixed caseload



- **All mixed case types:** All, or nearly all, judges are not specialized and carry a mixed caseload of juvenile and adult cases, including often both criminal and civil cases.
- **Mostly mixed:** Most judges in the state are not specialized and carry a mixed caseload.
- **Mostly specialized:** Most judges in the state who handle delinquency and family cases are specialized in this area of practice.

Source: Authors' adaptation of NCJJ's Juvenile Justice GPS, Judicial Specialization.

Once a mainstay of juvenile court, confidentiality has given way to substantial openness in many states

The first juvenile court was open to the public, but confidentiality became the norm over time

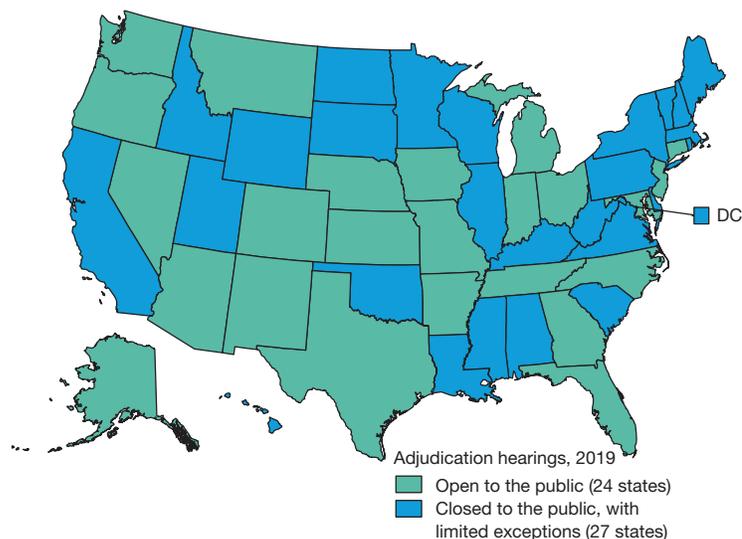
The legislation that created the first juvenile court in Illinois stated that the hearings should be open to the public. Thus, the public could monitor the activities of the court to ensure that the court handled cases in line with community standards.

In 1920, all but 7 of the 45 states that established separate juvenile courts permitted publication of information about juvenile court proceedings. The Standard Juvenile Court Act, first published in 1925, did not ban the publication of juveniles' names. By 1952, however, many states that adopted the Act had statutes that excluded the general public from juvenile court proceedings. The commentary to the 1959 version of the Act referred to the hearings as "private, not secret." It added that reporters should be permitted to attend hearings with the understanding that they not disclose the identity of the juvenile. The rationale for this confidentiality was "to prevent the humiliation and demoralizing effect of publicity." It was also thought that publicity might propel youth into further delinquent acts to gain more recognition.

As juvenile courts became more formalized and concerns about rising juvenile crime increased, the pendulum began to swing back toward more openness. By 2010, statutes in 38 states permitted the public to attend certain hearings in delinquency matters.

In 2019, there were 24 states with statutes allowing delinquency adjudication hearings to be generally open to the public. In the remaining 26 states and the District of Columbia the public is restricted from attending delinquency adjudication hearings, although there may be limited exceptions.

Delinquency adjudication hearings are closed to the public in more than half of states



Source: Authors' adaptation of the Juvenile Law Center's *Failed Policies, Forfeited Futures*.

Most states specify exceptions to confidentiality of juvenile court records

Although legal and social records maintained by juvenile courts have traditionally been confidential, legislatures have made significant changes over the past decades in how the justice system treats information about youth in delinquency proceedings. Juvenile court records are generally available to law enforcement (including prosecutors) and court personnel (including probation) for planning purposes to ensure youth are provided treatment and rehabilitative services. Records are also available to the youth, their attorney, and their parents/guardian. In almost every state, the juvenile code specifies other agencies or individuals allowed access to such records.

Many states have school notification laws. Under these statutes, schools are notified when students are involved in the justice system. Some states limit notification to adjudication or serious charges.

After the case is closed, juvenile record access can lead to severe collateral consequences

Juvenile records often follow youth well into adulthood and create barriers to employment and education. Public knowledge of a youth's justice system involvement works against the juvenile justice objective of rehabilitation by limiting the youth's ability to pursue personal and professional goals. Public access to juvenile record information can have substantial collateral consequences for youth, leading to the denial of secondary education, housing, employment, military service, and certain government benefits.

Juvenile record expungement or sealing can reduce the collateral consequences of a past case

Protecting youth's confidentiality including their records is at the heart of the juvenile justice system's rehabilitative aim. All states allow at least some juvenile records to be sealed—removed from public view or removed from view for some or all system actors—or

expunged—permanently deleted or destroyed. The majority of those provisions allow records to be unsealed to inform future investigation or prosecution. Some statutes use the term expungement but describe sealing. Some states rely on confidentiality laws and have no sealing or expungement provisions. Some states only expunge or seal records of nonjudicial cases, others only expunge or seal arrest records not court records.

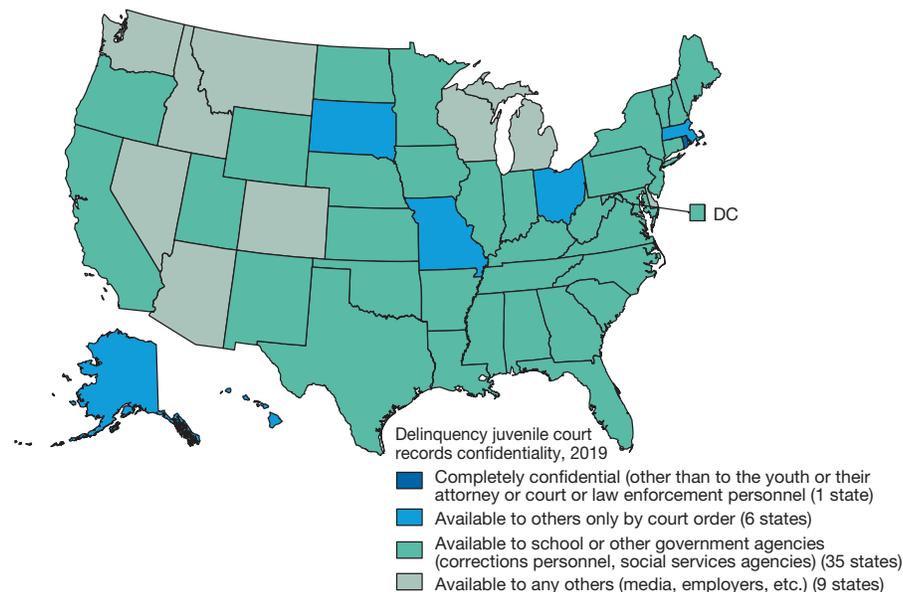
In some states, sealing happens automatically after a specified amount of time crimefree, but in most jurisdictions the youth must petition the court to request their records be sealed or expunged even if the charges were dropped or they were found not guilty. The process is often complicated, expensive, and may require an attorney.

Research often relies on the use of confidential juvenile records

In many states, records that are expunged or sealed are not available for research or descriptive caseload statistics. In some states, the records are available for caseload statistics, but are deidentified and cannot be connected to any future case activity by researchers conducting research requiring detail on recidivism/subsequent offending.

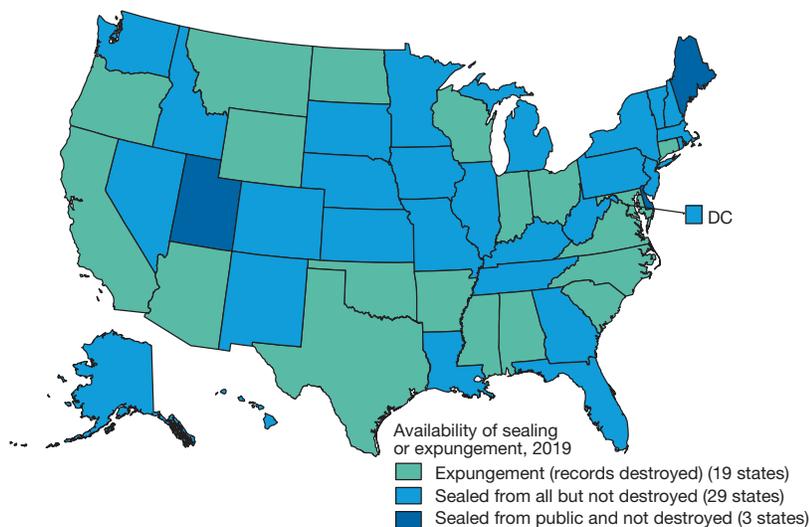
As part of juvenile justice reform efforts, several states have expanded provisions for expungement or sealing of juvenile court records. States are also increasing the use of risk/needs assessments and evidence-based programs and practices. States must calculate rates of reoffending to validate risk/needs assessment instruments and evaluate programs and practices to determine what is effective. Deleting, destroying, or de-identifying records can confuse those calculations. If recidivism is calculated without crimefree youth included because their records are no longer available, the resulting reoffending rates could be substantially higher than if crimefree youth are included.

Most states allow juvenile court records to be made available to certain other government agencies



Source: Authors' adaptation of the Juvenile Law Center's *Failed Policies, Forfeited Futures*.

Most states allow at least some juvenile records to be sealed (at least from public view), but those records may later be unsealed



Source: Authors' adaptation of the Juvenile Law Center's *Failed Policies, Forfeited Futures*.

All states allow certain juveniles to be tried in criminal court or otherwise face adult sanctions

Transferring juveniles to criminal court is not a new phenomenon

Juvenile courts have always had mechanisms for removing youth charged with the most serious offenses from the juvenile justice system. Traditional transfer laws establish provisions and criteria for trying certain youth of juvenile age in criminal court. Blended sentencing laws are also used to impose a combination of juvenile and adult criminal sanctions on some youth of juvenile age.

Transfer laws address which court (juvenile or criminal) has jurisdiction over certain cases involving youth charged with law violations. State transfer provisions are typically limited by age and offense criteria. Transfer mechanisms vary regarding where the case initiates and where responsibility for transfer decisionmaking lies. Transfer provisions fall into the following three general categories.

Judicial waiver: In 47 states in 2019, the juvenile court judge had the authority to waive juvenile court jurisdiction and transfer the case to criminal court for at least some cases. 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.

Statutory exclusion: In 2019, 27 states had statutes that exclude certain youth from juvenile court jurisdiction. Under statutory exclusion provisions, cases originate in criminal rather than juvenile court. Statutory exclusion is also known as legislative exclusion.

Prosecutorial discretion: In 14 states in 2019, original jurisdiction for certain cases was shared by both criminal

and juvenile courts, and the prosecutor has the discretion to file such cases in either court. When the prosecutor decides to “transfer” a case it originates in criminal court. Transfer under prosecutorial discretion provisions is also known as prosecutorial waiver, concurrent jurisdiction, or direct file.

Most states have “once an adult, always an adult” provisions

In 35 states, 2019 statutes require that 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.

Reverse waiver and blended sentencing serve as mitigating provisions

Even juveniles subject to the more automatic transfer mechanisms may be afforded a chance, at some point in the process, to make an individualized showing that they belong in the juvenile system. Reverse waiver and blended sentencing are two kinds of mitigating provisions that serve to inject individualized consideration into what would otherwise be automatic or inflexible transfer processes.

Reverse waiver. Laws permit criminal courts to restore transferred youth to juvenile court for trial or disposition. In 2019, of the 42 states with mandatory judicial waiver, statutory exclusion, or prosecutor discretion provisions, 26 also had provisions that allow certain transferred youth to petition for a “reverse.” Two additional states had reverse provisions that apply to “once

an adult, always an adult” provisions. Reverse decision criteria often parallel a state’s discretionary waiver criteria.

Blended sentencing laws address the correctional system (juvenile or adult) in which certain youth found guilty of certain crimes will be sanctioned. Blended sentencing statutes can be placed into the following two general categories.

Juvenile blended sentencing: In 2019, statutes in 15 states gave juvenile court the authority to impose adult criminal sanctions on youth charged with certain crimes. The majority of these blended sentencing laws authorize the juvenile court to combine a juvenile disposition with a criminal sentence that is suspended. If the youth successfully completes the juvenile disposition and does not commit a new offense, the criminal sanction is not imposed. If, however, the youth does not cooperate or fails in the juvenile sanctioning system, the adult criminal sanction is imposed. Juvenile court blended sentencing gives the juvenile court the power to send uncooperative youth to adult prison, broadening the typical array of juvenile court dispositional options.

Criminal blended sentencing. In 2019, statutes in 23 states allowed criminal courts sentencing certain transferred youth to impose sanctions otherwise available only to youth handled in juvenile court. The juvenile disposition may be conditional—the suspended criminal sentence is intended to ensure good behavior. Criminal court blended sentencing gives youth prosecuted in criminal court one last chance at a juvenile disposition, thus mitigating the effects of transfer laws on an individual basis.

Most states have multiple ways to impose adult sanctions on juveniles charged with a crime

State	Judicial waiver			Statutory exclusion	Prosecutorial discretion	Once an adult/ always an adult	Reverse waiver	Blended sentencing	
	Discretionary	Presumptive	Mandatory					Juvenile	Criminal
Number of states	46	12	12	27	14	35	28	15	23
Alabama	■			■		■			
Alaska	■	■		■				■	■
Arizona	■			■	■	■	■		
Arkansas	■				■		■	■	■
California	■					■	■		■
Colorado	■	■			■	■	■	■	■
Connecticut	■		■			■	■	■	■
Delaware	■		■	■	■	■	■		
Dist. of Columbia	■	■			■	■			
Florida	■				■	■			■
Georgia	■			■	■		■		■
Hawaii	■					■			
Idaho	■			■		■			■
Illinois	■	■		■				■	■
Indiana	■		■	■		■	■	■	■
Iowa	■			■		■	■		■
Kansas	■					■		■	
Kentucky	■		■				■		■
Louisiana	■		■	■	■				
Maine	■	■				■			
Maryland	■			■		■	■		
Massachusetts				■				■	■
Michigan	■				■	■		■	■
Minnesota	■	■		■		■		■	
Mississippi	■			■		■	■		
Missouri	■					■			■
Montana				■	■		■	■	■
Nebraska	■				■		■		■
Nevada	■	■		■		■	■		
New Hampshire	■	■				■			
New Jersey			■				■		
New Mexico				■				■	■
New York				■			■		
North Carolina	■		■			■	■		
North Dakota	■	■	■			■			
Ohio	■		■			■	■	■	
Oklahoma	■			■	■	■	■		■
Oregon	■			■		■	■		
Pennsylvania	■	■		■		■	■		
Rhode Island	■	■				■		■	
South Carolina	■		■	■		■			
South Dakota	■			■		■	■		
Tennessee	■					■	■		
Texas	■					■		■	
Utah	■	■		■		■			
Vermont	■			■			■		■
Virginia	■		■		■	■	■		■
Washington	■			■		■			
West Virginia	■		■			■			■
Wisconsin	■			■		■	■		■
Wyoming	■				■		■		

■ In states with a combination of provisions for transferring juveniles to criminal court, the exclusion, mandatory waiver, or prosecutorial discretion provisions generally target the oldest youth and/or those charged with the most serious offenses, whereas younger youth and/or those charged with relatively less serious offenses may be eligible for discretionary waiver.

Note: Table information is as of the end of the 2019 legislative session.

Source: Authors' adaptation of OJJDP's *Statistical Briefing Book*.

In most states, age and offense criteria limit transfer provisions

Judicial waiver remains the most common transfer provision

As of the end of the 2019 legislative session, a total of 47 states have laws designating some category of cases in which waiver of jurisdiction by juvenile court judges transfers certain cases 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, waiver is limited by age and offense boundaries.

Waiver provisions vary in terms of the degree of decisionmaking flexibility allowed. The decision may be entirely discretionary, there may be a rebuttable presumption in favor of waiver, or it may be a mandatory decision. Mandatory decisions arise when a law or provision requires a judge to waive the child after certain statutory criteria have been met. Most states set a minimum threshold for eligibility, but these are often quite low. In a few states, prosecutors may ask the court to waive virtually any juvenile delinquency case. Nationally, the proportion of juvenile cases in which waiver was granted was less than 1% of petitioned delinquency cases in 2019. The number of cases waived in 2019 (3,300) was 75% less than the number waived in 1994 (13,000), which was the peak year.

Some 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 youth who are no longer “amenable to treatment.” The specific factors that determine lack of amenability vary, but they typically include the youth’s willingness to participate in treatment 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 youth’s offense history, the availability of dis-

positional treatment alternatives, the time available for sanctions, public safety, and the best interest of the child. The waiver process must also

In most states, juvenile court judges may waive jurisdiction over certain cases and transfer them to criminal court

Judicial waiver offense and minimum age criteria, 2019

State	Any criminal offense	Certain felonies	Capital crimes	Murder	Certain person offenses	Certain property offenses	Certain drug offenses	Certain weapon offenses
Alabama	14							
Alaska	NS				NS			
Arizona		NS						
Arkansas		14	14	14	14			14
California		16						
Colorado		12		12	12	12		
Connecticut		15		15	15	15		
Delaware	NS	14						
Dist. of Columbia	15	15		15	15	15		NS
Florida	14							
Georgia		15	13		13			
Hawaii		14		NS				
Idaho	14			NS	NS	NS	NS	
Illinois	13	15						
Indiana		NS		12			16	
Iowa	12	10						
Kansas	14							
Kentucky		14	14					
Louisiana				14	14			
Maine		NS		NS	NS	NS		
Maryland	15		NS					
Michigan		14						
Minnesota		14						
Mississippi	13							
Missouri		12						
Nebraska	16	14						
Nevada	16	14		13	16			
New Hampshire		15		13	13		15	
New Jersey	15	15		15	15	15	15	15
North Carolina		13	13					
North Dakota	14	14		14	14	14		
Ohio		14		14	16	16		
Oklahoma		NS						
Oregon	15	15		NS	NS	15		
Pennsylvania		14		14	14	14		
Rhode Island		16	NS					
South Carolina	17	14		NS	NS		14	14
South Dakota		NS						
Tennessee		14						
Texas		14	14				14	
Utah		14		16	16	16		16
Vermont		16		12	12	12		
Virginia		14		14	14			
Washington	NS							
West Virginia		NS		NS	NS	NS	NS	
Wisconsin	15	14		14	14	14	14	
Wyoming	NS							

Notes: An entry in the column below an offense category means that there is at least one offense in that category for which a juvenile may be waived from juvenile court to criminal court. The number indicates the youngest possible age at which a juvenile accused of an offense in that category may be waived. “NS” means no age restriction is specified for an offense in that category. Table information is as of the end of the 2019 legislative session.

Source: Authors’ adaptation of OJJDP’s *Statistical Briefing Book*.

adhere to constitutional principles of due process of *Kent v. United States* (1966).

The surge in violence that peaked in 1994 helped shape current transfer laws

State transfer laws in their current form are largely the product of a period of intense legislative activity that began in the latter half of the 1980s and continued through the end of the 1990s. Prompted in part by public concern and media focus on the rise in violent youth crime that began in 1987 and peaked in 1994, legislatures in nearly every state revised or rewrote their laws to lower thresholds and expand eligibility for transfer, shift transfer decisionmaking authority from judges to prosecutors, and replace individualized attention with broad automatic and categorical mechanisms.

Between 1986 and the end of the century, the number of states with automatic transfer laws jumped from 20 to 38, and the number with prosecutorial discretion laws rose from 7 to 15.

Moreover, many states that had automatic or prosecutor controlled transfer statutes expanded their coverage drastically. In Pennsylvania, for example, an automatic transfer law had been in place since 1933 but had applied only to murder charges. Amendments that took place in 1996 added a long list of violent offenses to this formerly narrow statutory exclusion.

Transfer laws giving prosecutors discretion to file in juvenile or criminal court are least common

As of the end of the 2019 legislative session, 14 states had prosecutorial discretion provisions, which gave both juvenile and criminal courts original jurisdiction in certain cases. Under such provisions, prosecutors have discretion to file eligible cases in either court. Prosecutorial discretion is typically limited by age and offense criteria focusing on cases involving violent or repeat crimes or weapons offenses. These statutes are usually silent regarding standards, protocols, or considerations for decisionmaking, and no national data exists on the number of youth tried in

criminal court under prosecutorial discretion provisions.

State appellate courts have taken the view that prosecutorial discretion is equivalent to the routine charging decisions prosecutors make in criminal cases. Prosecutorial discretion in charging is considered an executive function, which is not subject to judicial review and does not have to meet the due process standards established by the Supreme Court. Some states, however, do have written guidelines for prosecutorial discretion.

Statutory exclusion accounts for the largest number of transfers

Legislatures transfer large numbers of youth to criminal court by enacting statutes that exclude certain cases from original juvenile court jurisdiction. As of the end of the 2019 legislative session, 27 states had statutory exclusion provisions. State laws typically set age and offense limits for excluded offenses. The offenses most often excluded are murder, capital crimes, and other serious person offenses. (Minor offenses such as wildlife, traffic, and watercraft violations are often excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction in states where they are not covered by concurrent jurisdiction provisions.)

Exclusion laws and prosecutors transfer more cases than do juvenile court judges

Based on data from 11 states with transfer laws other than judicial waiver provisions, 4,900 youth were prosecuted in criminal court under those laws. Applying that case rate to the youth population in the 24 other states with such laws that do not make data public, results in a rough estimate of 4,000 youth. Thus, approximately 8,900 youth younger than 18 were prosecuted in criminal court under statutory exclusion and prosecutor discretion laws. In comparison, 3,300 cases were transferred to criminal court by juvenile court judges.

In states with concurrent jurisdiction, the prosecutor has discretion to file certain cases in either criminal or juvenile court

Prosecutorial discretion offense and minimum age criteria, 2019

State	Any criminal offense	Certain felonies	Capital crimes	Murder	Certain person offenses	Certain property offenses	Certain drug offenses	Certain weapon offenses
Arizona		14						
Arkansas		16	14	14	14			
Colorado	16	16			16			
Delaware		16						
Dist. of Columbia	16	16		16	16	16		
Florida	16	16		14	14	14		14
Georgia			NS	13	13			
Louisiana				15	15	15	15	
Michigan		14		14	14	14	14	
Montana				12	12	16	16	16
Nebraska	17	14						
Oklahoma		16		15	15	15	16	15
Virginia				14	14		14	
Wyoming	13	14		14	14	14		

Notes: An entry in the column below an offense category means that there is at least one offense in that category that is subject to criminal prosecution at the option of the prosecutor. The number indicates the youngest possible age at which a juvenile accused of an offense in that category is subject to criminal prosecution. "NS" means no age restriction is specified for an offense in that category. Table information is as of the end of the 2019 legislative session.

Source: Authors' adaptation of OJJDP's *Statistical Briefing Book*.

Jurisdictional age laws may transfer as many as 40,800 additional youth to criminal court

Although not typically thought of as transfers, large numbers of youth younger than age 18 are tried in criminal court. States have always been free to define the respective jurisdictions of their juvenile and criminal courts. Nothing compels a state to draw the line between juvenile and adult at age 18. In 8 states, the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction during 2019 was set at 15 or 16 and youth could be held criminally responsible at age 16 or 17, respectively. The number of youth younger than 18 prosecuted as adults in these states can only be estimated.

To estimate the number of youth younger than 18 prosecuted in criminal court in these states, a study by Puzzanchera et al. used 2019 delinquency petition rates—that is, the rates at which youth are formally processed in juvenile court. Specifically, national age/sex/race petition rates were developed for delinquency cases based on estimates developed by the National Juvenile Court Data Archive. These rates were applied to corresponding age/sex/race population estimates for each of these 8 states. The resulting counts for each state were summed to produce an estimate of the number of cases involving 16- and 17-year-olds subject to criminal court processing in these 8 states. Using population and delinquency case estimates, an estimat-

ed 40,800 cases involving youth younger than 18 were subject to criminal court processing in 2019 in states with an upper age threshold younger than the 18th birthday.

This estimate is based on an assumption that juvenile and criminal courts would respond in the same way to similar offending behavior. It is possible that some conduct that would be considered serious enough to merit formal processing in juvenile court—such as vandalism, minor thefts, and low-level public order offenses—would not receive similar handling in criminal court.

Many states allow transfer of certain very young youth

In 21 states, no minimum age is specified in at least one judicial waiver, concurrent jurisdiction, or statutory exclusion provision for transferring juveniles to criminal court. For example, Pennsylvania’s murder exclusion has no specified minimum age. Other transfer provisions in Pennsylvania have age minimums set at 14 and 15. Among states where statutes specify age limits for all transfer provisions, age 14 is the most common minimum age specified across provisions.

Minimum transfer age specified in statute, 2019:

Age	State
None	Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming
10	Iowa, Wisconsin
12	Colorado, Missouri, Vermont
13	Illinois, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina
14	Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia
15	Connecticut, New Jersey, New Mexico
16	California

In states with statutory exclusion provisions, certain serious offenses are excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction

Statutory exclusion offense and minimum age criteria, 2011

State	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	16	16	16
Arizona		15		15	15	15		15
Delaware		NS		NS	NS	NS	16	
Georgia				13	13			
Idaho				14	14	14	14	
Illinois				16	16			
Indiana		16		16	16			16
Iowa	17	16					16	16
Louisiana				15	15			
Maryland			14	16	16			16
Massachusetts				14				
Minnesota				16				
Mississippi		13	13					
Montana			NS	17	17	17	17	17
Nevada	16	NS		NS	NS			16
New Mexico				15				
New York	16	16		13	13	14		14
Oklahoma		15		13	15	15	16	
Oregon				15	15	15		
Pennsylvania				NS	15	15		
South Carolina		16						
South Dakota		16						
Utah		16		16	16	16		16
Vermont				14	14	14		
Wisconsin				10	10			

Notes: An entry in the column below an offense category means that there is at least one offense in that category that is excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction. The number indicates the youngest possible age at which a juvenile accused of an offense in that category is subject to exclusion. “NS” means no age restriction is specified for an offense in that category. Table information is as of the end of the 2019 legislative session.

Source: Authors’ adaptation of OJJDP’s *Statistical Briefing Book*.

From 2004 to 2019, most states made changes to their transfer laws—many narrowing the path to criminal court

30 states changed their transfer laws between 2004 and 2019

Despite the steady decline in youth crime and violence rates since the mid-1990s, in 21 states transfer provisions remained essentially unchanged between 2004 and 2019. Among the 30 states making changes to the laws controlling youth transfer to criminal court, most made changes that narrowed the pool of youth eligible for transfer. There were 16 states that only enacted changes that narrowed the eligibility criteria for transfer to criminal

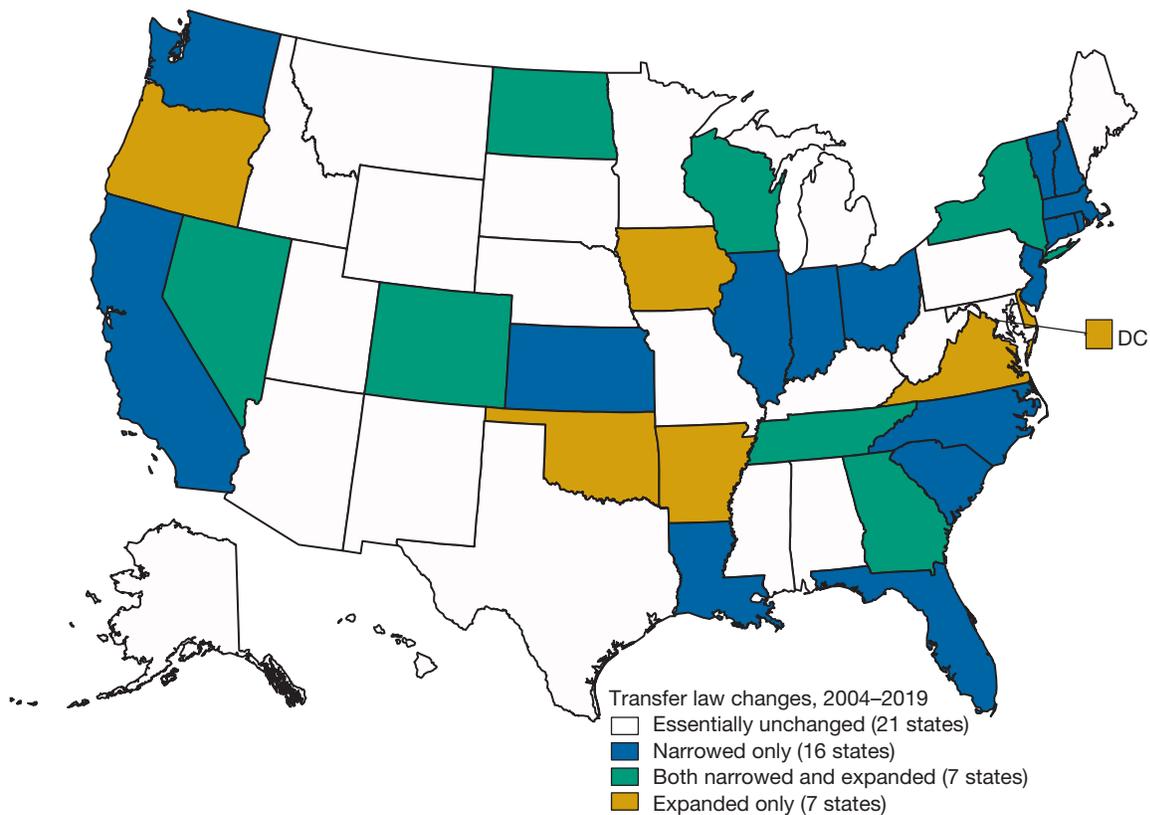
court. These included changes like “raise the age” reforms which impact all youth in a given age group, increases in upper or lower age limits, reductions in the offenses in transfer laws, removing transfer provisions, or adding reverse transfer provisions.

Among states that made changes, seven only made changes that expanded transfer criteria, such as adding provisions, lowering age limits, or adding offense categories. There were seven additional states that made changes in both directions. For example, New

York raised the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction and expanded their exclusion provisions by adding offenses and lowering the minimum age for some.

The net effect is that more states rolled back provisions—narrowing the criteria enabling youth to end up in criminal court. In 2019, there were an estimated 53,000 youth younger than 18 tried in criminal court. That figure was down 64% from the 2005 estimate.

Since 2004, more states have narrowed their transfer provisions than expanded them, contributing to a reduction in the number of youth eligible to be tried as adults in criminal court



Source: Authors analysis of state statutes and OJJDP's *Statistical Briefing Book*.



Few juveniles enter the federal justice system

There is no separate federal juvenile justice system

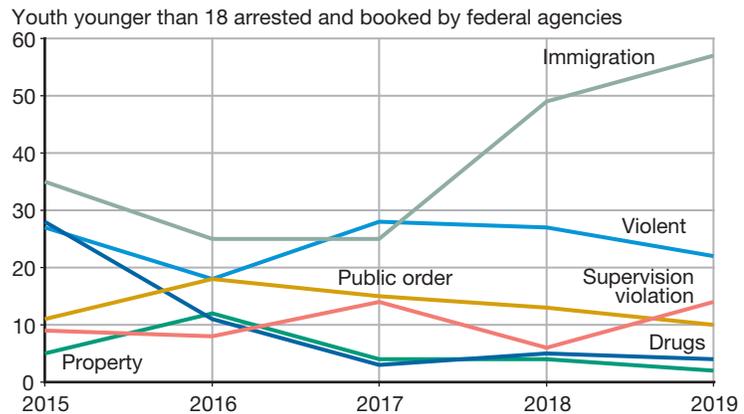
Youth younger than 18 who are arrested by federal law enforcement agencies may be prosecuted and sentenced in U.S. District Courts and even committed to the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The Federal Juvenile Delinquency Act, Title 18 U.S.C. 5031, lays out the definitions of a juvenile and juvenile delinquency as well as the procedures for the handling of juveniles accused of crimes against the U.S. Although it generally requires that youth be turned over to state or local authorities, there are limited exceptions.

Juveniles initially come into federal law enforcement custody in a variety of ways. The federal agencies that arrest the most young people are the Border Patrol, Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Marshals Service, and FBI. In 2019, there were a total of 218 youth younger than 18 arrested by federal agencies. That figure was slightly fewer than the average for the 2010–2019 period (219.5). The peak during that period was 384 in 2011, which was driven by a spike in drug arrests.

Federal prosecutors may retain certain serious cases

Following a federal arrest of a person younger than 21, federal law requires an investigation to determine whether the offense was a delinquency offense under state law. If so, and if the state is willing and able to deal with the youth, the federal prosecutor may forego prosecution and surrender the youth to state authorities. However, a case may instead be “certified” by the Attorney General for federal delinquency prosecution, if one of the following conditions exists: (1) the state does not have or refuses to take jurisdiction over the case; (2) the state does not have adequate programs or services for the needs of the youth; or (3) the youth is charged with a violent felony, drug trafficking, or firearms offense and the

In 2019, immigration arrests remained a large share of federal arrests of youth younger than 18



Source: Authors' analysis of BJS' *Federal Criminal Case Processing Statistics* data tool for 2015 through 2019.

case involves a “substantial federal interest.”

A case certified for federal delinquency prosecution is heard in U.S. District Court by a judge sitting in closed session without a jury. Following a finding of delinquency, the court has disposition powers similar to those of state juvenile courts. For instance, it may order the youth to pay restitution, serve a period of probation, or undergo “official detention” in a correctional facility. Generally, neither probation nor official detention may extend beyond the youth’s 21st birthday or the maximum term that could be imposed on an adult convicted of an equivalent offense, whichever is shorter. But for juveniles who are between ages 18 and 21 at the time of sentencing, official detention for certain serious felonies may last up to 5 years.

A juvenile in the federal system may also be “transferred” for criminal prosecution

When proceedings in a federal case involving a juvenile are transferred for criminal prosecution, they actually re-

main in district court but are governed by federal criminal laws rather than state laws or the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. Federal law authorizes transfer at the written request of a youth of at least age 15 who is alleged to have committed an offense after attaining the age of 15 or upon the motion of the Attorney General in a qualifying case where the court finds that “the interest of justice” requires it. Qualifying cases include those in which a youth is charged with (1) a violent felony or drug trafficking or importation offense committed after reaching age 15; (2) murder or aggravated assault committed after reaching age 13; or (3) possession of a firearm during the commission of any offense after reaching age 13. However, transfer is mandatory in any case involving a youth age 16 or older who was previously found guilty of a violent felony or drug trafficking offense and who is now accused of committing a drug trafficking or importation offense or any felony involving the use, attempted use, threat, or substantial risk of force.

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Chapter 5

Law enforcement and youth

Law enforcement is the doorway for most youth who enter 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 many of those that are reported remain unsolved. Law enforcement's incident-based reporting systems include characteristics of the person(s) who committed the crime as reported by the victim. For these crimes, even when there is no arrest, law enforcement records can be used to develop an understanding of juvenile offending. For all other types of crimes, an understanding of juvenile involvement comes through the study of arrest statistics. Arrest statistics can monitor the flow of juveniles and adults into the justice system and 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 and offense characteristics of juvenile arrests in 2019 and historical trends in juvenile arrests. This chapter also examines arrests and arrest trends for females and youth under age 13 and compares arrest trends for males and females and different racial groups. It includes arrest rate trends for many specific offenses, including murder and other violent crimes, property crimes, and drug and weapons offenses. The majority of data presented in this chapter were originally compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as part of its Uniform Crime Reporting Program, which includes the Supplementary Homicide Reports and the National Incident-Based Reporting System. Arrest estimates for 1980–2014 were developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and arrest estimates for 2015–2019 were developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice based on data published in the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for the respective years.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program monitors law enforcement's response to juvenile crime

Police agencies have reported to the UCR Program since the 1930s

Annually, thousands of police agencies voluntarily report the following data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program:

- Number of Index crimes (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson) reported to law enforcement.
- Number of arrests and the most serious charge involved in each arrest.
- Age, sex, and race of persons arrested.
- Proportion of reported Index crimes cleared by arrest, and the proportion of these Index crimes cleared by the arrest of persons younger than 18.
- Police dispositions of juvenile arrests.
- Detailed victim, offender, and circumstance information in murder incidents.

What arrest data tell us about kids and crime

The UCR arrest data provide a sample-based portrait of the volume and characteristics of arrests in the United States. Detailed national estimates developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) for 1980–2014 and the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) for 2015–2019 are based on these sample data. The estimates include detailed juvenile age groups as well as details by sex, race, and specific offenses. The data can be used to analyze the number and rates of juvenile arrests within offense categories and demographic subgroups and to track changes over various periods. They can also be used to compare the relative number of juvenile and adult arrests by offense categories and demographics and to monitor the proportion of crimes cleared by arrests of juveniles.

What do arrest statistics count?

To interpret the material in this chapter properly, the reader needs a clear understanding of what these statistics count. Arrest statistics report the number of arrests that law enforcement agencies made in a given year—not the number of individuals arrested nor the number of crimes committed. The number of arrests is not the same as the number of people arrested because an unknown number of individuals are arrested more than once during the year. Nor do arrest statistics represent the number of crimes that arrested individuals commit, because a series of crimes that one person commits may culminate in a single arrest, and a single crime may result in the arrest of more than one person. This latter situation, where many arrests result from

one crime, is relatively common in juvenile law-violating behavior because juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups. For this reason, one should not use arrest statistics to indicate the relative proportions of crime that juveniles and adults commit. Arrest statistics are most appropriately a measure of entry into the justice system.

Arrest statistics also have limitations in measuring the volume of arrests for a particular offense. Under the UCR Program, the FBI requires law enforcement agencies to classify an arrest by the most serious offense charged in that arrest. For example, the arrest of a youth charged with aggravated assault and possession of a weapon would be reported to the FBI as an arrest for aggravated assault. Therefore, when ar-

The official definition of rape has changed and impacts the Violent Crime Index

Since 1927, the FBI had defined forcible rape as “the carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will.” Beginning in 2013, the FBI adopted a broader definition of rape: “Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.” Unlike the definition in place for more than 80 years, the new definition does not require force and is gender neutral. Under current reporting practices, law enforcement agencies may submit data on rape arrests based on either the new or legacy definition. Due to differences in agency reporting practices, national estimates for the offenses of “rape” and “sex offenses” are not available after 2012. Additionally, estimates for the Violent Crime Index (which included “forcible rape”) are not shown, as this category is no longer compatible with prior years.

Changes to the definition of rape impact the Violent Crime Index. For

many years, the primary means of assessing trends in violent crime was to monitor four offenses that law enforcement agencies nationwide consistently report. These four crimes—murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault—formed the Violent Crime Index. Due to changes in the official definition of rape, tracking violence through the Violent Crime Index is no longer tenable, as the meaning of the included offenses is no longer consistent before and after 2013. In this chapter, we use a modified measure of violence that includes the offenses of murder, robbery, and aggravated assault. In any given year prior to the rape definition change, these three offenses accounted for more than 95% of arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses. Note that these changes do not impact the Property Crime Index, which includes the offenses of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

rest statistics show that law enforcement agencies made an estimated 16,080 arrests of young people for weapons law violations in 2019, it means that a weapons law violation was the most serious charge in these 16,080 arrests. An unknown number of additional arrests in 2019 included a weapons charge as a lesser offense.

What do clearance statistics count?

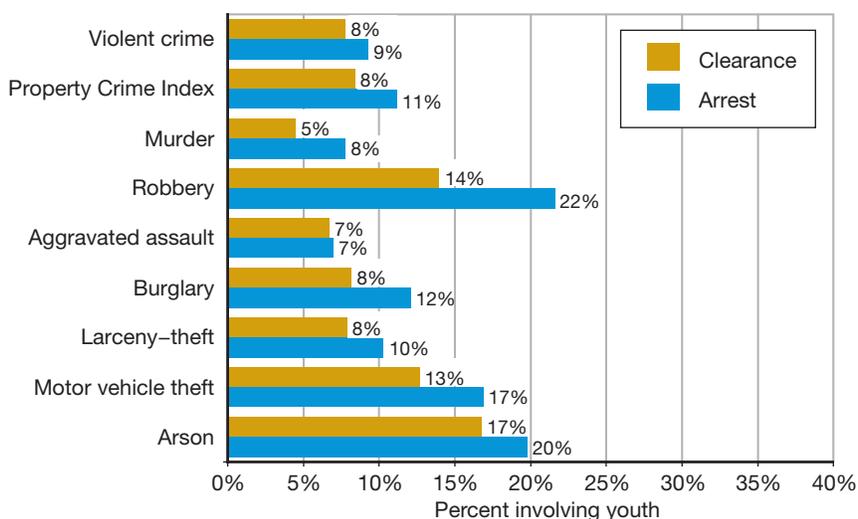
Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that were cleared (or “closed”) by either arrest or other, exceptional means (such as the death of the offender or unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances. For example, 1 arrest could clear 10 burglaries if the person was charged with committing all 10 crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if a group of people committed the crime.

For those interested in juvenile justice issues, the FBI also reports the proportion of clearances that involved arrests of only persons younger than age 18.

This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime that this age group commits than is the proportion of arrests, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic overestimates the proportion of crimes that juveniles commit. Research has shown that juvenile offenders are more easily apprehended than adult offenders; thus, the juvenile proportion of clearances probably overestimates juveniles’ responsibility for crime.

To add to the difficulty in interpreting clearance statistics, the FBI’s current reporting guidelines require that clearances involving both juveniles and adults be classified as clearances for crimes that adults commit. Because the juvenile clearance proportions include only those clearances in which no adults were involved, they underestimate juvenile involvement in crime. Although these data do not present a definitive picture of juvenile involvement in crime, they are the closest measure generally available of the proportion of crime known to law enforcement that is attributed to persons younger than age 18.

The juvenile proportion of arrests exceeded the juvenile proportion of crimes cleared by arrest in each offense category



Source: Author’s analysis of the FBI’s Crime in the United States, 2019.

Incident-based data collection replaces summary reporting

Since the 1930s, law enforcement agencies across the U.S. have voluntarily reported aggregate level crime and arrest data to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Program’s Summary Reporting System (SRS). Out of necessity, details about crime and arrests captured through the UCR program were confined to aggregate counts, thereby limiting a complete understanding of crime incidents. The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) was developed to overcome these and other limitations.

Created in the 1980s, the purpose of NIBRS is to provide statistics about crime that would lead to better decisionmaking. By capturing detailed information about crime incidents, such as information about multiple offenses within the same incident, information about victims and persons known to have committed the offense(s) and the relationships between them, as well as the time of day and location(s) of crime incidents, NIBRS is a much more effective tool for policymakers, analysts, and the general public to truly understand crime and make informed decisions about how to address the problem. Put simply, NIBRS captures the complexity of crime incidents that cannot be achieved by a system based on aggregate counts.

In 2016, the FBI approved the transition of all federal, state, county, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies from SRS to NIBRS. The target date for the transition was January 2021. The FBI expects 75% of all U.S. law enforcement agencies to report their crime data through NIBRS by the effective date, representing 80% of the U.S. population. Based on the FBI’s normal release schedule, data for calendar year 2021—the first year of NIBRS-based estimates—would be available sometime in the fall of 2022.

Law enforcement agencies in the U.S. made 696,620 arrests of persons under age 18 in 2019

Females accounted for 31% of all juvenile arrests in 2019, youth ages 16–17 accounted for 48%, and White youth accounted for 63%

Most serious offense	2019 estimated number of juvenile arrests	Percent of total juvenile arrests, 2019					
		Female	Ages 16–17	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	696,620	31%	48%	63%	34%	2%	1%
Violent crime	44,010	21	50	49	48	2	2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	860	11	70	47	50	3	0
Rape	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Robbery	16,080	12	56	36	62	1	2
Aggravated assault	27,070	26	46	56	40	2	1
Property Crime Index	119,790	33	49	55	42	2	2
Burglary	20,700	14	46	57	40	2	2
Larceny-theft	83,690	40	50	55	41	2	2
Motor vehicle theft	13,610	20	48	47	50	2	1
Arson	1,800	15	27	69	27	2	1
Nonindex							
Other (simple) assault	126,130	38	37	59	38	2	1
Forgery and counterfeiting	850	23	69	62	36	1	2
Fraud	3,690	33	58	50	46	2	1
Embezzlement	540	46	87	47	50	0	3
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	8,940	18	58	35	62	1	2
Vandalism	31,950	20	38	70	27	2	1
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	16,080	10	53	56	41	1	2
Prostitution and commercialized vice	290	71	74	47	51	0	2
Sex offense (except rape and prostitution)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Drug abuse violation	81,320	26	63	75	21	2	2
Gambling	190	29	63	58	38	0	3
Offenses against the family and children	3,060	41	43	67	23	10	0
Driving under the influence	5,570	26	93	89	6	3	2
Liquor laws	26,650	42	68	86	7	6	1
Drunkenness	3,470	33	70	77	12	10	1
Disorderly conduct	53,990	37	36	55	42	3	1
Vagrancy	350	25	45	72	25	2	1
All other offenses (except traffic)	144,160	30	50	67	29	2	1
Curfew and loitering	14,650	34	44	66	30	3	2
U.S. population ages 10–17:	33,266,572	49%	25%	75%	17%	2%	6%

- Larceny-theft, simple assault, drug abuse violations, and disorderly conduct offenses accounted for half of all juvenile arrests in 2019.
- In 2019, females accounted for 40% of all juvenile arrests for larceny-theft, 38% of all juvenile arrests for simple assault, and 37% of juvenile arrests for disorderly conduct.
- Youth ages 16-17 accounted for half (50%) of all juvenile arrests for violent crime in 2019, and an even larger proportion of juvenile arrests for murder (70%).
- Black youth, who accounted for 17% of the juvenile population in 2019, were involved in 62% of juvenile arrests for robbery and stolen property offenses, and 50% of arrests for murder and motor vehicle theft.

NA: Data for rape and sex offenses are not available because of the change in the definition for reporting rape (see sidebar on page 3).

Notes: UCR data do not distinguish the ethnic group Hispanic; Hispanics may be of any race. In 2019, 88% of Hispanics ages 10–17 were classified racially as White. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

In 2019, 6% of male arrests and 8% of female arrests involved a person younger than age 18

In 2019, juveniles were involved in about 1 in 5 arrests for robbery and arson, and 1 in 10 arrests for larceny-theft, stolen property offenses, and weapons law violations

Most serious offense	Juvenile arrests as a percentage of total arrests, 2019						
	All persons	Male	Female	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
Total	7%	6%	8%	6%	9%	6%	6%
Violent crime	9	9	9	8	12	7	6
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	8	8	7	8	8	13	1
Rape							
Robbery	22	23	16	17	25	11	24
Aggravated assault	7	7	8	6	8	6	4
Property Crime Index	11	12	10	9	16	11	13
Burglary	12	13	8	10	17	18	13
Larceny-theft	10	11	10	9	14	9	13
Motor vehicle theft	17	18	15	12	29	19	10
Arson	20	21	14	19	22	20	9
Nonindex							
Other (simple) assault	12	11	16	11	15	10	9
Forgery and counterfeiting	2	2	1	2	2	1	2
Fraud	3	3	3	2	5	4	2
Embezzlement	4	4	4	3	5	1	6
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	10	11	8	6	18	8	9
Vandalism	18	19	15	18	18	16	11
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	10	10	11	11	10	13	12
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Sex offense (except rape and prostitution)							
Drug abuse violation	5	5	5	5	4	9	6
Gambling	8	8	8	8	10	0	2
Offenses against the family and children	4	3	5	4	3	7	2
Driving under the influence	1	1	1	1	0	1	0
Liquor laws	15	13	21	17	7	18	13
Drunkenness	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Disorderly conduct	17	15	22	15	24	10	14
Vagrancy	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
All other offenses (except traffic)	4	4	5	4	5	4	4

- Juvenile females accounted for about 1 in 6 simple assault arrests involving females in 2019, while male juveniles accounted for about 1 in 10 simple assault arrests involving males.
- In 2019, juveniles accounted for 9% of violent crime arrests and 11% of Property Crime Index arrests. On average, juveniles accounted for 11% of all violent crime arrests during the 2010s, compared with 16% during the 2000s, and they accounted for 16% of all Property Crime Index arrests in the 2010s, compared with 28% in the 2000s.
- Overall, in 2019, 6% of arrests of Whites and 9% of arrests of Blacks involved a person younger than age 18. This pattern of juveniles being involved in a greater proportion of arrests of Blacks than of Whites was found across nearly all offenses. However, for liquor law violations, the reverse was true.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Across most offenses, juvenile arrests fell proportionately more than adult arrests between 2010 and 2019

The number of arrests of juveniles in 2019 was 58% fewer than the number of arrests in 2010, while adult arrests fell 18% during the same period

Most serious offense	Percent change in arrests, 2010–2019								
	All persons			Juveniles			Adults		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Total	-23%	-25%	-17%	-58%	-58%	-56%	-18%	-21%	-10%
Violent crime	-10	-12	-3	-36	-37	-33	-6	-8	2
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	-1	-2	8	-15	-15	-11	0	-1	10
Rape									
Robbery	-34	-36	-14	-41	-42	-29	-31	-34	-11
Aggravated assault	-6	-7	-2	-40	-41	-36	-1	-3	3
Property Crime Index	-35	-35	-34	-67	-65	-71	-25	-26	-23
Burglary	-41	-45	-19	-68	-69	-61	-33	-37	-11
Larceny-theft	-36	-35	-37	-70	-67	-74	-26	-26	-27
Motor vehicle theft	13	5	49	-14	-18	8	20	12	60
Arson	-20	-24	1	-61	-61	-55	8	4	25
Nonindex									
Other (simple) assault	-21	-23	-13	-40	-42	-36	-17	-20	-7
Forgery and counterfeiting	-42	-38	-49	-50	-47	-57	-42	-38	-49
Fraud	-40	-34	-48	-36	-35	-37	-40	-34	-48
Embezzlement	-19	-18	-19	22	13	36	-20	-19	-20
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	-7	-10	6	-39	-40	-34	-1	-4	12
Vandalism	-29	-32	-13	-59	-61	-45	-15	-19	-3
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	-4	-5	9	-49	-48	-52	7	5	29
Prostitution and commercialized vice	-57	-49	-61	-73	-55	-76	-57	-49	-61
Sex offense (except rape and prostitution)									
Drug abuse violation	-5	-12	26	-52	-58	-24	1	-7	31
Gambling	-75	-81	-24	-86	-89	29	-74	-79	-27
Offenses against the family and children	-23	-28	-6	-19	-27	-4	-23	-28	-7
Driving under the influence	-27	-30	-21	-54	-54	-53	-27	-29	-20
Liquor laws	-66	-67	-64	-72	-74	-69	-64	-65	-62
Drunkenness	-44	-46	-31	-73	-75	-66	-43	-46	-30
Disorderly conduct	-50	-51	-46	-65	-67	-62	-44	-46	-39
Vagrancy	-32	-34	-21	-84	-84	-82	-28	-31	-16
All other offenses (except traffic)	-11	-14	0	-51	-54	-45	-7	-11	4
Curfew and loitering	-85	-85	-82	-85	-85	-82	NA	NA	NA

- The overall decline in juvenile arrests was comparable for males (58%) and females (56%) between 2010 and 2019. Across most offenses, however, the relative decline was greater for juvenile males than juvenile females (e.g., robbery, burglary, simple assault, and vandalism).
- Arrests declined for juveniles and adults between 2010 and 2019, and for most offenses, the relative decline in juvenile arrests outpaced that of adults, regardless of gender. For example, arrests for robbery, aggravated assault, simple assault, and disorderly conduct declined more for juvenile than adult males, a pattern that was replicated in arrests of females. Somewhat less common, however, was a decline in juvenile arrests coupled with an increase for adults. For example, juvenile arrests for weapons law violations for males and females decreased between 2010 and 2019 but increased for their adult counterparts.

NA = Curfew and loitering offenses are status offenses that only apply to juveniles.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.



The proportion of juvenile arrests involving females has grown

Females accounted for 31% of juvenile arrests in 2019

In 2019, law enforcement agencies made an estimated 696,620 arrests of persons younger than age 18. Females accounted for 212,650 of those arrests, or less than one-third (31%) of all arrests in that year. Although males accounted for the majority (69%) of juvenile arrests in 2019, the female share was relatively high for certain offenses, including liquor law violations (42%), larceny-theft (40%), simple assault (38%), and disorderly conduct (37%). In comparison, females accounted for a smaller share of murder (11%), robbery (12%), and burglary (14%) arrests.

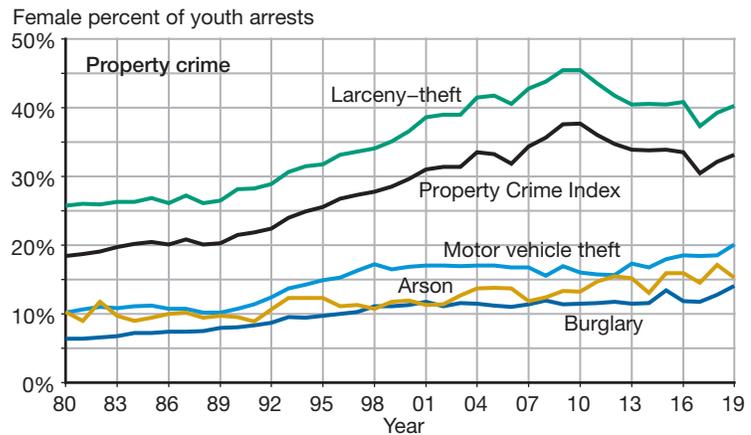
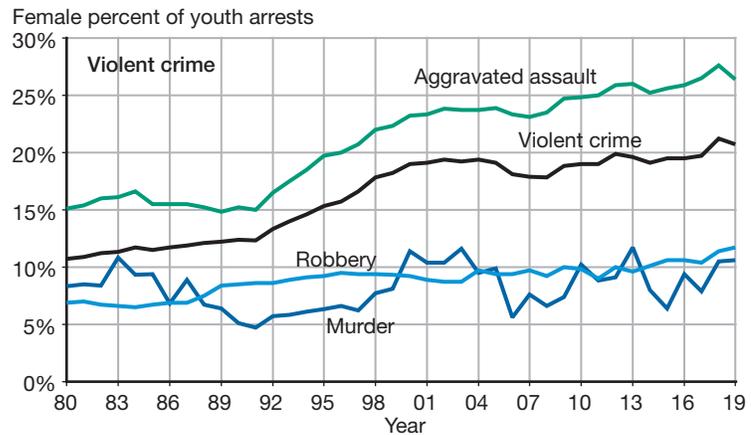
The female share of juvenile arrests has grown

Overall, juvenile arrests have declined considerably in the last two decades. For example, between 2000 and 2019, juvenile arrests fell 68%. During the same period, the number of juvenile arrests involving males fell 70% while the number of female juvenile arrests fell 61%. In fact, from 2000 through 2019, arrests of juvenile females decreased less than male arrests in most offense categories (e.g., robbery, aggravated and simple assault, burglary, and drug abuse violations).

Percent change, 2000-2019:

Most serious offense	Male	Female
All offenses	-70%	-61%
Violent crime	-55	-49
Robbery	-43	-25
Aggravated assault	-61	-53
Property Crime Index	-78	-74
Burglary	-79	-73
Larceny-theft	-78	-75
Motor vehicle theft	-74	-68
Simple assault	-51	-35
Vandalism	-74	-56
Drug abuse violation	-64	-26
Driving under the influence	-76	-61
Liquor laws	-83	-72
Drunkenness	-87	-73
Disorderly conduct	-71	-56
Curfew	-91	-90

The increases in the female proportion of violent crime and property crime arrests since 1980 were tied to changes in arrests for aggravated assault and larceny-theft



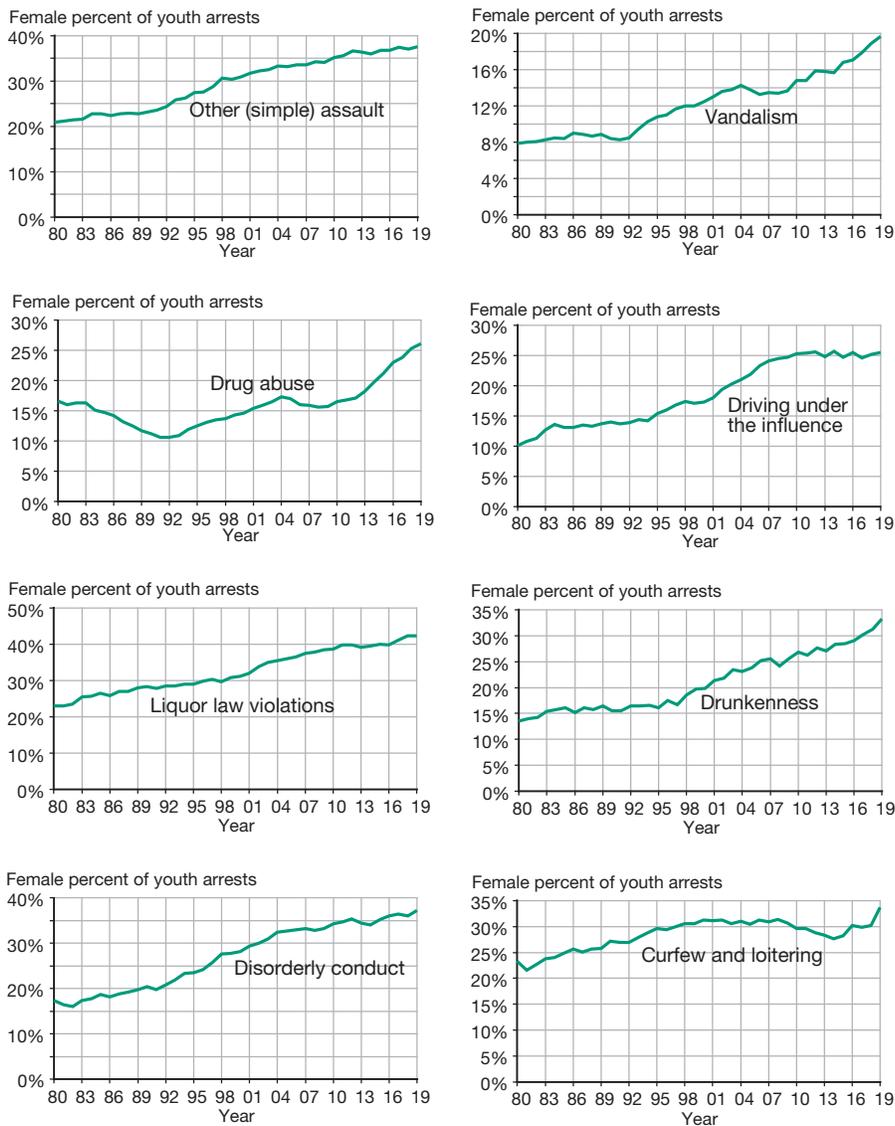
Juvenile arrests for both aggravated assault and larceny-theft have been on the decline since 2000, but the declines have been greater for males than females—61% and 78%, respectively, for males, compared with 53% and 75% for females. Following this disproportionate decrease in arrests, the female share of aggravated assault and larceny-theft arrests has grown, from 23% in 2000 to 26% in 2019 for aggravated assault, and from 37% to 40% for larceny-theft.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

As a result of the relatively larger decline in juvenile male arrests, females accounted for a larger proportion of juvenile arrests in 2019 than they did 20 years prior. In 2019, females accounted for 31% of all juvenile arrests, up from 25% in 2000. Between 2000 and 2019, the number of simple assault arrests declined more for juvenile males (51%) than females (35%). As a result, the female share of simple assault arrests increased from 31% to 38%. Likewise, female juvenile arrests for larceny-theft fell 75% in the last 20 years, while arrests of males fell 78%. The net result was that females accounted for 40% of such arrests in 2019, compared with 37% in 2000.

Gender differences also occurred in arrest trends for adults. For example, between 2000 and 2019, adult male arrests for simple assault fell 24% while adult female arrests increased 11%. As a result, adult females accounted for a larger share of simple assault arrests in 2019 (28%) than in 2000 (21%). Similarly, adult male arrests for larceny-theft fell 20% while adult female arrests increased 10%. Therefore, the female proportion of arrests grew for each offense for adults, as it did for juveniles.

Between 1980 and 2019, the female proportion of juvenile arrests increased substantially for simple assault, vandalism, liquor law violations, drunkenness, and disorderly conduct



- The growth in the female proportion of arrests for the offenses shown above over the last 10 years is largely attributable to disproportionate changes in arrests of male and female youth. Specifically, across these offenses, arrests of males and females have been on the decline since 2010, but the relative decline in male arrests outpaced the decline for females. For example, drug arrests involving males fell 58% between 2010 and 2019, compared with a 24% decline for females. The result of such disproportionate declines is that the female share of youth arrests for each offense has grown.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Youth under age 13 account for a small proportion of juvenile arrests

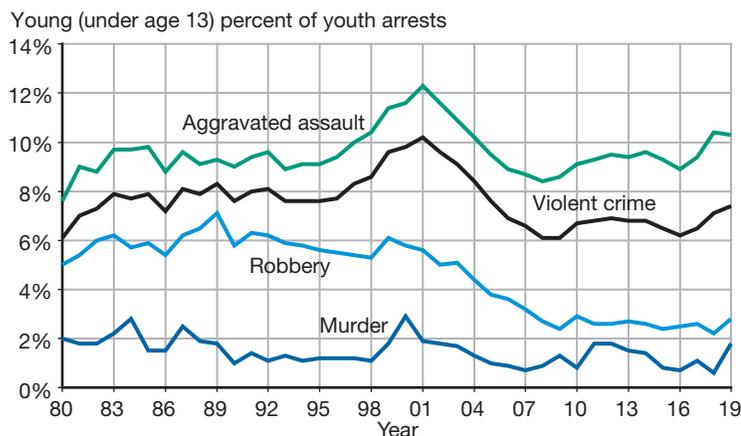
Arrest rates for very young juveniles declined in the last two decades

In 1980, there were an estimated 1,259 arrests of persons ages 10–12 for every 100,000 persons in this age group in the U.S. population. Following a 39% increase through 1994, the rate declined steadily. By 2019, the arrest rate had fallen to 421, a decline of 74% from the 1994 peak, and 4% above the 2018 low point.

The proportion of juvenile arrests involving the very young alternated between periods of growth and decline. In 1980, 9% of all juvenile arrests were arrests of persons under age 13. The proportion reached a peak in 1989 at 11%, declined to a low of 6% in 2009, and then reached 8% in 2019. Part of the increase since 2009 can be attributed to the fact that, while arrests for all juveniles have been on the decline, the relative decline for older juveniles outpaced that of younger juveniles. Since 2009, arrests of juveniles under age 13 fell 50% while arrests of juveniles ages 13–17 fell 62%.

Across most offenses, arrest rates for young juveniles in 2019 were at or near historically low levels. However, for some offenses, arrests of young juveniles have been on the rise in recent years, and the types of youth entering the juvenile justice system has changed. For example, since the late 1980s, arrest rates for larceny-theft and burglary for younger juveniles fell more than 90% by 2019. Similarly, following an 86% decline since 1994, the robbery arrest rate for young juveniles reached a new low in 2019. The same cannot be said, however, for arrests of young juveniles for aggravated and simple assault, both of which have been on the rise in recent years. Since 2015, the aggravated assault arrest rate for young juveniles increased 8% and the rate for simple assault increased 20%. As a result, even though the overall arrest rate declined, the number of young juve-

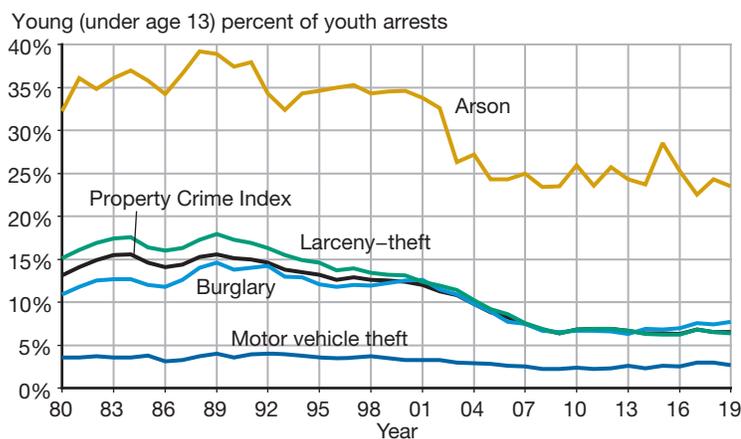
In 2019, 7% of juvenile violent crime arrests involved youth younger than age 13, down from a high of 10% in the early 2000s



- Aggravated assault is by far the most common violent crime involving youth younger than age 13. Since 1998, arrests for aggravated assault accounted for 80% or more of violent crime arrests involving youth younger than age 13.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

The proportion of juvenile Property Crime Index arrests involving youth younger than age 13 declined from 16% in the late 1980s to 6% in 2019



- Compared to other Property Crime Index offenses, the proportion of arson arrests involving youth younger than age 13 is high; since 2005, one-fourth of all juvenile arson arrests involved a youth younger than age 13.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

niles entering the juvenile justice system charged with assaults has grown in recent years. This implies there were: (1) different factors influencing the volume and/or nature of law-violating behavior by young juveniles over this time period, and/or (2) differential responses by law enforcement to these behaviors.

Arrest rates of young males declined more than those of young females in recent years

Since 2010, the overall arrest rate for youth ages 10–12 fell 29%, but the relative decline in the male rate (48%) was greater than that of the female rate (41%). In fact, across most offenses, the arrest rate for young females declined less than that of their young male peers. For drug offenses, the female rate actually increased 24% while the male rate declined 47%. As a result, a greater number and proportion of the young juvenile arrestees in 2019 were female than in 2010.

Percent change in young juvenile (ages 10–12) arrest rate, 2010–2019:

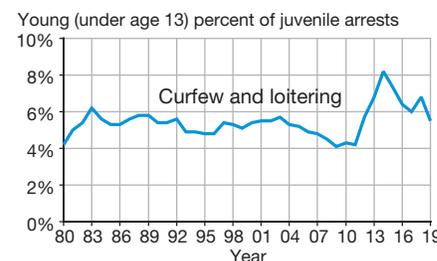
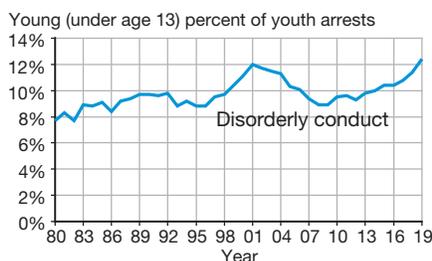
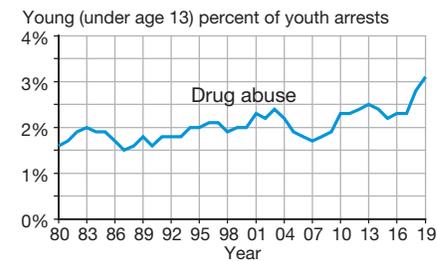
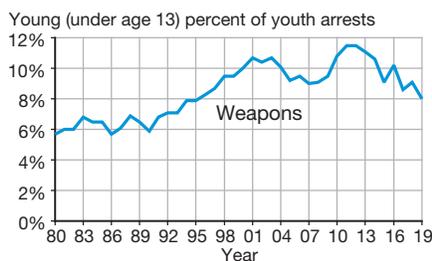
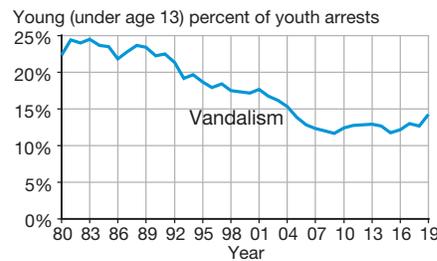
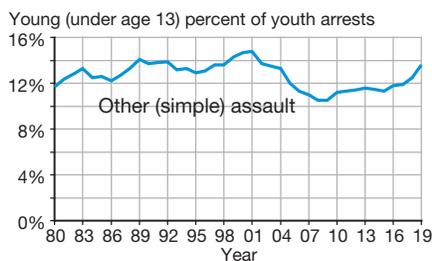
Most serious offense	Male	Female
All offenses	-48%	-41%
Violent crime	-36	-14
Aggravated assault	-35	-13
Property Crime Index	-65	-73
Burglary	-63	-56
Larceny-theft	-68	-76
Simple assault	-30	-13
Stolen property	-71	-58
Vandalism	-51	-45
Weapons law violation	-60	-42
Drug abuse violation	-47	24
Liquor law violations	-33	-24
Disorderly conduct	-57	-50
Curfew	-80	-77

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

Analysis of race-specific arrest rate trends for very young juveniles is not possible

The FBI’s UCR Program captures information on the gender of arrestees

Between 1980 and 2019, the proportion of juvenile arrests involving youth younger than 13 declined for vandalism but increased for disorderly conduct



- In 1980, 22% of juvenile vandalism arrests involved youth younger than 13; by 2019, 14% of such arrests involved youth younger than 13.
- The proportion of juvenile arrests for disorderly conduct involving youth younger than 13 increased from 8% in 1980 to 12% in 2019.
- Despite an increase since 2007, a small proportion (3% in 2019) of juvenile drug arrests involve youth younger than 13.

Source: Authors’ analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

subdivided into a large set of detailed age groups (e.g., under 10, 10–12, 13–14, 15, 16, and 17). It also captures information on the race of arrestees, but the only age breakdown asso-

ciated with these counts is “under 18” and “18 and above.” Therefore, age-specific arrest trends for racial groups, including trends for young juveniles, cannot be analyzed with UCR data.

The juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes reached a new low in 2019

Violent crime arrest rates declined substantially after 1994

The juvenile arrest rate (i.e., the number of arrests per 100,000 juveniles in the population) for violent crimes was relatively stable between 1980 and 1987. This period of stability was followed by substantial growth, as the violent crime arrest rate increased 73% through 1994. This rapid growth led to speculation about changes in the nature of juvenile offenders—concerns that spurred state legislators to pass laws that facilitated an increase in the flow of youth into the adult justice system. Since the 1994 peak, the juvenile arrest rate for violent crime declined annually through 2004, increased each of the next two years, then declined again through 2013. After a few years of stability, the rate fell 4% in the last year, reaching its lowest level (131.7) since at least 1980, and 72% below the 1994 peak.

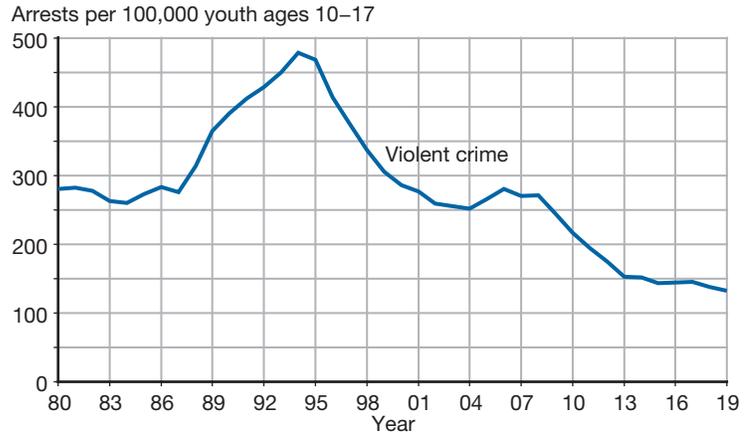
Violent crime arrest rates declined more for males than females

In 1980, the juvenile male violent crime arrest rate was 8 times greater than the female rate. By 2019, the male rate was 3.7 times greater. This convergence of male and female arrest rates is due to the large relative increase in the female rate through the mid-1990s and the larger relative decrease in the male rate through 2019. Between 1980 and 1994, the male rate increased 62%, while the female rate increased 133%. Since 1994, the male rate fell 74%, while the female rate fell 61% through 2019.

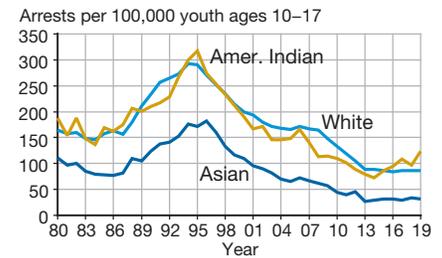
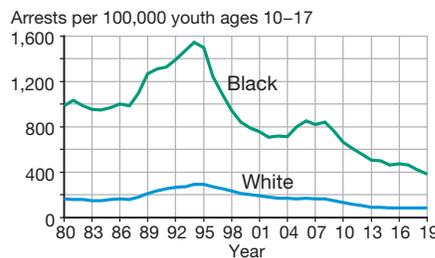
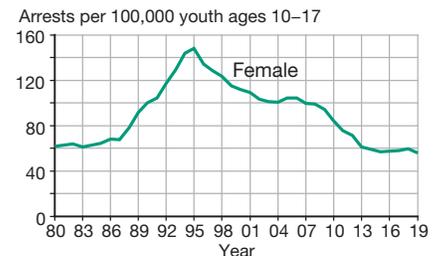
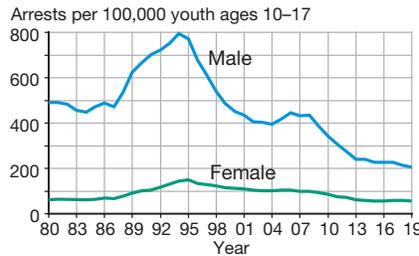
Arrest rates declined for all racial groups since the mid-1990s

Violent crime arrest rates declined for all race groups since their mid-1990s peak. For White and Asian youth, the rate fell through 2013, then remained relatively stable through 2019, while the rate for American Indian youth fell through 2014, then increased through

The juvenile arrest rate for violent crime was cut in half between 2006 and 2019



Violent crime arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The violent crime arrest rate in 2019 for Black juveniles was more than 4 times the rate for White juveniles, 3 times the rate for American Indian juveniles, and 12 times the rate for Asian juveniles.

Source: Authors' analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

2019. The rate for Black youth declined from 1996 through 2002, increased through 2006, and then de-

clined through 2019 to reach its lowest level since at least 1980.

After 6 years of increase, the juvenile arrest rate for murder declined in the last year

The 2019 murder arrest rate was 19% above the 2012 lowpoint

Between the mid-1980s and the peak in 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for murder more than doubled. Since the 1993 peak, however, the rate fell substantially through 2000, remained relatively stable through 2007, and then declined to its lowest level in 2012. This trend reversed, however, as the rate increased through 2018, then declined in the last year. Compared with the period from 1984 through 2000, the juvenile murder arrest rate between 2010 and 2019 has been historically low and relatively stable. In fact, the number of juvenile arrests for murder in the 4-year period from 1992 through 1995 exceeded the total number of such arrests since 2010.

Male arrests drove murder arrest rate trends

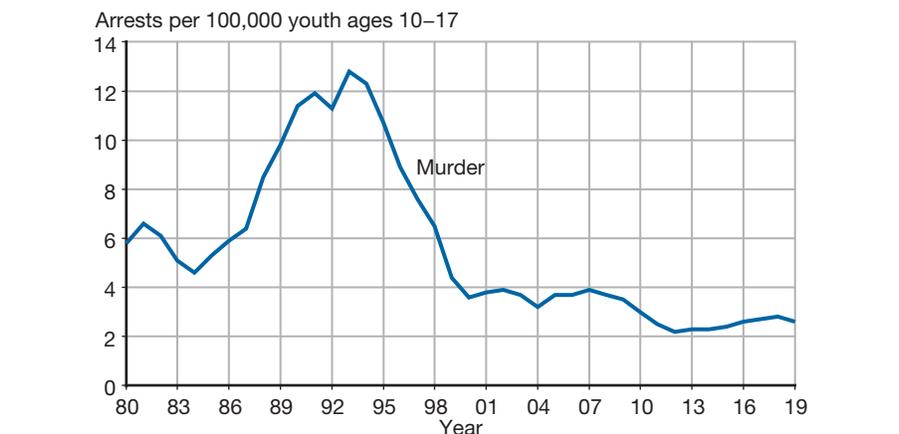
During the 1980s and 1990s, the juvenile male arrest rate for murder was, on average, about 13 times greater than the female rate. Both displayed generally similar trends.

The female murder arrest rate peaked in 1994 at 63% above its 1980 level, whereas the male rate peaked in 1993 at 123% above the 1980 rate. Since reaching their peaks, the rates for both fell substantially. The male rate reached a lowpoint in 2012, 84% below the 1993 peak, while the female rate reached its lowpoint in 2015, 80% below the 1994 peak. Despite recent increases, rates for both in 2019 were near their historical lowpoints.

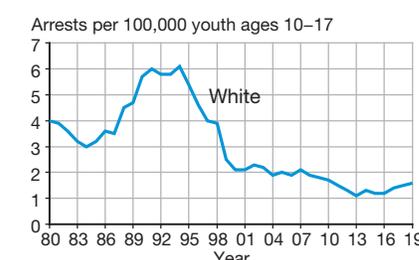
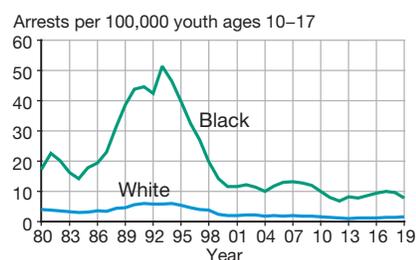
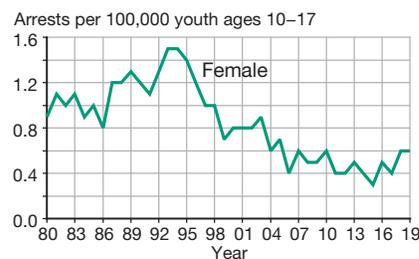
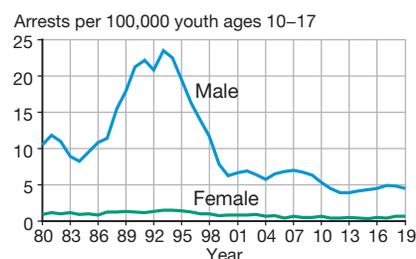
The juvenile murder arrest rate pattern was linked to the arrests of Black juveniles

The Black-to-White ratio of juvenile arrest rates for murder grew from about 4-to-1 in 1980 to nearly 9-to-1 in 1993, reflecting the greater increase in the Black rate over this period—the White rate increased 47% while the

Black rate tripled. Since 1993, both rates fell through 2004, with the Black rate falling considerably more (81% vs. 67%). More recently, the White rate has increased since 2013, while the rate



Murder arrest rate trends by gender and race



Note: Murder arrest rates for American Indian youth and Asian youth are not presented because the small number of arrests and small population sizes produce unstable rate trends.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Black rate tripled. Since 1993, both rates fell through 2004, with the Black rate falling considerably more (81% vs. 67%). More recently, the White rate has increased since 2013, while the rate

for Black youth has declined since 2017. As a result, the Black-to-White ratio of juvenile arrest rates for murder in 2019 was less than 5-to-1.

The juvenile arrest rate for robbery reached a historic low point in 2019

The juvenile arrest rate for robbery was cut in half between 2008 and 2019

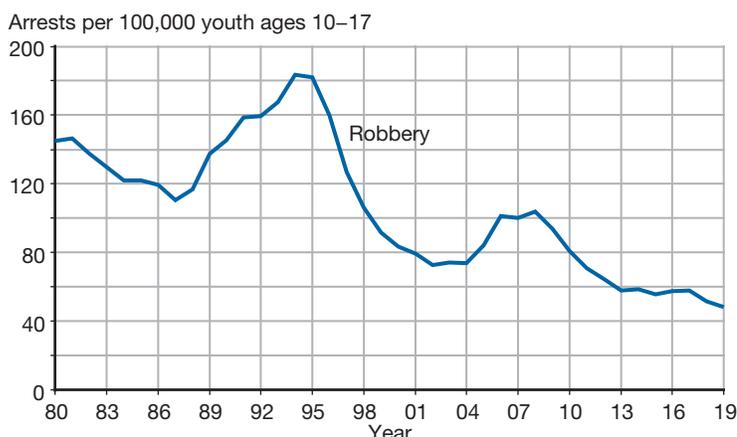
The juvenile arrest rate trend for robbery is marked by alternating periods of growth and decline. The rate declined for most of the 1980s, increased steadily to reach a peak in 1994, and then declined 60% by 2002. Following an increase through 2008, the rate fell once again through 2013, held relatively stable through 2017, and then declined 16% in the last two years. By 2019, the rate reached a new lowpoint, and was 53% below the 2008 level.

Arrest rate trends by gender and race parallel the overall robbery arrest rate pattern

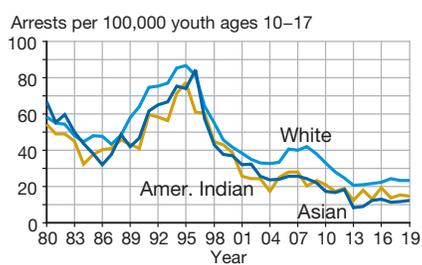
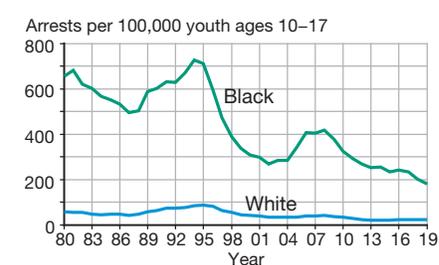
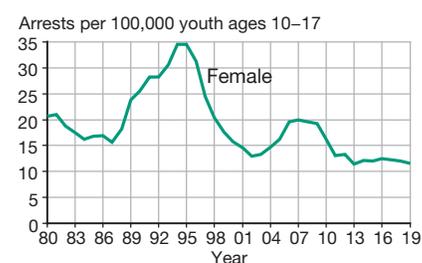
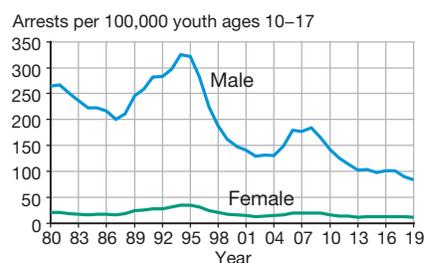
Across gender and race subgroups, robbery arrest rates decreased through the late 1980s and climbed to a peak in the mid-1990s. By 2002, the rates for males and females had fallen 60% and 62%, respectively, from their 1995 peak. Following these declines, the rates for both increased through 2008. More recently, the male rate declined 18% since 2017, while the female rate declined 7% since 2016. By 2019, the male rate was at its lowest level since at least 1980 and the female rate was 2% above the 2013 lowpoint.

The trends in arrest rates within racial groups were similar over the past three decades. For each racial group, the juvenile robbery arrest rate fell by 60% or more between the mid-1990s and the early 2000s, then alternated between periods of growth and decline. Juvenile robbery arrest rates reached a historic low in 2013 for White, American Indian, and Asian youth. From their low points to 2019, rates increased 13% for White youth, 19% for American Indian youth, and 49% for Asian youth. Unlike the pattern for other race groups, the robbery arrest rate for Black youth declined steadily between 2008 and 2019—falling 57% to reach its lowest level since at least 1980.

The juvenile arrest rate for robbery reached a historically low level in 2019, 74% below the 1994 peak



Robbery arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Despite the large relative decline in the robbery arrest rate for Black youth, racial differences in juvenile arrest rates for robbery remained high in 2019. Specifically, the rate for Black youth was about 8 times the rate for White youth, 12 times the rate for American Indian youth, and 14 times the rate for Asian youth.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Similar to robbery, the juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault reached a new low in 2019

The juvenile aggravated assault arrest rate declined steadily since the 1994 peak

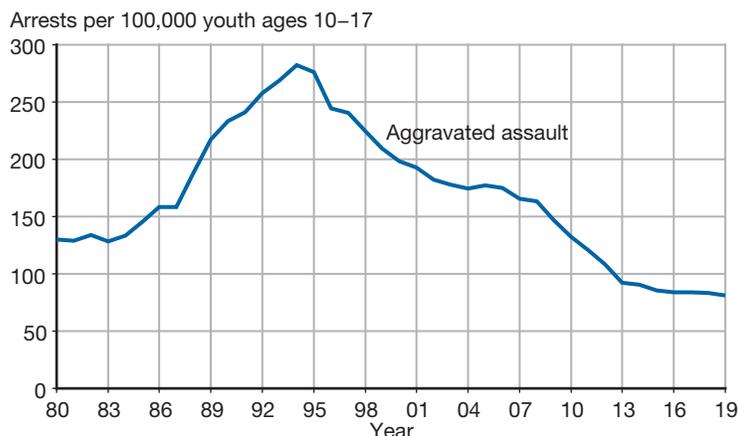
The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault more than doubled between 1980 and 1994 and then fell substantially and consistently. In fact, with the exception of 2005, the rate declined each year between 1994 and 2019. By 2019, the rate had fallen 71% from the 1994 peak, and, like robbery, reached its lowest level since at least 1980.

The rate for females increased more and declined less than the male rate

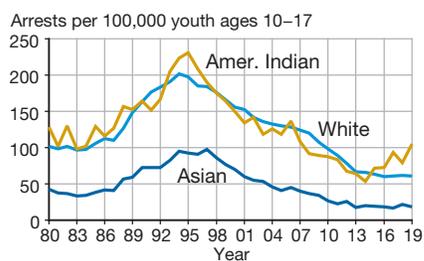
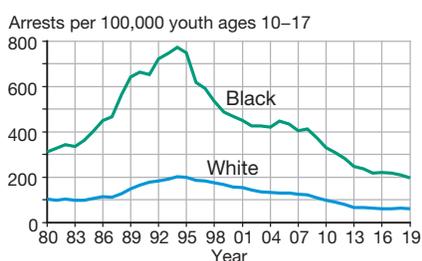
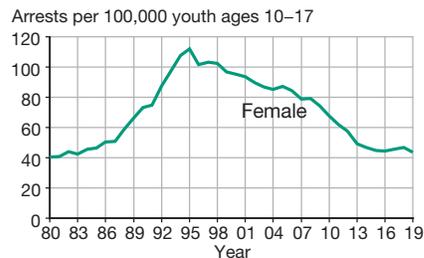
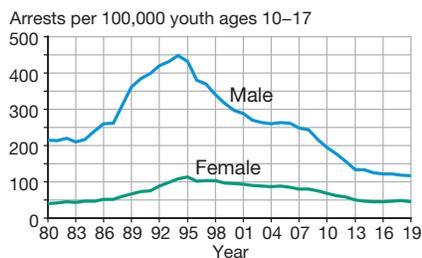
The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault for males doubled between 1980 and its 1994 peak, while the female rate increased by more than 170% to reach a peak in 1995. Since their respective peaks, the rates for both groups declined through 2019, but the relative decline was greater for males (74%) than for females (61%). As a result, in 2019, the male arrest rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980 while the female rate was 3% above its 1983 low point. The disproportionate increase in the female arrest rate for aggravated assault compared with that of males indicates that factors that impinged differently on females and males affected the rates. One possible explanation may be found in policy changes over this period that encouraged arrests in domestic violence incidents, which have higher rates of arrests of females than other types of aggravated assault incidents.

The period from 1980 through 1994 saw substantial increases in aggravated assault arrest rates for juveniles in each racial group—Black (149% increase), Asian (126%), White (97%), and American Indian (73%)—followed by a period of decline. The rate reached a historic low in 2014 for American Indian youth, 2016 for White youth, and 2017 for Asian youth. From their low

The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault was cut in half between 2008 and 2019



Aggravated assault arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The Black-White disparity in aggravated assault arrest rates peaked in 1988, when the Black rate was more than 4 times the White rate; by 2019, the Black-White ratio was a little more than 3-to-1.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

points to 2019, rates increased 96% for American Indian youth, 12% for Asian youth, and 1% for White youth. Unlike the pattern for other race groups, the

aggravated assault arrest rate for Black youth declined through 2019, reaching its lowest level since at least 1980 and 75% below the 1994 peak.

The juvenile arrest rate for property crimes in 2019 was at its lowest level since at least 1980

After 1994, the juvenile property crime arrest rate fell continuously for more than a decade

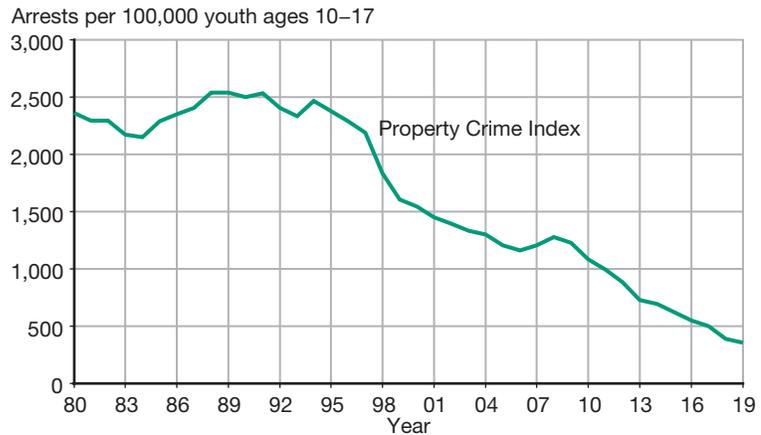
Between 1980 and 1994, the juvenile arrest rate for Property Crime Index offenses varied little, always remaining within 10% of the average for the period. After years of relative stability, the juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate began a decline in the mid-1990s that continued annually until reaching a then-historic low in 2006, down 54% from its 1988 peak. This decline was followed by a 10% increase over the next 2 years, and then a 72% decline between 2008 and 2019. As a result, juveniles were far less likely to be arrested for property crimes in 2019 than in any previous year.

Property crime arrest rates reached a historic low in 2019 for all but American Indian youth

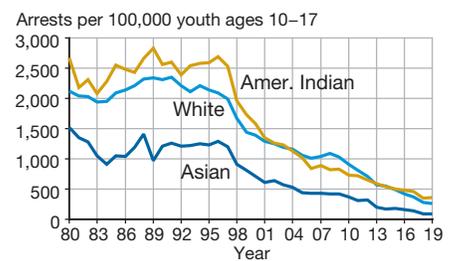
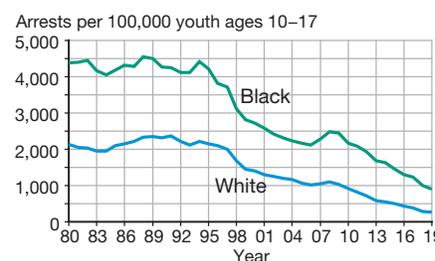
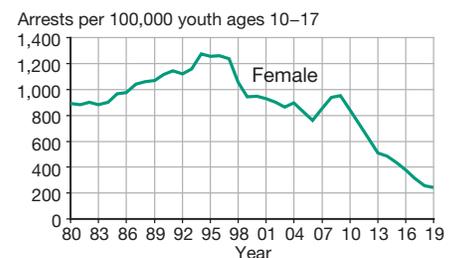
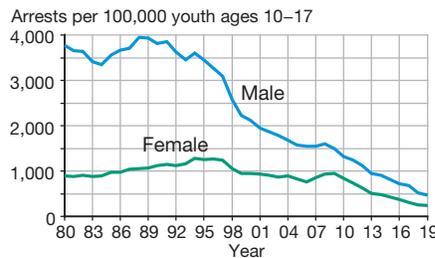
Male and female juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates followed similar patterns after the mid-1990s. Both rates declined between 1994 and 2006 (57% for males and 40% for females), increased for about two years, and then declined again. Between 2010 and 2019, the relative decline in the female rate outpaced the decline in the male rate (71% and 64%, respectively). However, the net result was that both rates reached a historic low in 2019.

Juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates fell 80% or more for each racial group between 1990 and 2019. As a result, arrest rates in 2019 were at their lowest level for White, Black, and Asian youth, while the rate for American Indian youth in 2019 was just 1% above its 2018 low point. On average, the Black juvenile arrest rate for property crimes was 3 times the White arrest rate over the last 10 years, much smaller than the disparity in arrest rates for violent crimes over the same period, which averaged more than 5 times the White rate.

The juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rate fell 72% between 2008 and 2019



Property Crime Index arrest rate trends by gender and race



■ The Property Crime Index is dominated by larceny-theft, which, in 2019, accounted for 70% of all juvenile Property Crime Index arrests. Therefore, the trends in Property Crime Index arrests largely reflect the trends in arrests for larceny-theft.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

The juvenile arrest rate for burglary reached a new low in 2019, 92% below the 1980 peak

Juvenile arrests for burglary fell more than adult arrests

In 2019, the juvenile arrest rate for burglary reached its lowest point in the past 40 years, nearly one-tenth of its 1980 level. While adult arrests for burglary also declined over the period, the decline for juveniles outpaced that of adults. For example, between 2010 and 2019, the number of juvenile burglary arrests fell 68% while adult burglary arrests fell 33%. In 2010, 23% of all burglary arrests were arrests of a juvenile; in 2019, reflecting the greater decline in juvenile arrests, 12% of burglary arrests were juvenile arrests.

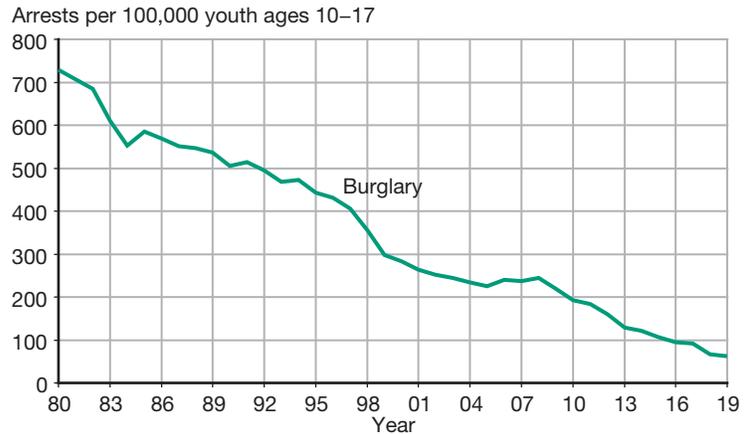
Juvenile male arrest rates for burglary declined more than female rates

The substantial decline in the juvenile burglary arrest rate was primarily the result of a decline in juvenile male arrests. Between 1980 and 2019, the male rate fell 92% while the female rate dropped 81%. By 2019, the male rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980, and the female rate was 3% above the 2018 low-point. Following the larger relative decline for males, females accounted for a larger share of juvenile burglary arrests in 2019 (14%) than in 1980 (6%).

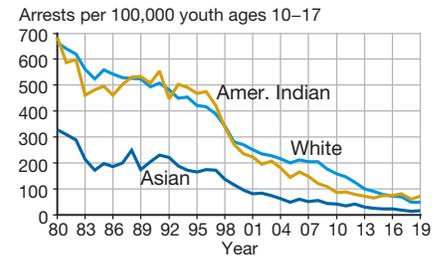
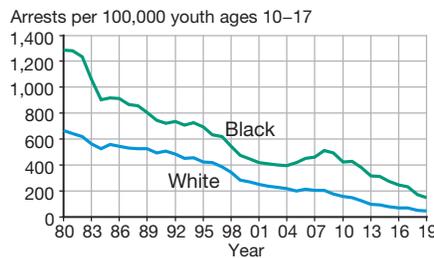
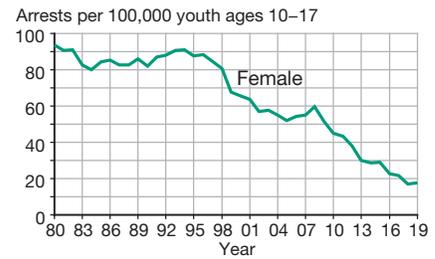
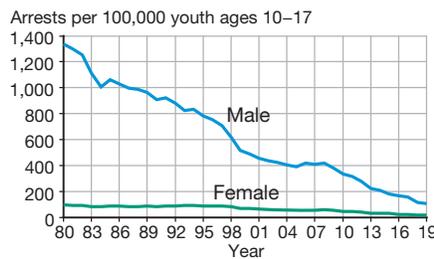
Juvenile burglary arrest rates for White and Black youth reached a new low in 2019

Between 1980 and 2019, the juvenile burglary arrest rate declined for all racial groups: 95% for Asians, 93% for Whites, 90% for American Indians, and 88% for Blacks. As a result, rates for White and Black youth in 2019 were at their lowest level since 1980, while the rates for American Indian and Asian youth were 19% and 18%, respectively, above their 2018 low point.

The juvenile burglary arrest rate fell 75% between 2008 and 2019



Burglary arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Following the larger relative decline in the juvenile burglary rate for males, the gender disparity in arrest rates has diminished. In 1980, the juvenile male arrest rate for burglary was more than 14 times the female rate; in 2019, the male rate was 6 times the female rate.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Following a 73% decline since 2008, the juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft reach a new low in 2019

Juvenile larceny-theft rates declined annually since 2008

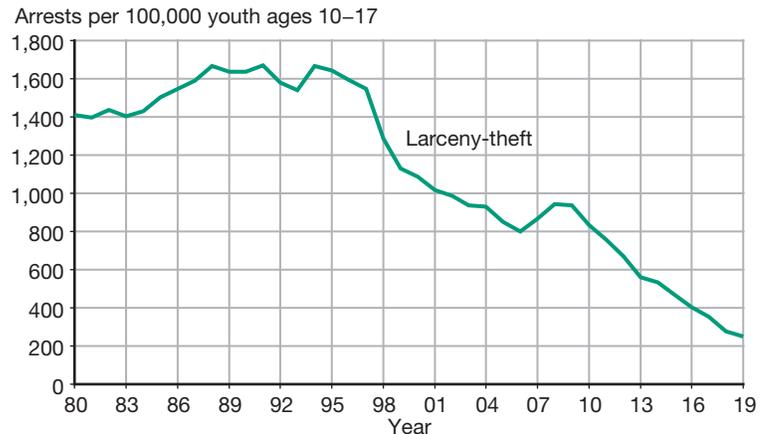
The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft generally increased between 1980 and the mid-1990s and then fell 52% between 1994 and 2006, reaching a then-historic low. Following an increase between 2006 and 2008, the rate then declined for the next 11 years. By 2019, the rate was 69% below the prior low-point in 2006, and 85% below the 1991 peak. The overall decline in arrests for such a high-volume offense translated into significantly fewer juveniles charged with property crimes entering the justice system.

The female larceny-theft arrest rate decreased more than the male rate since 2010

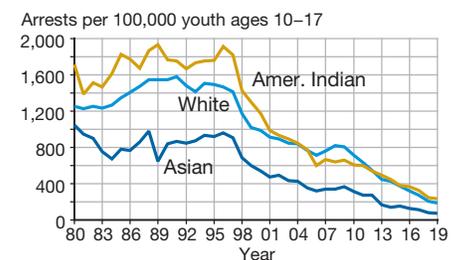
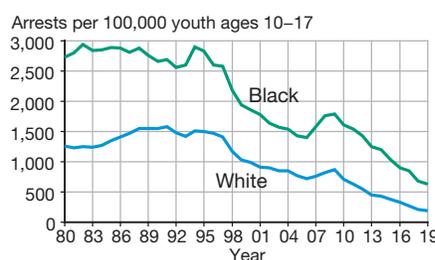
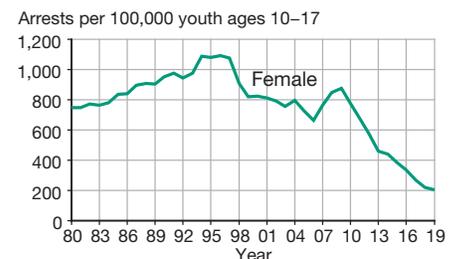
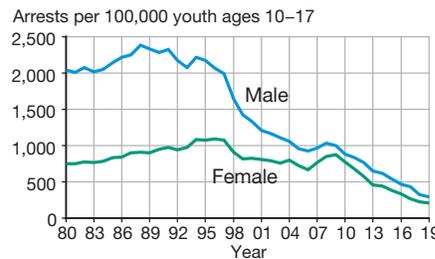
Male and female juvenile larceny-theft arrest rates followed similar patterns after the mid-1990s. Both rates declined between 1994 and 2006 (58% for males and 39% for females), increased briefly, and then declined again. Between 2010 and 2019, the relative decline in the female rate outpaced the decline in the male rate (73% and 67%, respectively). The net result was that both rates reached a historic low in 2019.

Race-specific trends in the larceny-theft arrest rate mirrored the overall trend. The rates declined between 1994 and 2006 for all race group: 66% each for Asians and American Indians, 53% for Whites, and 52% for Blacks. Following a brief interruption, rates for all race groups declined considerably since 2010 (77% for Asians, 74% for Whites, 62% for American Indians, and 61% for Blacks) and, by 2019, were at their lowest level since 1980.

The juvenile arrest rate for larceny-theft in 2019 was 85% below the 1991 peak



Larceny-theft arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Between 1980 and the mid-2000s, the proportion of larceny-theft arrests involving Black youth stayed within a limited range (24% to 29%). However, following the larger decline in arrests involving White youth since 2006 (75% vs. 57% for Black youth), the proportion of larceny-theft arrests involving Black youth has grown, from 29% in 2006 to 41% in 2019.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

The motor vehicle theft arrest rate for juveniles declined in the last 2 years

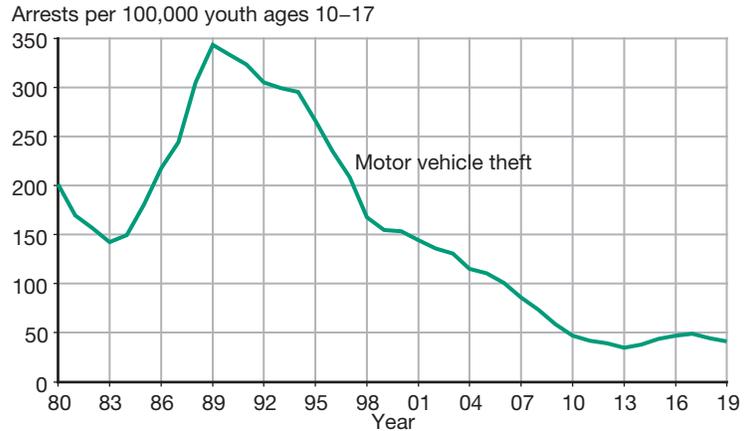
The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft peaked in 1989

The juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft more than doubled between 1983 and 1989, up 141%. After the 1989 peak, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft declined steadily to reach a historic low in 2013 (90% below the 1989 peak), then increased again. Despite a decline in the past 2 years, the 2019 rate was 17% above the 2013 low point. Trends for juveniles and adults followed similar patterns until recently; in the 10-year period between 2010 and 2019, the number of juvenile motor vehicle theft arrests fell 14%, while adult motor vehicle theft arrests increased 20%.

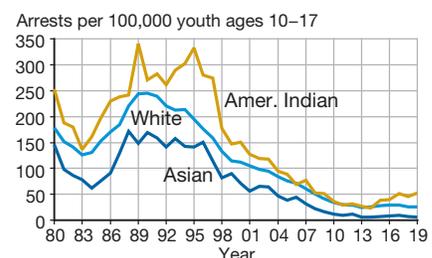
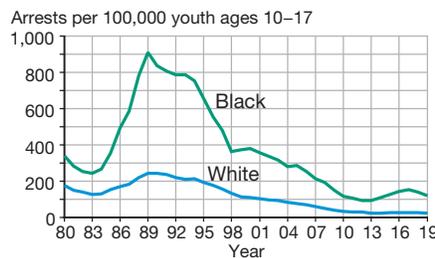
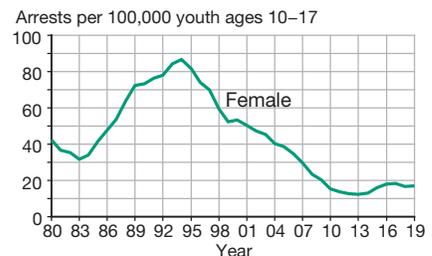
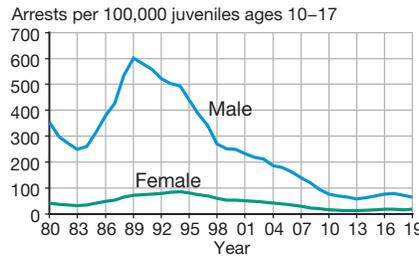
Male and female juvenile arrest rates for motor vehicle theft displayed generally similar trends in the 1980s and 1990s. However, the male rate peaked in 1989, but the female rate did not peak until 1994. Both rates fell substantially from their peak (91% for males, 86% for females), to reach a historic low in 2013. Despite recent declines, the rates for both in 2019 were above the 2013 low point.

From 1983 to their peak years, arrest rates for motor vehicle theft nearly doubled for White juveniles (peak year 1990), more than doubled for Asian juveniles (peak year 1988), increased nearly 150% for American Indian juveniles (peak year 1989), and more than tripled for Black juveniles (peak year 1989). Rates for White, Black, and Asian youth reached a historic low in 2013, while the low point for American Indians came one year later. By 2019, motor vehicle theft arrest rates for all racial groups were well below their late 1980s or early 1990s peaks.

Since the 2013 low point, the juvenile arrest rate for motor vehicle theft increased through 2017, then declined 16% by 2019



Motor vehicle theft arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Juvenile motor vehicle theft arrest rates decreased for most demographic sub-groups since 2017: 18% for males, 9% for females, 38% for Asians, 20% for Blacks, and 13% for Whites. The rate for American Indians increased 3% during the same period.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Following a 63% decline since 2011, the juvenile arrest rate for arson in 2019 reached a historic low

Most juvenile arrests for arson involve youth under age 15

Unlike other Property Crime Index offenses, the majority of juvenile arson arrests involve youth under the age of 15. In 2019, youth under age 15 accounted for more than half (57%) of all juvenile arson arrests. In comparison, 33% of all juvenile burglary arrests and 30% of all juvenile larceny-theft arrests in 2019 involved youth under age 15. Overall, juveniles accounted for 7% of all arrests in 2019, but their share of arson arrests (20%) was considerably higher.

The arson arrest rate declined considerably since the 1994 peak

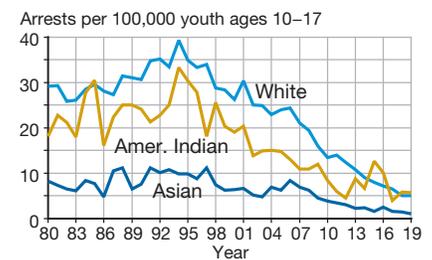
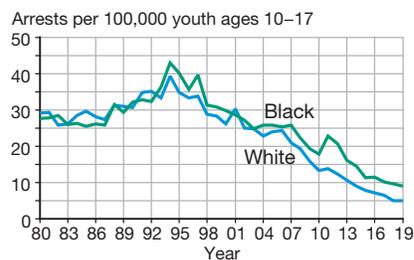
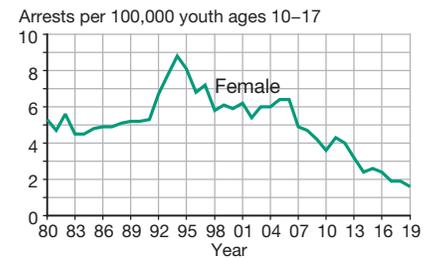
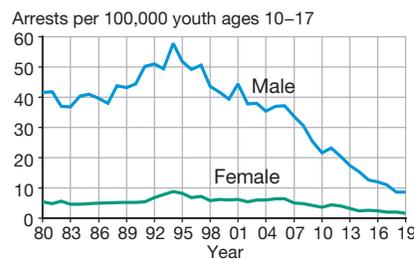
After a period of relative stability in the 1980s, the juvenile arrest rate for arson increased more than 50% between 1987 and 1994. Since the 1994 peak, the rate generally declined through 2019, falling 85% to reach a new low point. This general pattern was replicated in the trends for males and females. Between 1987 and 1994, the male rate increased 52% and the female rate increased 80%. Since the 1994 peak, both rates fell more than 80%; the net result was that, by 2019, both rates were at their lowest level since 1980.

Race-specific trends in arrest rates for arson followed a similar pattern between 1980 and 2019. Rates for White, Black, and American Indian juveniles reached a peak in 1994, while the rate for Asians peaked 3 years earlier. Since their respective peaks and 2019, rates for all race groups declined substantially: 92% for Asians, 87% for Whites, 83% for American Indians, and 79% for Blacks. As a result, rates for White, Black, and Asian youth in 2019 were at their lowest level, while the rate for American Indian youth remained above the 2017 low point.

The juvenile arrest rate for arson in 2019 was 85% below the 1994 peak



Arson arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Compared with other property crimes, the disparity between arson arrest rates for Black juveniles and White juveniles was relatively low. In 2019, the arson arrest rate for Black juveniles was about twice the rate for White juveniles, but for burglary and larceny-theft, the Black rate was more than three times the White rate.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)



The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault in 2019 remained well above the 1981 low point

Simple assault accounted for the majority of assault arrests

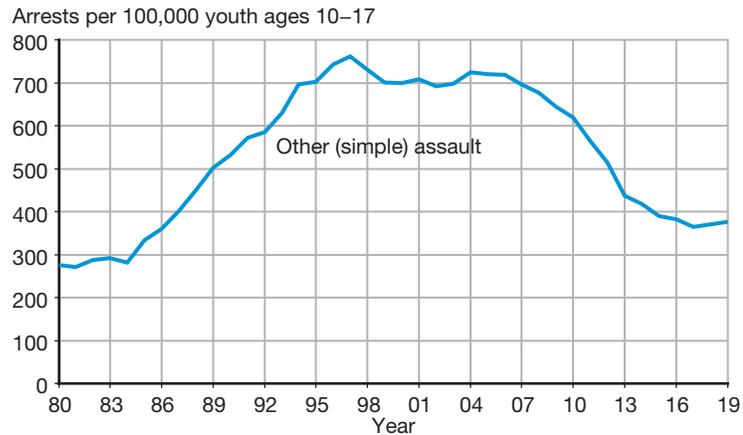
The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased 176% between 1980 and 1997, then held relatively stable through the mid-2000s. The rate then fell 50% by 2017. Despite an increase in the last two years, the rate in 2019 remained well below the levels of the late 1990s and mid-2000s. Comparatively, the rate for juvenile aggravated assault arrests declined 71% between its 1994 peak and 2019. As a result of the greater decrease in aggravated assault rates, a larger proportion of assaults that law enforcement handled in recent years has been for the less serious form. In 2019, 82% of assault arrests were for simple assault, compared with 68% in 1980.

Growth in the female arrest rate for simple assault outpaced the male rate

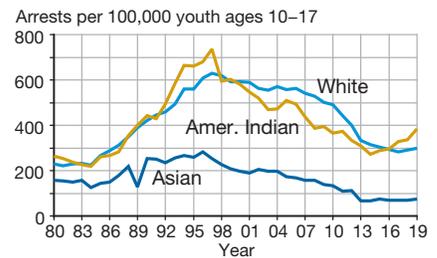
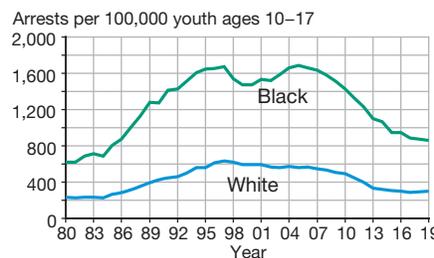
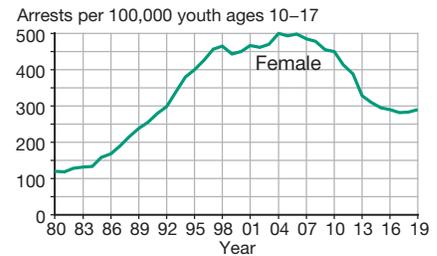
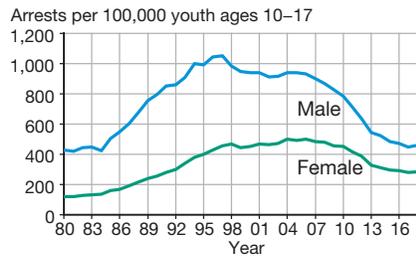
The male juvenile arrest rate for simple assault reached a peak in 1997, while the female rate peaked in 2004. Between 1980 and their respective peaks, the increase in the female arrest rate far outpaced the increase in the male rate (321% vs. 146%). By 2019, both rates were well below their peaks, by 56% for males and by 42% for females. As a result, the female proportion of juvenile arrests for simple assault grew from 21% in 1980 to 38% in 2019.

Simple assault arrest rates peaked in 1996 for Asian youth, 1997 for White and American Indian youth, and 2005 for Black youth. Since their respective peaks and 2019, rates for all race groups declined: 73% for Asians, 52% for Whites, 49% for Blacks, and 48% for American Indian youth.

The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault declined 48% between 2004 and 2019



Simple assault arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The relative decline in juvenile arrest rates over the past 10 years was the same for simple assault and aggravated assault (39% each). However, while the aggravated assault rate reached a historic low in 2019, the simple assault rate remained well above the 1981 low point.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations in 2019 was 77% below the 1994 peak

The juvenile weapons arrest fell 65% since 2006

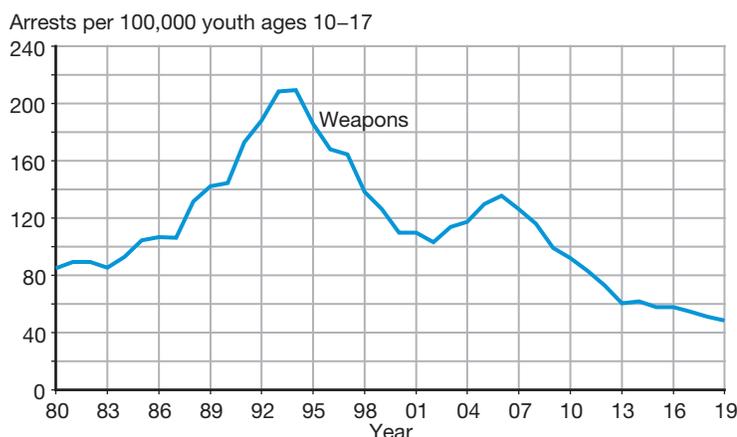
Between 1980 and 1994, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations increased 146%. Then the rate fell substantially, so that by 2002 the rate was just 21% more than the 1980 level. This decline was interrupted between 2002 and 2006, when the juvenile weapons law violation arrest rate increased 32%. The rate has since fallen 65%, bringing the 2019 rate to its lowest level since at least 1980, and 77% below the 1994 peak. It must be remembered that these statistics do not reflect all arrests for weapons offenses. An unknown number of other arrests for more serious crimes also involved a weapons offense as a secondary charge, but the FBI's arrest statistics classify such arrests by their most serious charge and not the weapons offense.

The weapons arrest rate for White and Black youth reached a new low in 2019

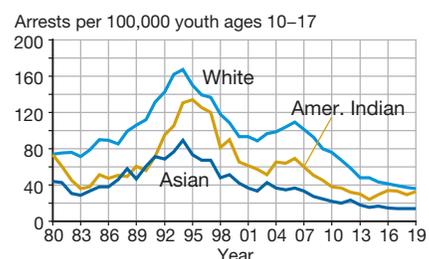
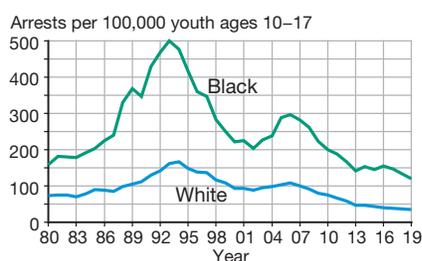
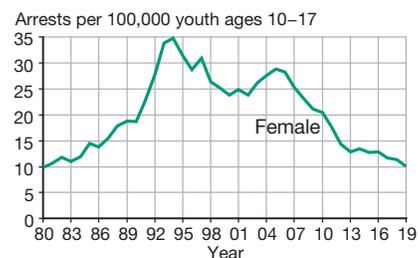
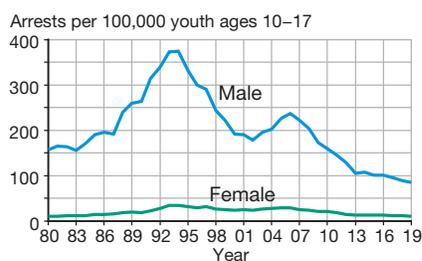
Between 1980 and 1994, the arrest rate for weapons law violations increased proportionally more for females (256%) than for males (139%). Since the peak, both rates experienced brief periods of decline and growth through the mid-2000s, then declined steadily through 2019. While the relative decline in both rates was the same between 2006 and 2019 (64%), the male rate reached a historic low in 2019 but the female rate was 3% above the 1980 low point.

Arrest rates for weapons law violations peaked in 1993 for Black juveniles, in 1994 for White and Asian juveniles, and in 1995 for American Indian juveniles. The increase between 1980 and the peak year was the greatest for Black juveniles (215%), followed by Whites (126%), Asians (104%), and American Indians (83%). Similar to trends for males and females, the rates for all racial groups dropped quickly after their peaks, grew between 2002 and 2006,

The juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations reached a new low in 2019, 77% below the 1994 peak



Weapons law violation arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Juvenile arrests for weapons law violations typically involve older juveniles (ages 15-17). Since 2005, older juveniles accounted for at least two-thirds of juvenile weapons law violation arrests.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

and fell again. Since 2006, the rate for White youth and Black youth declined (67% and 59%, respectively) to a new low in 2019, while the rate for Asian youth fell 62% to reach a low in 2017,

then stayed within a limited range through 2019. Conversely, the rate for American Indian youth fell 65% to reach a low in 2014 and then increased through 2019.



The juvenile drug abuse violation arrest rate was cut in half in the last 10 years and reached its lowest level since 1980

Racial disparity in drug arrests increased in the 1980s and early 1990s

The annual juvenile arrest rates for drug abuse violations (a category that includes both drug possession and drug sales) varied within a limited range in the 1980s. A closer look at juvenile drug arrest rates finds sharp racial differences. The drug abuse violation arrest rate for White juveniles generally declined between 1980 and 1991 while the Black rate increased dramatically. The White rate fell 54%, compared with a 190% increase for Black youth. In 1980, the White and Black arrest rates were essentially equal, with Black youth involved in 14% of all juvenile drug arrests. By 1991, the Black rate was nearly 6 times the White rate, and Black youth were involved in 52% of all juvenile drug arrests.

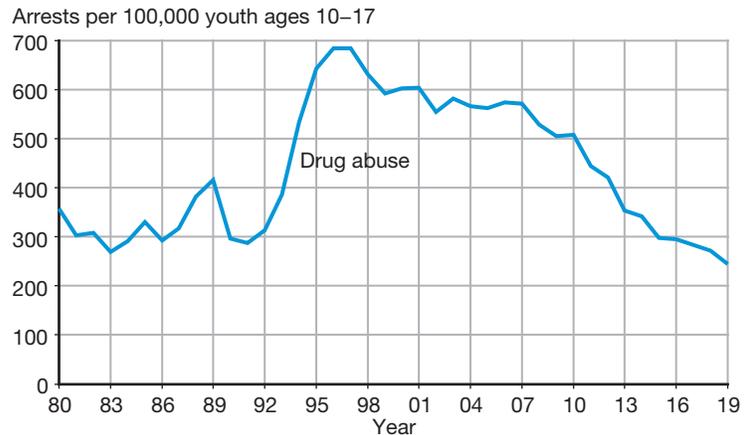
Drug arrests soared for all youth between 1991 and 1997

Between 1991 and 1997, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased 138% and then declined. Most of the decline took place in the last 10 years, when the rate fell 52%. By 2019, the arrest rate reached its lowest level since at least 1980, and was 64% below the 1997 peak.

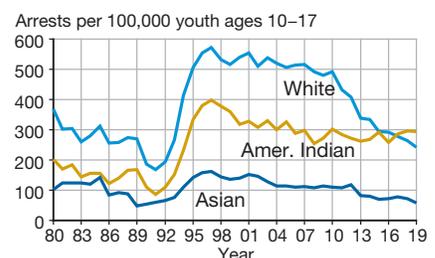
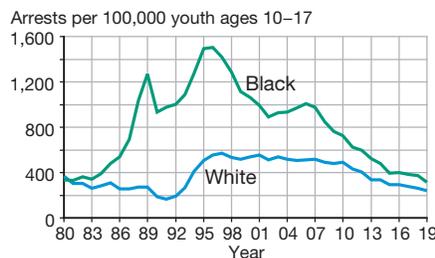
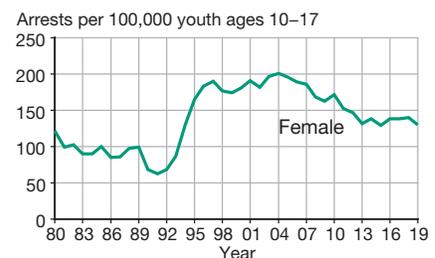
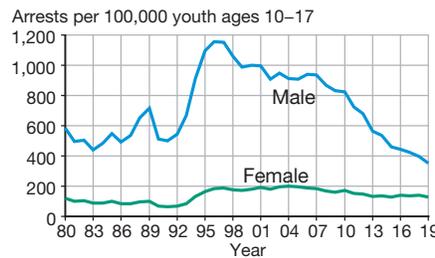
After a period of substantial growth in the early and mid-1990s, the male juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations generally declined after 1996 while the female rate remained relatively stable through the mid-2000s. Both rates declined in the last 10 years (57% for males, 24% for females). By 2019, the male rate reached a new historic low, while the female rate was more than twice the 1991 low point.

The drug abuse violation arrest rate for Black youth declined considerably after the 1996 peak, and most of the decline took place since 2006 (69%). Conversely, after reaching a peak in 1997,

The juvenile drug abuse arrest rate declined annually since 2010



Drug abuse violation arrest rate trends by gender and race



- The juvenile drug abuse arrest rate declined for all racial groups in the past 10 years, falling 56% for Black youth, 51% for White youth, 46% for Asian youth, and 3% for American Indian youth.
- Drug abuse arrest rates for American Indian youth in 2019 were 3 times their 1991 low point, and the rate for Asian youth was 22% above their 1989 low point.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

the White rate stayed within a limited range through 2010, then declined 51%. By 2019, the rate for Black youth

was at its lowest level since at least 1980, but the rate for White youth was 44% above the 1991 low point.

The juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct in 2019 was 77% below the 1996 peak

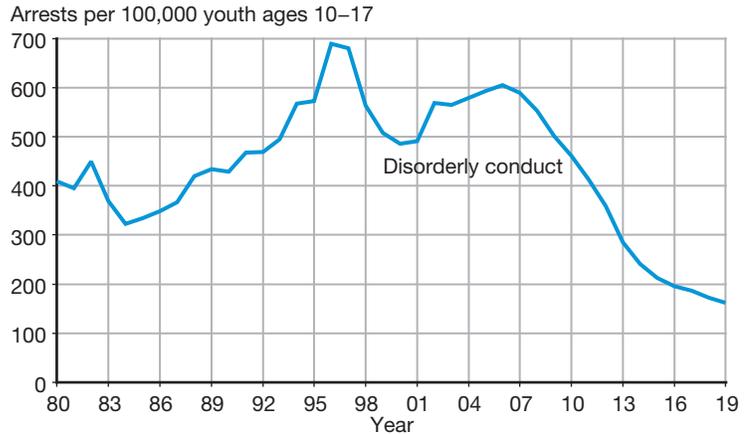
In 2019, the juvenile disorderly conduct arrest rate reached its lowest level since 1980

The juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct more than doubled between 1984 and 1996, declined through 2000, then increased again through 2006. This period of increase was followed by 13 years of decline through 2019, during which time the juvenile disorderly conduct arrest rate fell more than 70%, and reached its lowest level since 1980.

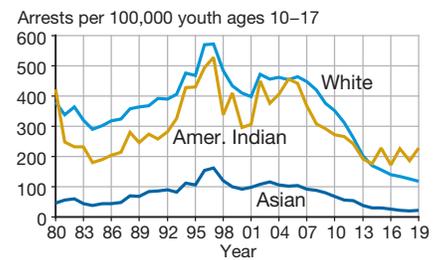
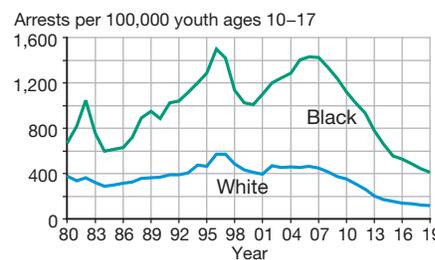
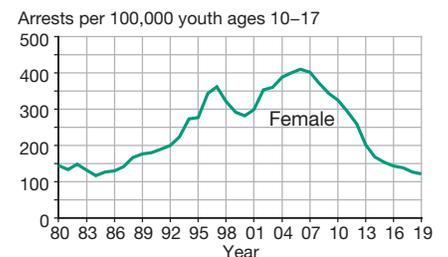
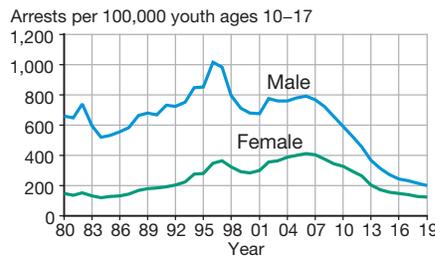
Female and male juvenile arrest rates for disorderly conduct followed a similar pattern

For both females and males, the juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct increased between 1984 and 1996, but the increase in the female rate outpaced that of males (192% vs. 97%). After reaching its peak in 1996, the male rate experienced brief periods of decline and growth through 2006. The female rate also declined after 1996, but this decline was followed by a period of growth that saw the rate reach a new peak in 2006. Since 2006, the rate for both males and females declined continuously through 2019, but the decline in the male rate exceeded the decline in the female rate (75% vs. 70%). By 2019, the juvenile male arrest rate for disorderly conduct was at its lowest point since at least 1980, while the female rate was 4% above its 1984 lowpoint. As a result of these changes, the female share of juvenile arrests for disorderly conduct has steadily grown, from 16% in 1984 to 37% in 2019

The juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct declined annually since 2006



Disorderly conduct arrest rate trends by gender and race



- Since 2006, the juvenile arrest rate for disorderly conduct declined 70% or more for White, Black, and Asian youth, and was cut in half for American Indian youth. By 2019, the rates for White youth and Black youth were at their lowest levels since at least 1980, while the rates for American Indian youth and Asian youth were above their historic low years (2016 and 2018, respectively).

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Age-specific arrest rates for violent crime in 2019 were well below their mid-1990s peak for all juvenile age groups

What is the age-crime curve?

Most displays of juvenile and adult arrest rates show data that combines all ages younger than 18 into the juvenile group and all ages 18 and older into the adult group. However, UCR data allow the calculation of age-specific arrest rates. When graphed, these rates show a mountain-shaped curve—which increases from adolescence through young adulthood and then declines—often referred to as the “age-crime curve.” This age-crime curve is seen across offense categories, although the exact shape of the curve may change along with various factors, such as offense or gender. Variations are also seen over time.

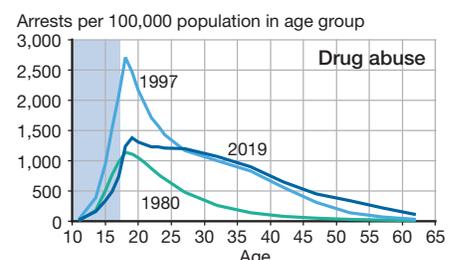
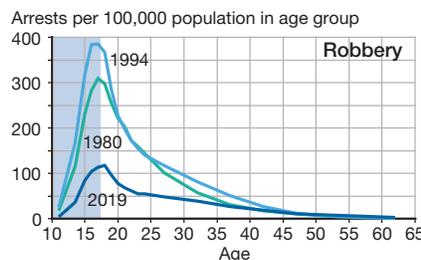
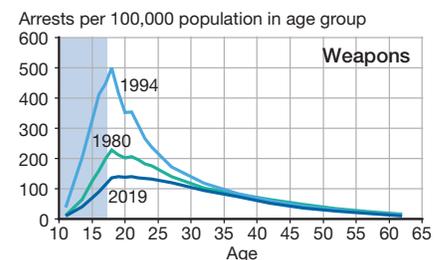
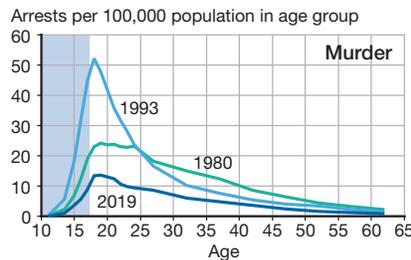
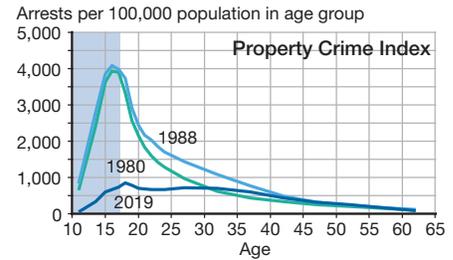
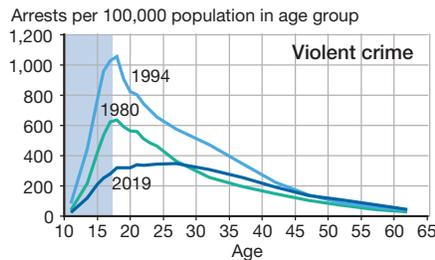
Although the overall juvenile arrest rate for violent crime offenses was 131.7 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17 in 2019, the age-specific rates ranged from 24.4 for children ages 10–12 to 281 for 17-year-olds. The age with the highest rate were adults ages 25 to 29 with a rate of 345.8. In 2019, all ages between 18 and 34 had violent crime arrest rates greater than 300. After youth ages 10–12, the age group with the next lowest rate were adults age 60 (44.7 per 100,000 persons ages 60–64).

The shape of the age-crime curve has changed for some offenses

For both murder and aggravated assault, age-specific arrest rates in 2019 were substantially below the levels of the mid-1990s. The biggest declines were in the age groups that had the highest rates. For example, between the mid-1990s peak and 2019, age-specific murder arrest rates fell 60% or more for all persons under age 25, and the rates for aggravated assault fell more than 50% for persons under age 23.

Simple assault arrest rates in 2019 were higher than the rates in 1980 for all ju-

The shape of the age-crime curve varies across offense categories and over time within offenses

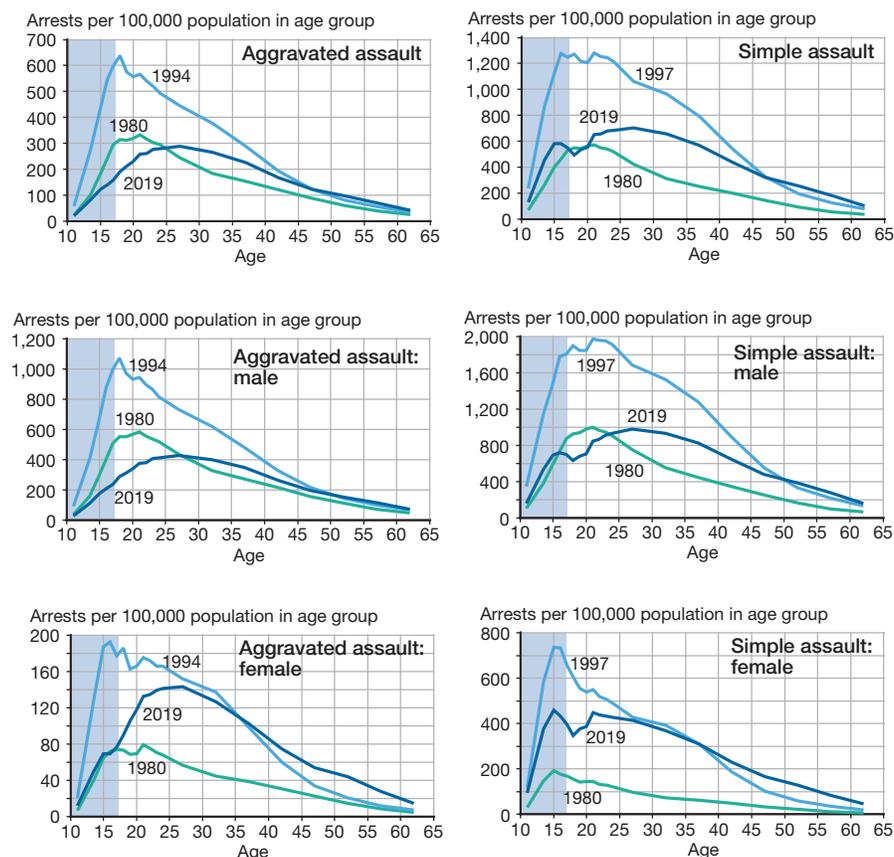


- Violent crime arrest rates were higher in 2019 than in 1980 for adults age 30 and over; for juveniles, 2019 rates were well below the rates in 1980.
- Property Crime Index arrest rates in 2019 were below 1980 rates for ages younger than 30; for youth younger than 18, the rates in 2019 were at least 80% below the rates in 1980.
- For murder and robbery, 2019 arrests rates declined for all age groups from their peak year, and the relative decline was greater for juveniles than young adults. For example, murder arrest rates dropped an average of 81% for youth ages 15–17, 71% for young adults ages 18–20, and 64% for young adults ages 21–24.
- The 2019 arrest rates for weapons offenses were less than the 1980 rates for all ages, and the largest relative declines were for those ages 15 through 18.
- Unlike other offense categories, the 2019 arrest rates for drug abuse violations were higher than the 1980 arrest rates for all adults age 18 or older.

Note: Rates are shown for 2019, 1980, and the year with the highest juvenile arrest rate peak for each offense.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

Age-specific arrest rates for aggravated assault and simple assault vary by gender



- Overall, the 2019 aggravated assault arrest rates for youth younger than 15 were about the same as in 1980.
- The 2019 age-specific simple assault arrests rates for juveniles were higher than the corresponding rates in 1980 for all but persons ages 18–20, but the patterns varied by gender. Across all ages, 2019 simple assault arrest rates for females were higher than in 1980; for males, the rates in 2019 were lower than in 1980 for persons ages 16–23.
- Assault arrest rates for females were well below the rates for males, but the magnitude of the difference varied by offense. For example, for simple assault, female rates for persons under age 23 were about half the rate of males of the same age; for aggravated assault, female rates were about one-third the corresponding rates for males.

Note: Rates are shown for 2019, 1980, and the year with the highest juvenile arrest rate peak for each offense.

Source: Analysis of arrest data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Juvenile Justice, and population data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. (See arrest rate data source note at the end of this chapter for details.)

venile age groups, and for adults ages 21 and older, but the 2019 rates were below the 1997 level for all age groups through age 45. In fact, between 1997 and 2019, age-specific arrests rates for simple assault fell 45% or more for each juvenile age group as well as adults ages 18–24. However, unlike the pattern in 1997, when the simple assault arrest rate peaked at age 21, the rate in 2019 peaked at age 27.

Age-crime curves vary by gender within offense categories

A closer look at the age-specific arrest rates for assault by gender shows some very different patterns for males and females. The age-specific arrest rates for both aggravated and simple assault declined for males and females from their respective peak years through 2019, but the relative declines were greater for males than females for all offense-age combinations.

For aggravated assault, 2019 arrest rates for males were below the levels of 1980 for all age groups under 30, but for females, age-specific rates in 2019 were higher than the corresponding rates in 1980 for all but 16-year-olds.

For simple assault, the 2019 age-specific arrest rates for males were below the 1980 rates for persons ages 16–23, while the rates for females in 2019 were above the 1980 rates for all age groups.

Clearance figures implicate juveniles in about 1 in 20 murders, 1 in 15 aggravated assaults, and 1 in 7 robberies in 2019

Clearances give insight into the relative involvement of juveniles and adults in crime

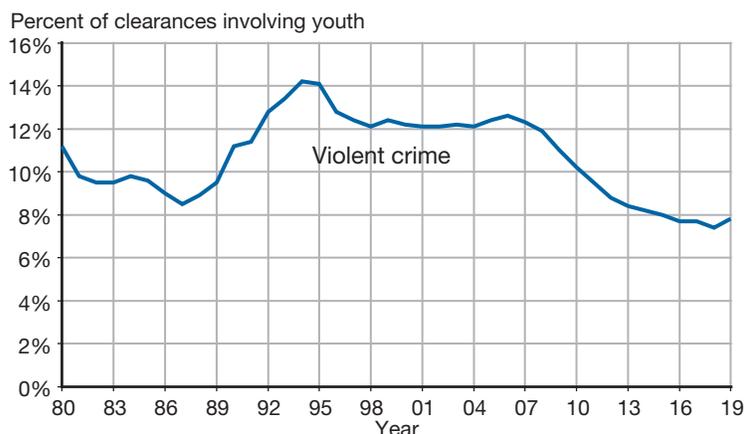
Clearance statistics measure the proportion of reported crimes that are resolved by an arrest or other, exceptional means (e.g., death of the person who committed the crime, unwillingness of the victim to cooperate). A single arrest may result in many clearances if the person arrested committed several crimes. Or multiple arrests may result in a single clearance if the crime was committed by a group of people. The FBI reports information on the proportion of clearances that involved persons under age 18. This statistic is a better indicator of the proportion of crime committed by this age group than is the arrest proportion, although there are some concerns that even the clearance statistic overestimates the juvenile proportion of crimes. Nevertheless, trends in clearance proportions are reasonable indicators of changes in the relative involvement of juveniles in various crimes.

The juvenile share of violent crime returned to levels of the late 1980s

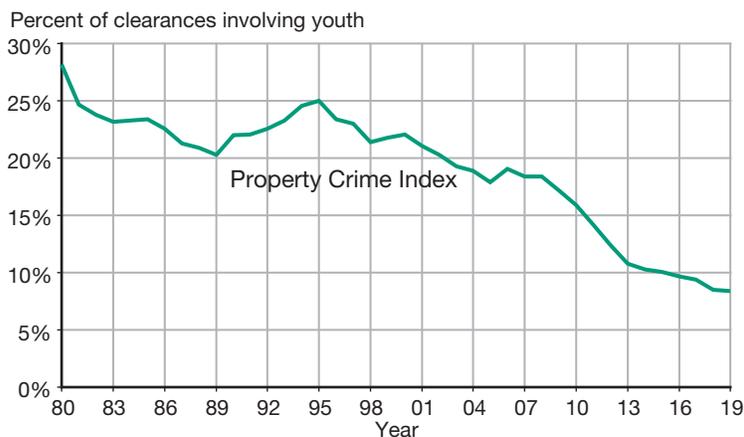
The FBI's *Crime in the United States* series shows that the proportion of violent crimes attributed to juveniles has declined nearly every year since 2006. The juvenile proportion of violent crimes cleared by arrest (or exceptional means) grew from an average of 9% in the 1980s to 14% in 1994, then fell to 12% in 1998, where it remained through most of the 2000s. By 2011, the proportion fell below 10%, and has remained at or below 8% since 2015. In 2019, juveniles committed 1 in 13 violent crimes known to law enforcement.

Each of the violent crime offenses showed an increase in juvenile clearances between 1980 and the mid-1990s. The juvenile proportion of

The juvenile proportion of violent crimes cleared by arrest or exceptional means has remained relatively stable in the last 5 years



The juvenile share of property crime has fallen substantially since 1980



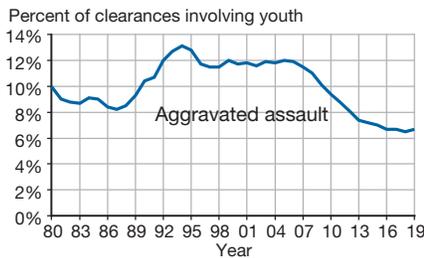
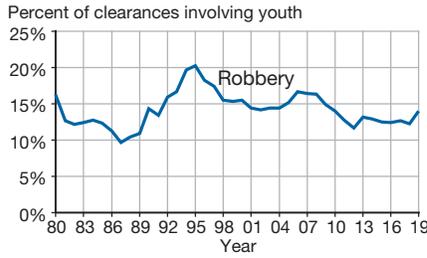
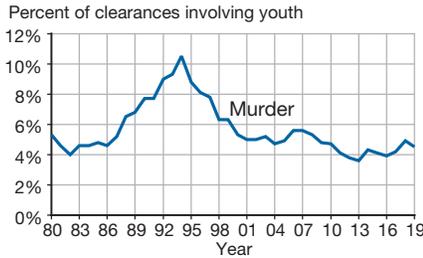
Note: Prior to 2013, rape is included in the calculation for violent crimes, but is excluded in the calculation for 2013 through 2019.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1980 through 2019.

murder clearances peaked in 1994 at 10% and then fell. Between 2010 and 2019, the proportion has stayed within a limited range, averaging 4% over the past 10 years. The juvenile proportion of robbery clearances peaked in 1995 (20%), and then declined through the mid-2000s. In the last 10 years, the proportion varied between 12% and 14%; in 2019, about 1 in 7 (14%) rob-

beries were attributed to juveniles. After reaching a peak in 1994 (13%), the juvenile proportion of aggravated assault clearances was relatively constant through the mid-2000s, and then declined through 2019. The proportion stayed within a limited range over the last 5 years, and well below the 1987 low point.

Clearance statistics imply that juvenile involvement in aggravated assault has declined since 2006

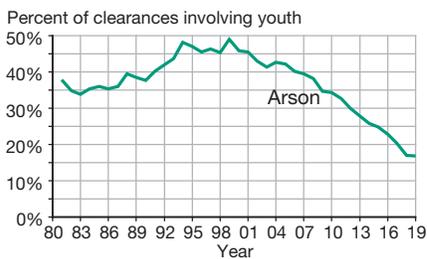
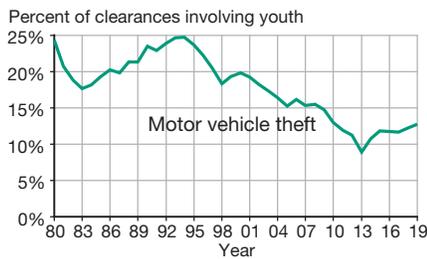
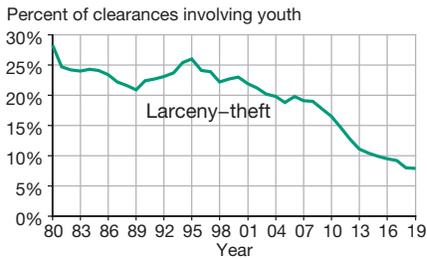
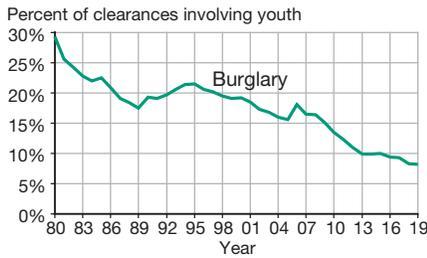


A juvenile committed roughly 1 in 12 property crimes known to law enforcement in 2019

In the 1980s, the juvenile proportion of cleared Property Crime Index offenses decreased from 28% to 20%. This proportion then increased in the early 1990s, peaking in 1995 at 25%. After 1995, the juvenile proportion of clearances for Property Crime Index offenses generally declined, so that by 2019 it was at its lowest level (8%) since at least 1980.

By 2019, juvenile clearance proportions for the crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, and arson were at their lowest levels since 1980 (8%, 8%, and 17%, respectively). For motor vehicle theft, the juvenile proportion of clearances reached a low-point in 2014 (9%) and then increased to 13% in 2019.

In 2019, the juvenile shares of clearances for burglary, larceny-theft, and arson were at their lowest points since 1980



The juvenile proportion of crimes cleared varied with community size

In general, larger cities had a lower proportion of clearances attributed to juvenile arrests for violent crimes and Property Crime Index offenses in 2019.

Percent of clearances involving juveniles, 2019:

Population served by reporting agencies	Violent crime	Property Crime Index
All agencies	7.8%	8.4%
1 million or more	7.3	5.9
500,000 to 999,999	7.1	7.7
250,000 to 499,999	8.0	10.1
100,000 to 249,000	8.1	9.4
50,000 to 99,999	8.0	9.0
25,000 to 49,999	8.1	8.4
10,000 to 24,999	8.1	7.3
under 10,000	10.5	8.0

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2019*.

Note: Arson clearance data were first reported in 1981.

Source: Authors' analysis of the FBI's *Crime in the United States* reports for 1980 through 2019.



In 2019, about one-third of the states had a juvenile violent crime arrest rate above the national average

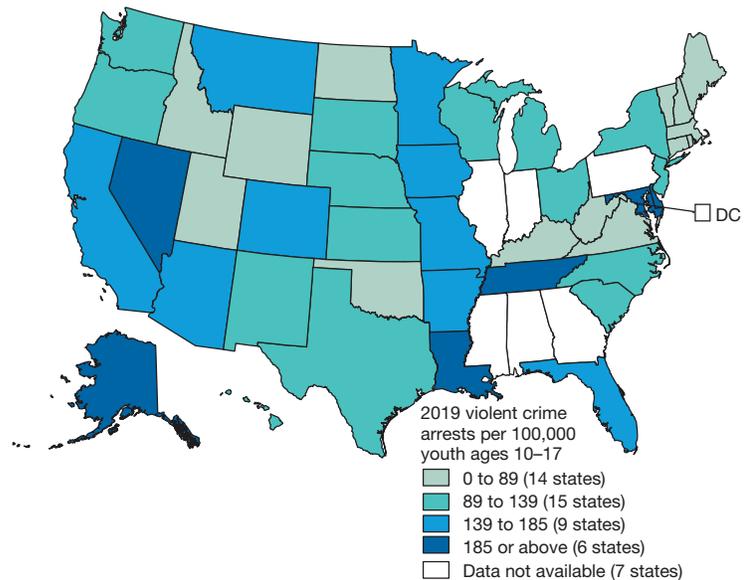
Among states with at least minimally adequate reporting, those with high juvenile violent crime arrest rates in 2019 were Delaware, Maryland, and Nevada

State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of youth under age 18 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17, 2019					State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of youth under age 18 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17, 2019				
		Violent Crime	Robbery	Aggrav. assault	Other assault	Weapon			Violent Crime	Robbery	Aggrav. assault	Other assault	Weapon
U.S. total	77%	139	53	83	378	49	Missouri	63%	165	52	107	460	36
Alabama	2	35	23	12	46	35	Montana	88	183	4	178	638	18
Alaska	94	198	33	158	514	25	Nebraska	91	100	67	32	828	59
Arizona	77	181	51	127	618	50	Nevada	96	298	84	212	679	93
Arkansas	88	144	28	113	603	39	New Hampshire	94	44	10	31	534	3
California	97	168	72	94	187	67	New Jersey	100	111	52	57	131	68
Colorado	85	145	51	92	398	68	New Mexico	65	129	17	108	498	49
Connecticut	100	76	41	34	485	43	New York	51	106	49	54	203	26
Delaware	100	327	116	210	906	64	North Carolina	69	104	54	44	308	51
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	100	80	9	68	699	29
Florida	100	157	65	89	412	45	Ohio	79	102	40	60	505	35
Georgia	22	99	33	62	392	56	Oklahoma	99	89	25	62	205	40
Hawaii	81	90	59	31	344	15	Oregon	88	116	35	80	316	21
Idaho	98	77	7	65	378	49	Pennsylvania	25	197	49	144	404	50
Illinois	1	327	180	140	889	160	Rhode Island	100	85	26	57	428	95
Indiana	40	94	20	73	323	42	South Carolina	84	115	37	73	516	90
Iowa	82	168	26	143	632	45	South Dakota	92	118	15	100	750	122
Kansas	55	104	19	84	427	30	Tennessee	95	194	70	119	618	66
Kentucky	97	67	30	34	213	23	Texas	90	136	48	85	336	25
Louisiana	75	243	47	188	689	106	Utah	89	65	16	48	389	46
Maine	100	26	7	20	441	6	Vermont	100	60	11	48	443	32
Maryland	100	323	198	122	872	103	Virginia	96	80	39	39	348	34
Massachusetts	86	86	16	70	226	18	Washington	93	124	60	62	418	33
Michigan	96	92	23	67	289	31	West Virginia	53	21	3	18	104	2
Minnesota	96	145	70	72	418	55	Wisconsin	94	136	42	91	451	77
Mississippi	42	76	29	42	373	60	Wyoming	88	66	0	66	849	22

NA = Arrest counts were not available for the District of Columbia in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2019*.

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: Analysis of arrest data from *Crime in the United States 2019* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019) tables 3 and 22, and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Vintage 2019 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019), by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, as of July 9, 2020].



High juvenile property crime arrest rates in 2019 did not necessarily mean high violent crime arrest rates

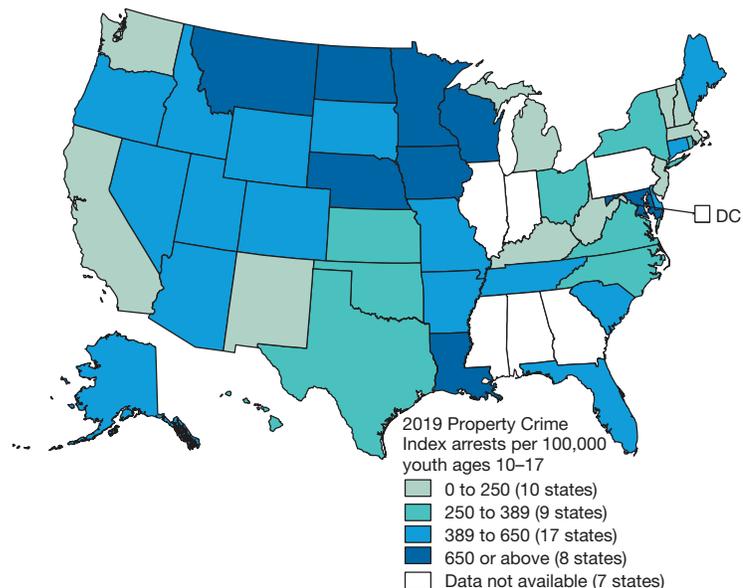
Among states with at least minimally adequate reporting, those with high juvenile Property Crime Index arrest rates in 2019 were Montana, Nebraska, and North Dakota

State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of youth under age 18 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17, 2019					State	Reporting population coverage	Arrests of youth under age 18 per 100,000 youth ages 10–17, 2019				
		Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Vandalism			Property Crime Index	Burglary	Larceny-theft	Motor vehicle theft	Vandalism
U.S. total	77%	389	67	270	46	93	Missouri	63%	461	60	342	55	109
Alabama	2	808	0	785	23	69	Montana	88	724	68	588	60	269
Alaska	94	444	152	205	72	149	Nebraska	91	952	48	807	85	323
Arizona	77	489	84	343	57	254	Nevada	96	414	74	295	39	110
Arkansas	88	506	82	387	34	94	New Hampshire	94	208	22	170	15	167
California	97	168	61	74	30	54	New Jersey	100	247	49	176	19	56
Colorado	85	619	64	466	77	170	New Mexico	65	183	30	142	10	65
Connecticut	100	400	61	270	65	85	New York	51	359	62	254	39	147
Delaware	100	597	157	352	80	152	North Carolina	69	383	91	253	34	65
Dist. of Columbia	0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	North Dakota	100	747	92	565	79	245
Florida	100	597	140	347	107	44	Ohio	79	354	50	275	25	94
Georgia	22	397	67	302	24	54	Oklahoma	99	357	69	239	42	47
Hawaii	81	288	35	240	9	19	Oregon	88	465	60	355	36	144
Idaho	98	439	56	342	24	129	Pennsylvania	25	377	60	278	32	125
Illinois	1	441	33	334	40	167	Rhode Island	100	358	76	239	25	199
Indiana	40	312	34	241	35	48	South Carolina	84	444	85	323	31	77
Iowa	82	694	108	500	74	231	South Dakota	92	623	55	471	90	178
Kansas	55	313	41	240	23	119	Tennessee	95	566	81	362	117	128
Kentucky	97	272	60	158	44	50	Texas	90	312	47	227	35	45
Louisiana	75	701	173	453	65	105	Utah	89	616	48	533	26	209
Maine	100	462	69	352	28	181	Vermont	100	251	78	143	26	147
Maryland	100	656	108	443	93	142	Virginia	96	345	32	287	21	54
Massachusetts	86	122	29	73	17	45	Washington	93	276	56	192	24	110
Michigan	96	278	38	208	29	45	West Virginia	53	33	8	21	3	20
Minnesota	96	700	54	560	80	123	Wisconsin	94	699	62	545	84	276
Mississippi	42	439	102	292	42	45	Wyoming	88	595	88	446	57	241

NA = Arrest counts were not available for the District of Columbia in the FBI's *Crime in the United States 2019*.

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: Analysis of arrest data from *Crime in the United States 2019* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2019) tables 3 and 22, and population data from the National Center for Health Statistics' *Vintage 2019 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019), by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, as of July 9, 2020].





What do police do with juveniles they arrest?

Many large local police departments have personnel designated to address problems related to juveniles

The Bureau of Justice Statistics' Local Police Departments, 2016 report, part of the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) data collection series, provides detailed characteristics of an estimated 12,261 local police departments throughout the U.S. In 2016, these local departments employed nearly 600,000 full-time persons, and more than 468,000 of these employees were sworn personnel with full arrest powers.

Many local police departments had personnel designated to address specific crime-related problems or serve in various functions. In some instances, these issues were addressed by a specialized unit that had full-time personnel. Departments serving 100,000 or more residents were more likely than those serving less than 100,000 residents to have the personnel necessary to operate such units.

In 2016, the majority of local police departments serving 100,000 or more

residents assigned personnel full-time to specialized units for child abuse (72%), drug enforcement (89%), gangs (71%), domestic violence (69%), school safety (59%), and juvenile crimes (50%). However, the proportions were much lower among departments serving less than 100,000 residents: child abuse (6%), drug enforcement (14%), gangs (3%), domestic violence (6%), school safety (11%), and juvenile crimes (7%).

Most arrested juveniles were referred to court

In nine states, statutes define some persons younger than age 18 as adults for prosecution purposes. These persons are not under the original jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system; they are under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system. For arrested youth who are younger than 18 and under the original jurisdiction of their state's juvenile justice system, the FBI's UCR Program monitors what happens as a result of the arrest. This is the only aspect of the UCR data collection that is sensitive to state variations in the legal definition of a juvenile.

In 2019, 42% of arrests involving youth eligible in their state for processing in the juvenile justice system were handled within law enforcement agencies, 49% were referred to juvenile court, and 4% were referred directly to criminal court. The others were referred to a welfare agency or to another police agency. The proportion of juvenile arrests referred to juvenile court in 2019 was less than the proportion in 1980 (58%).

In 2019, juvenile arrests were less likely to result in referral to juvenile court in large cities (population over 250,000) than in moderate-size cities (population 100,000–250,000) or small cities (population less than 100,000). In large cities, 43% of juvenile arrests resulted in referral to juvenile court, compared with 56% in moderate-size cities and 49% in small cities. Conversely, a larger proportion of juvenile arrests in larger cities (50%) were handled in the department and released than in moderate-size (43%) or small cities (42%).

Bureau of Justice Statistics. Arrest Data Analysis Tool [available online at www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=datool&surl=/arrests/index.cfm, retrieved December 12, 2018].

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Federal Bureau of Investigation. National Incident-Based Reporting System. Available: www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/nibrs [retrieved December 14, 2020].

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Hyland, S., and Davis, E. 2019. *Local Police Departments, 2016: Personnel*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

National Center for Health Statistics. 2004. *Bridged-Race Intercensal Estimates of the July 1, 1990–July 1, 1999, United States Resident Population by County, Single-Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* [data files]. Prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau with support from the National Cancer Institute. Available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm [released July 26, 2004].

National Center for Health Statistics. 2012. *Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2000–July 1, 2009, by Year,*

Arrest rate source note

Arrest estimates developed by the Bureau of Justice Statistics for 1980–2014 were retrieved from their *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [available online at www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=datool&surl=/arrests/index.cfm, retrieved December 12, 2018]; the National Center for Juvenile Justice developed arrest estimates for 2015–2019 based on data published in the FBI’s *Crime in the United States* reports for the respective years; population data for 1980–1989 is from the U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1980 to 1999* [machine-readable data files available online, released April 11, 2000]; population data for 1990–1999 is from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau with support from the National Cancer Institute), *Bridged-Race Intercensal Estimates of the July 1, 1990–July 1, 1999, United States Resident Population by County, Single-Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, released July 26, 2004]; population data for 2000–2009 is from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collabor-

ative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau), *Intercensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States for July 1, 2000–July 1, 2009, by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, 2012, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the revised unbridged intercensal estimates by 5-year age group on October 9, 2012]; and population data for 2010–2019 are from the National Center for Health Statistics (prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau), *Vintage 2019 Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019), by Year, County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex* [machine-readable data files available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm, as of July 9, 2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged vintage 2019 postcensal estimates by 5-year age group, retrieved on July 29, 2020].

Technical note

Arrest rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be representative of the entire state. Although 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 ac-

tivity 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 many areas, not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for such areas are necessarily based on partial information and may not be accurate. Comparisons of juvenile arrest rates across jurisdictions can be informative. Because of factors noted, however, comparisons should be made with caution.

County, Single-Year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex [data files]. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available online at www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm [released October 26, 2012, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the revised unbridged intercensal estimates by 5-year age group on October 9, 2012].

National Center for Health Statistics. 2020. *Postcensal Estimates of the Resident Population of the United States (April 1, 2010, July 1, 2010–July 1, 2019) by Year, County, Single-year of Age (0, 1, 2, . . . , 85 Years and Over), Bridged Race, Hispanic Origin, and Sex (Vintage 2019)* [data files]. Prepared under a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Census Bureau. Available online: cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/

[bridged_race.htm](#) [released July 9, 2020, following release by the U.S. Census Bureau of the unbridged vintage 2019 postcensal estimates by 5-year age groups].

U.S. Census Bureau. *U.S. Population Estimates by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1980 to 1999* [data files]. Available online [released April 11, 2000].

Chapter 6

Youth in juvenile court

Law enforcement agencies refer approximately two-thirds of all arrested youth to a court with juvenile jurisdiction for further processing. As with law enforcement, the court may decide to divert some youth away from the formal justice system to other agencies for service. Prosecutors may file some juvenile cases directly to criminal (adult) court. Those cases that progress through the juvenile court system may result in adjudication and court-ordered probation or out-of-home placement or may be transferred from juvenile court to criminal court. While their cases are being processed, youth 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 gender and race differences. (Chapter 4, on juvenile justice system structure and process, describes the juvenile court process in general, the history of juvenile courts in the U.S., and state variations in current laws. Chapter 2, on victims, discusses the handling of child maltreatment matters.) The chapter also discusses racial disproportionality in the juvenile justice system and presents an analysis of juvenile court referral histories from a sample birth cohort of youth born in 2000.

The information presented in this chapter is drawn from the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, which is funded by NIJ with support from OJJDP, and the Archive's primary publication, *Juvenile Court Statistics*.



The *Juvenile Court Statistics* report series details the activities of U.S. juvenile courts

***Juvenile Court Statistics* reports have provided data on court activity since the late 1920s**

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 1974, the 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 data collection effort through the National Juvenile Court Data Archive project. The project not only produces the *Juvenile Court Statistics* reports but also conducts research and archives data for use by other researchers.

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 NCJJ receives are not uniform but reflect the natural variation that exists across court information systems. To develop national estimates, NCJJ restructures compatible data into a common format. In 2019, juvenile courts with jurisdiction over virtually 100% of the U.S. juvenile population contributed at least some data to the national reporting program. Because not all contributed data can support the national reporting requirements, the national estimates for 2019 were based on data from more than 2,500 jurisdictions containing nearly 87% of the na-

tion's juvenile population (i.e., youth age 10 through the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction in each state).

***Juvenile Court Statistics* documents the number of cases courts handled**

Just as the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program counts arrests 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 the initial disposition of 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 youth brought before juvenile courts.

Cases involving multiple charges are categorized by their most serious offense

In a single case where a youth is charged with robbery, simple assault, and a weapons law violation, the case is counted as a robbery case (similar to 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 youth. In addition, given that only the most serious offense is used to classify the case, 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 youth was placed in a residential facility.

***Juvenile Court Statistics* describes delinquency and status offense caseloads**

The *Juvenile Court Statistics* series describes delinquency and 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' differential use of petition, detention, adjudication, and disposition alternatives by case type. The series also can identify trends in the volume and characteristics of court activity. However, care should be exercised when interpreting gender, age, or racial differences in the analysis of juvenile delinquency or status offense 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 *Juvenile Court Statistics* series does not provide national estimates of the number of youth referred to court, their prior court histories, or their future recidivism. Nor does it provide data on criminal court processing of juvenile cases. Criminal court cases involving youth younger than age 18 who are defined as adults in their state are not included. The series was designed to produce national estimates of juvenile court activity, not to describe the law-violating activities of youth.

Juvenile courts handled 722,600 delinquency cases in 2019—down from 1.2 million in 1985

Juvenile court caseloads have decreased and changed

In 2019, U.S. courts with juvenile jurisdiction handled an estimated 722,600 cases in which the youth was charged with a delinquency offense—an offense for which an adult could be prosecuted in criminal court. Thus, U.S. juvenile courts handled 1,980 delinquency cases per day in 2019. In comparison, approximately 1,100 delinquency cases were processed daily in 1960. After a substantial increase (60%) between 1985 and the peak in 1997, the volume of delinquency cases handled by juvenile courts decreased 61% through 2019. This is in line with the decrease in the number of juvenile arrests made between 1997 and 2019.

Most delinquency cases are referred by law enforcement

Delinquency and status offense cases are referred to juvenile courts by a number of different sources, including law enforcement agencies, social services agencies, victims, probation officers, schools, or parents.

Percent of cases referred by law enforcement agencies:

Offense	2019
Delinquency	82%
Person	87
Property	91
Drugs	90
Public order	62
Status offense (formal cases)	18
Runaway	33
Truancy	1
Curfew	93
Ungovernability	31
Liquor	86

In 2019, 82% of delinquency cases were referred by law enforcement agencies. This proportion has changed little over the past two decades. Law enforcement agencies are generally

Youth were charged with a person offense in one-third of the delinquency cases handled by juvenile courts in 2019

Most serious offense	Number of cases	Percent of total cases	Percent change	
			1985–2019	2010–2019
Total delinquency	722,600	100%	-38%	-45%
Person offense	237,000	33	29	-29
Violent Crime Index	53,600	7	-13	-22
Criminal homicide	1,100	0	-4	34
Forcible rape	8,300	1	59	-3
Robbery	18,600	3	-26	-26
Aggravated assault	25,700	4	-14	-25
Simple assault	153,100	21	45	-30
Other violent sex offense	7,500	1	12	-26
Other person offense	22,700	3	118	-38
Property offense	214,500	30	-70	-56
Property Crime Index	145,600	20	-72	-58
Burglary	38,600	5	-73	-55
Larceny-theft	89,600	12	-73	-63
Motor vehicle theft	15,300	2	-57	-2
Arson	2,100	0	-69	-54
Vandalism	35,900	5	-58	-54
Trespassing	19,500	3	-63	-54
Stolen property offense	7,000	1	-77	-51
Other property offense	6,600	1	-64	-35
Drug law violation	96,400	13	25	-40
Public order offense	174,700	24	-11	-48
Obstruction of justice	81,000	11	20	-49
Disorderly conduct	48,300	7	7	-51
Weapons offense	16,000	2	-20	-46
Liquor law violation	4,100	1	-77	-69
Nonviolent sex offense	11,500	2	-12	5
Other public order offense	13,900	2	-57	-44

■ Property crimes accounted for 30% of delinquency cases in 2019.

■ The number of juvenile court referrals decreased 38% between 1985 and 2019; however, during the 10-year period between 2010 and 2019, juvenile court referrals decreased by nearly half (45%).

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

much less likely to be the source of referral for formally handled status offense cases (involving offenses that are not crimes for adults) than delinquency

cases. The exceptions are curfew cases and status liquor law violation cases (underage drinking and possession of alcohol).



The juvenile court caseload increased steadily between 1985 and 1997 and then declined to its lowest level in 2019

Juvenile court cases have decreased steadily since the late 1990s

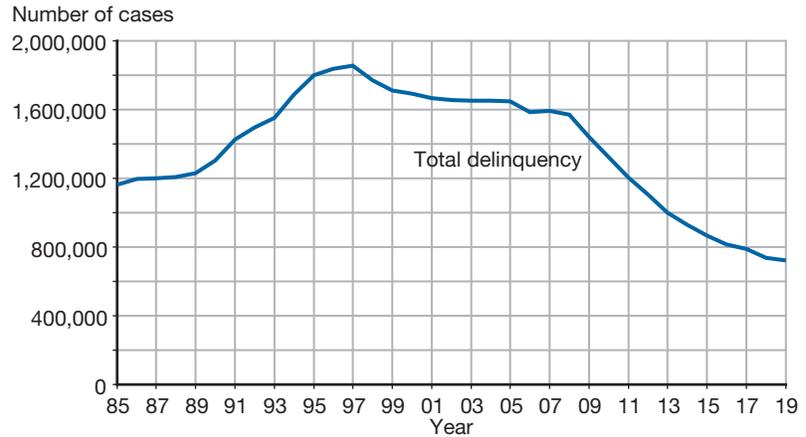
The number of delinquency cases increased 60% between 1985 and the 1997 peak, before decreasing 61% through 2019. Cases involving property or drug offenses followed a similar pattern; property offenses increased 29% through 1995 and drug offense cases more than doubled (147%) through 1997. Both offense types decreased steadily through 2019—down 76% and 49%, respectively. Public order and person offense cases more than doubled to their respective peaks in 2004 and 2005. Public order offense cases decreased 59% through 2019 and person offense cases decreased 45%.

In more recent years, juvenile court cases involving violent crime offenses decreased 22% in the 10-year period between 2010 and 2019. More specifically, robbery was down 26%, aggravated assault 25%, and forcible rape 3%. In contrast, criminal homicide cases increased 34% during the period.

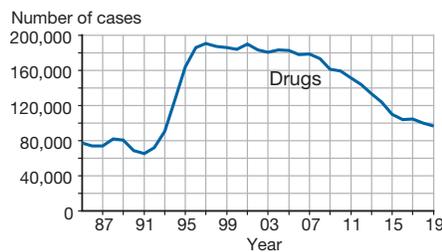
There were also large declines in cases involving property offenses. Larceny-theft cases decreased the most during the 10-year period, down 63%, followed by burglary (55%), arson, vandalism, and trespassing (down 54% each), and stolen property offenses (51%). Motor vehicle theft cases decreased 2% between 2010 and 2019.

Trends in juvenile court cases largely parallel trends in arrests of persons younger than 18. FBI data show that arrest rates for persons younger than 18 charged with violent offenses and Property Crime Index offenses have dropped substantially since their peaks in the mid-1990s.

The juvenile court caseload decreased 38% between 1985 and 2019



Delinquency cases by offense category



- In the 10-year period between 2010 and 2019, caseloads decreased for the four general offense categories. Property offense cases fell 56%, followed by public order offense cases (48%), drug offense cases (40%), and person offense cases (29%). The overall delinquency caseload decreased 45% during the same time period.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

An offense classification may encompass situations with a wide range of seriousness

The four general offense categories—person, property, drugs, and public order—are each very broad in terms of the seriousness of the offenses they comprise. Within these general categories, individual offenses (e.g., aggravated assault, robbery) may also encompass a wide range of seriousness. For example:

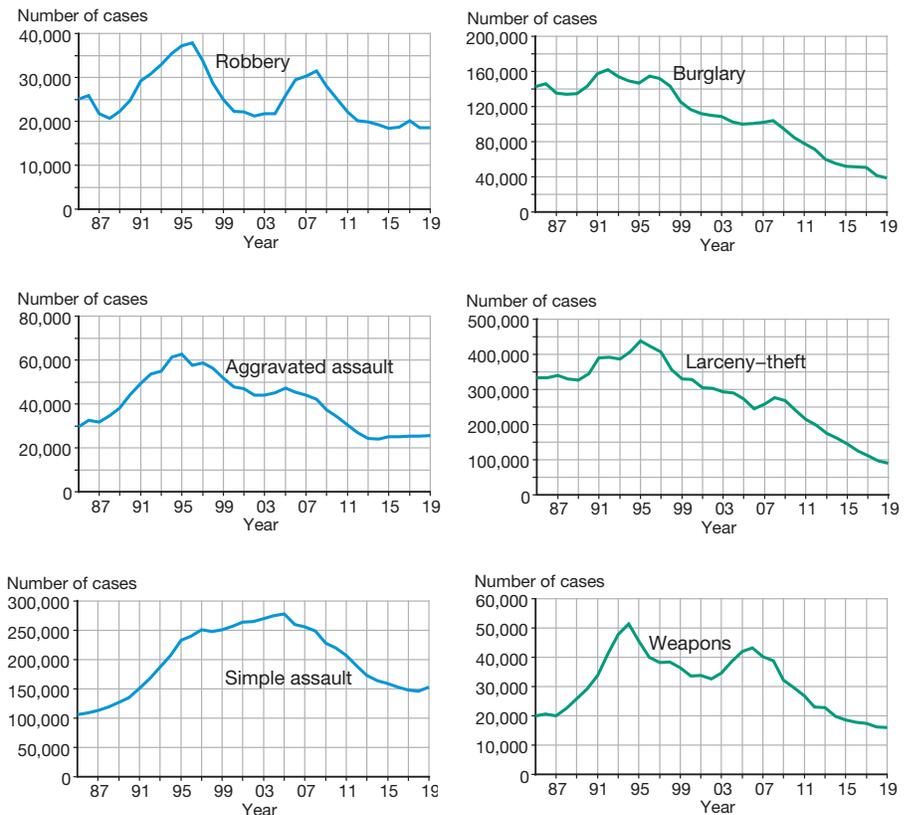
Aggravated assault is the unlawful intentional infliction of serious bodily injury or unlawful threat or attempt to inflict bodily injury or death by means of a deadly or dangerous weapon with or without actual infliction of injury. The following situations are examples of aggravated assault:

- 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 is the unlawful taking or attempted taking of property in the immediate possession of another person by force or threat of force. The following situations are examples of robbery:

- 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.”

Trend patterns for juvenile court caseloads from 1985 through 2019 varied substantially across offenses



- Robbery cases peaked in 1996, fell through 2004, and increased again through 2008, before declining through 2019. As a result, the number of robbery cases in 2019 was 26% less than the number in 1985.
- Aggravated assault cases peaked in 1995, at 62,700 and then fell off sharply. In comparison, simple assault cases climbed steadily through 2005, then decreased through 2019. Unlike other offenses, the number of simple assault cases in 2019 outnumbered the number reported in 1985.
- Burglary and larceny-theft caseloads peaked in the 1990s and steadily decreased through 2019 to their lowest levels since at least 1985.
- After a steady decline following the peak in 1994, weapons offense cases increased through the mid 2000s before decreasing again through 2019.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Cases increased for males and females through the mid-1990s; since then, cases have declined for both

Females account for a relatively small share of delinquency cases

In 2019, juvenile courts handled more than 200,300 delinquency cases involving females—just over one-quarter of all delinquency cases handled in 2019. Females made up a fairly large share of cases in some offense categories—simple assault (37%), disorderly conduct (36%), larceny-theft (35%), and liquor law cases (33%). For other offense categories, the female share of the case-load was relatively small—violent sex offenses other than rape (6%), robbery and weapons offenses (11% each), burglary offenses (12%), and criminal homicide (14%).

Most serious offense	Female proportion
Total delinquency	28%
Person offense	31
Violent Crime Index	16
Criminal homicide	14
Forcible rape	4
Robbery	11
Aggravated assault	24
Simple assault	37
Other violent sex offense	6
Other person offense	30
Property offense	25
Property Crime Index	28
Burglary	12
Larceny-theft	35
Motor vehicle theft	22
Arson	15
Vandalism	19
Trespassing	23
Stolen property offense	14
Other property offense	26
Drug law violation	26
Public order offense	28
Obstruction of justice	27
Disorderly conduct	36
Weapons offense	11
Liquor law violation	33
Nonviolent sex offense	22
Other public order offense	23

For most offenses, female caseloads have grown more or decreased less than male caseloads between 1985 and 2019

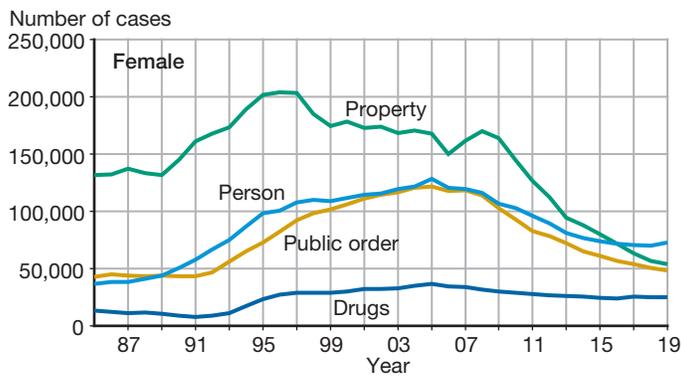
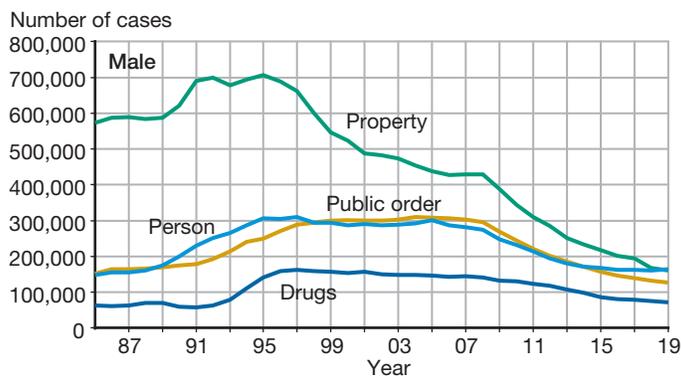
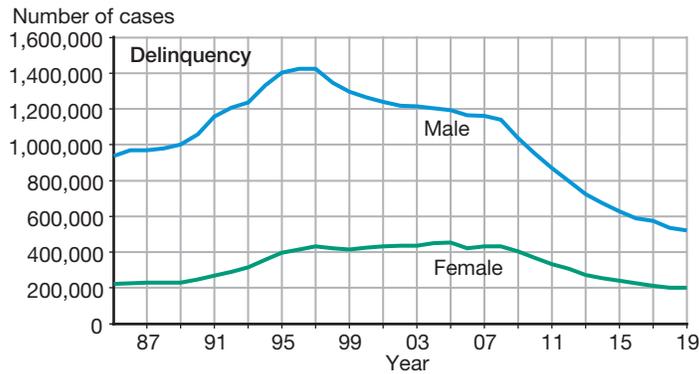
Most serious offense	Percent change			
	1985–2019		2010–2019	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total delinquency	-44%	-11%	-45%	-46%
Person offense	11	101	-30	-29
Violent Crime Index	-17	21	-21	-25
Criminal homicide	-6	5	31	55
Forcible rape	56	161	-3	-3
Robbery	-30	25	-27	-18
Aggravated assault	-20	17	-24	-29
Simple assault	23	110	-32	-27
Other violent sex offense	12	14	-24	-43
Other person offense	81	321	-36	-42
Property offense	-72	-59	-53	-63
Property Crime Index	-74	-62	-53	-67
Burglary	-74	-57	-55	-47
Larceny-theft	-76	-65	-56	-70
Motor vehicle theft	-61	-35	-3	2
Arson	-70	-55	-55	-44
Vandalism	-62	-21	-55	-43
Trespassing	-67	-47	-57	-45
Stolen property offense	-78	-71	-51	-52
Other property offense	-65	-63	-35	-37
Drug law violation	12	84	-45	-13
Public order offense	-17	13	-48	-48
Obstruction of justice	17	28	-50	-48
Disorderly conduct	-11	68	-52	-50
Weapons offense	-23	15	-45	-50
Liquor law violation	-80	-63	-69	-68
Nonviolent sex offense	-17	10	4	9
Other public order offense	-57	-58	-45	-41

- Between 1985 and 2019, the overall delinquency caseload for females decreased 11%, compared with a 44% decrease for males.
- Among females, the number of aggravated assault cases increased 17% between 1985 and 2019. In comparison, among males, aggravated assault cases were down 20%.
- Between 2010 and 2019, the number of aggravated assault cases dropped for both males and females, but the decline for females (29%) was slightly greater than the decline for males (24%).

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

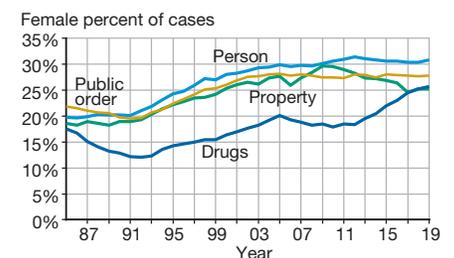
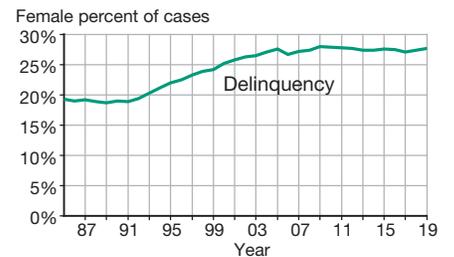
Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Juvenile court caseload trends were different for males and females, and the differences varied by offense category



The female share of delinquency cases increased steadily through 2002 and then leveled off

The proportion of delinquency cases that involved females was 19% in 1985; by 2005, it had increased 9 percentage points to 28% and remained close to this level through 2019. The female share of person offense cases rose 11 percentage points between 1985 and 2019 to 31%. The female proportion of property cases went from 19% in 1985 to 30% in 2009, then decreased to 25% in 2019. The female proportion of drug offense cases increased 8 percentage points from 1985 to 2019, up to 26%. The female proportion of public order cases increased 6 percentage points from 1985 to 2019, up to 28%.



- Male delinquency caseloads have been on the decline since the mid-1990s. The female caseload peaked in 2005 and decreased through 2019.
- The decline in male caseloads has been driven by a sharp reduction in the volume of property cases—down 77% from the 1995 peak to 2019.
- For females, the largest 1985–2019 increase was in person offense cases (101%). Drug law violation cases also rose substantially (84%).

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchara's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.



In 2019, male and female offense profiles were similar

The delinquency caseload changed for both males and females between 2010 and 2019

Compared with offense profiles in 2010, both male and female delinquency caseloads had greater proportions of person offense cases in 2019.

Offense profile by gender:

Offense	Male	Female
2019		
Delinquency	100%	100%
Person	31	36
Property	31	27
Drugs	14	12
Public order	24	24
2010		
Delinquency	100%	100%
Person	24	28
Property	36	39
Drugs	14	8
Public order	26	25

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

Person and property cases accounted for equal proportions of the male caseload in 2019 (31% each). In 2019, person offenses accounted for the largest share of the female caseload; in 2010 property offenses accounted for largest share.

In 2019, the male caseload contained greater proportions of property and drug offenses than the female caseload. In contrast, person offenses accounted for a larger share of the female caseload than the male caseload. The proportion of delinquency cases involving public order offenses was the same for both males and females in 2019.

Although males accounted for more than twice as many delinquency cases as females in 2019, their offense profiles were similar

Most serious offense	Male		Female	
	Number of cases	Percent of cases	Number of cases	Percent of cases
Total delinquency	522,293	100%	200,332	100%
Person offense	163,973	31	73,043	36
Violent Crime Index	44,915	9	8,712	4
Criminal homicide	978	0	157	0
Forcible rape	7,932	2	336	0
Robbery	16,432	3	2,132	1
Aggravated assault	19,573	4	6,086	3
Simple assault	95,999	18	57,129	29
Other violent sex offense	7,127	1	415	0
Other person offense	15,933	3	6,788	3
Property offense	160,494	31	53,992	27
Property Crime Index	105,479	20	40,075	20
Burglary	33,995	7	4,649	2
Larceny-theft	57,867	11	31,734	16
Motor vehicle theft	11,880	2	3,374	2
Arson	1,737	0	317	0
Vandalism	29,114	6	6,754	3
Trespassing	15,044	3	4,463	2
Stolen property offense	5,996	1	990	0
Other property offense	4,861	1	1,710	1
Drug law violation	71,657	14	24,755	12
Public order offense	126,169	24	48,542	24
Obstruction of justice	59,006	11	22,012	11
Disorderly conduct	30,670	6	17,585	9
Weapons offense	14,164	3	1,841	1
Liquor law violation	2,736	1	1,346	1
Nonviolent sex offense	8,953	2	2,523	1
Other public order offense	10,640	2	3,235	2

■ Compared with males, the female juvenile court caseload had a greater proportion of simple assault, larceny-theft, and disorderly conduct cases and a smaller proportion of robbery, burglary, vandalism, and drug cases.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

A disproportionate number of delinquency cases involved Black youth

In 2019, Black youth constituted 15% of the juvenile population but 35% of the delinquency caseload

Although the largest proportion of delinquency cases handled in 2019 involved White youth (310,100 or 43%), a disproportionate number of cases involved Black youth (254,800 or 35%), given their proportion of the juvenile population. In 2019, White youth made up 53% of the juvenile population (youth ages 10 through the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction in each state), Black youth 15%, Hispanic¹ youth 24%, American Indian² youth 2%, and Asian³ youth 6%.*

The racial profile of delinquency cases overall had a slightly greater proportion of cases involving Black youth in 2019 (35%) than in 2010 (33%) and, conversely, a slightly smaller proportion of cases involving White youth. The proportion of cases involving Hispanic youth was the same in both years (19%).

Racial profile:

Race/ethnicity	Delinquency	
	2019	2010
White	43%	45%
Black	35	33
Hispanic	19	19
American Indian	2	1
Asian	1	1

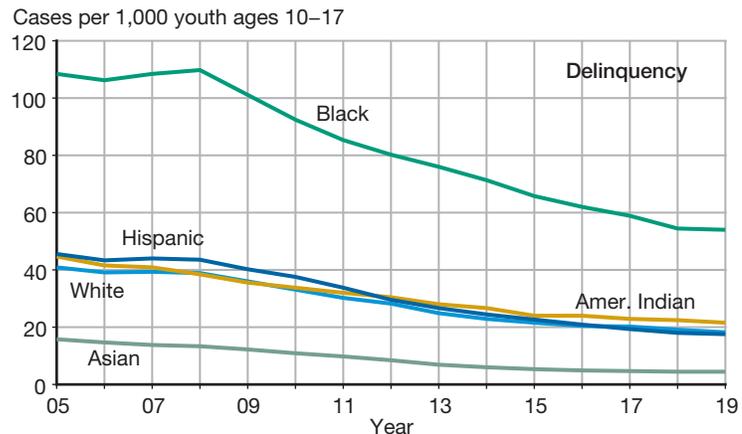
Note: Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

¹Persons of Hispanic ethnicity are treated as a distinct race group and are excluded from the other four race groups, with one important exception. Data provided to the Archive from many jurisdictions do not include any means to determine the ethnicity of American Indian youth. Rather than assume ethnicity for these youth, they are classified solely on their racial classification. As such, the American Indian group includes an unknown proportion of Hispanic youth.

²The racial classification American Indian (usually abbreviated as Amer. Indian) includes American Indian and Alaskan Native.

³The racial classification Asian includes Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander.

Between 2005 and 2019, delinquency case rates declined for youth of all racial groups



- The delinquency case rate was at its highest level in 2005 for all racial groups except for Black youth. The delinquency case rate for Black youth peaked in 2008 (109.7) and then fell 51% by 2019. Between 2005 and 2019, the delinquency case rate decreased the most for Asian youth (71%), followed by Hispanic youth (61%), White youth (55%), American Indian youth (52%), and Black youth (50%).
- In 2019, the total delinquency case rate for Black youth (53.9) was more than double the rate for American Indian youth (21.5), 3 times the rate for White youth (18.3) and Hispanic youth (17.6), and nearly 12 times the rate for Asian youth (4.6).

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

The National Juvenile Court Data Archive began including data on Hispanic youth with the 2005 data year

Beginning with the 2005 data year, detailed race estimates developed by the National Juvenile Court Data Archive (Archive) project were expanded to include estimates for cases involving Hispanic youth. As a result of this change, race data are not comparable across all data years presented in this chapter (1985–2019). For the 1985–2004 data period, the Archive project developed race estimates for four race groups (White, Black, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander) without consideration of ethnicity, and persons of Hispanic ethnicity could be of any race and were included within each of the four racial groups. Beginning with the 2005 data year, persons of Hispanic ethnicity are treated as a distinct race group and

are excluded from the other race groups. For this reason, race estimates for the 1985–2004 data period are not comparable to the race estimates for the 2005–2019 data period. Therefore, in this chapter, racial data are presented only for the 2005–2019 period. An important exception to racial classification must be noted. Data provided to the project did not always allow for identification of Hispanic ethnicity for cases involving American Indian youth. Specifically, data from many jurisdictions did not include any means to determine the ethnicity of American Indian youth. Rather than assume ethnicity for these youth, they are classified solely on their racial classification; as such, the American Indian group includes an unknown proportion of Hispanic youth.

Racial profile, 2019:

Race/ethnicity	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	41	42	53	41
Black	40	32	20	36
Hispanic	16	18	21	22
American Indian	1	2	2	1
Asian	1	2	1	1

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

Offense profiles for White youth and Black youth differed

Delinquency caseloads for Black youth contained a greater proportion of person offenses than did caseloads for all other races. For White, Black, and Hispanic youth, person offenses accounted for the largest proportion of cases, and drug offenses accounted for the smallest proportion of cases for all racial groups. Person offenses made up a larger share of delinquency cases in 2019 than in 2010 for all racial groups.

Offense profile:

Race/ethnicity	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
2019				
White	32%	29%	17%	23%
Black	35	32	7	25
Hispanic	31	26	17	25
American Indian	31	33	17	19
Asian	30	32	15	23
2010				
White	24%	39%	15%	23%
Black	30	35	7	27
Hispanic	21	36	14	30
American Indian	23	39	13	25
Asian	20	46	11	24

Note: Rows total 100%; however, detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

In 2019, the disparity between rates for Black youth and White youth was lowest for drug cases

In 2019, case rates for Black youth were substantially higher than rates for other youth in all offense categories, but the degree of disparity varied. The person offense case rate for Black youth (19.1 per 1,000) was more than

3 times the rate for White youth (5.8), as was the property offense case rate (17.4 for Black youth and 5.3 for White youth), and the public order case rate (13.6 for Black youth and 4.2 for White youth).

In comparison, in 2019, the drug offense case rate for Black youth (3.9) was 1.3 times the rate for White youth (3.0). The disparity in the drug offense case rate between Black and White youth decreased since 2006, when the case rate for Black youth was nearly double the case rate for White youth.

The racial profile for delinquency cases was similar for males and females in 2019

Among females referred to juvenile court in 2019 for person offenses, Black youth accounted for 41% of cases—the greatest overrepresentation among Black youth. The Black proportion among males referred for person offenses was slightly smaller at 37%.

Racial profile of delinquency cases by gender and offense, 2019:

Race/ethnicity	Delinquency			
	Male	Female	Public order	Drugs
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	43	44	41	41
Black	35	35	36	36
Hispanic	19	17	21	21
American Indian	2	2	2	2
Asian	1	1	1	1
Female				
White	39	44	41	41
Black	41	35	39	39
Hispanic	17	16	22	22
American Indian	2	2	3	2
Asian	1	2	2	1

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

Among females referred for drug offenses, Black youth were underrepresented. Although they account for 15% of the population of juvenile females, Black youth made up 13% of drug cases involving females in 2019.

In 2019, American Indian and Asian youth combined made up 8% of the juvenile population; however, they accounted for less than 6% of cases across all gender and offense groups.

Offense profiles for both males and females varied somewhat across racial groups

Among males in 2019, Black youth had a greater proportion of person offense cases than all other race groups. Conversely, Black males had a smaller proportion of drug cases than all other race groups.

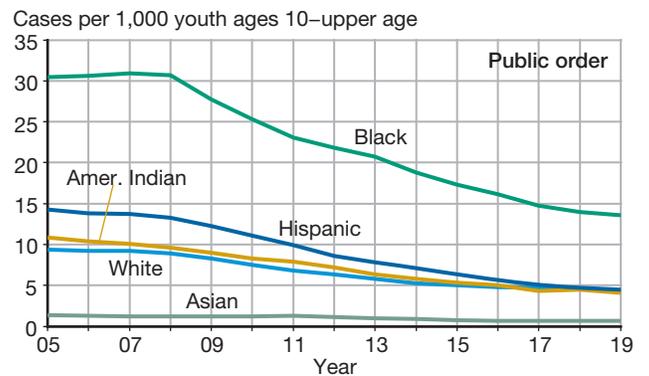
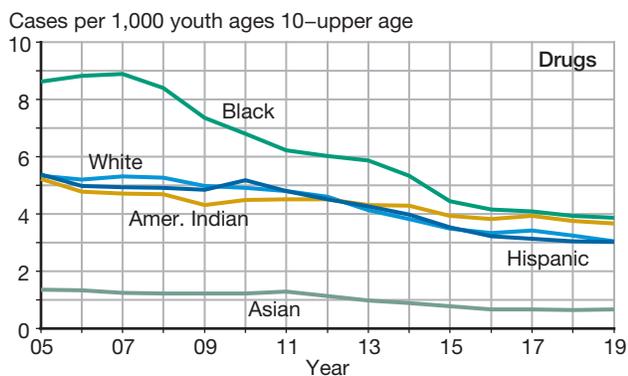
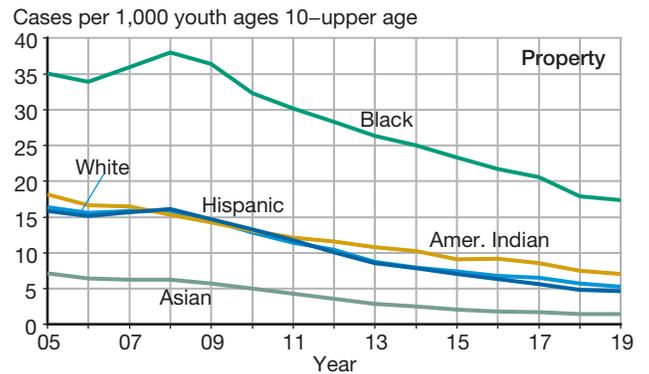
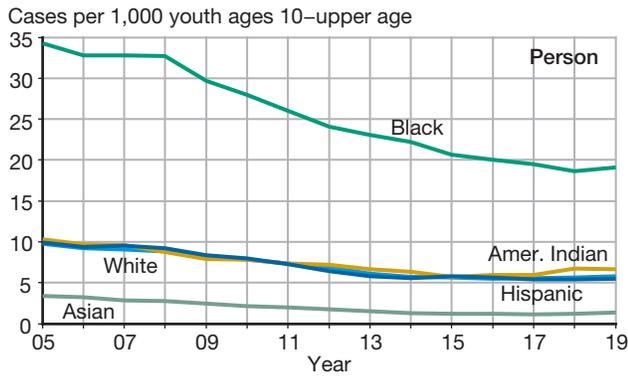
Offense profile of delinquency cases by gender and race, 2019:

Race/ethnicity	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
Male				
White	31%	29%	16%	23%
Black	33	34	8	25
Hispanic	29	27	18	26
American Indian	30	34	16	20
Asian	31	31	15	23
Female				
White	32%	27%	17%	23%
Black	42	27	5	27
Hispanic	36	25	15	23
American Indian	33	31	18	18
Asian	28	34	15	22

Note: Rows total 100%; however, detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Among females, person offenses accounted for 42% of the cases involving Black youth, compared with 36% of the cases involving Hispanics, 33% involving American Indian youth, 32% involving White youth, and 28% involving Asian youth. As with males, Black females had a smaller proportion of drug cases than all other race groups.

Case rates varied across race and offense but, in all offense categories and nearly all years from 2005 through 2019, the rates for Black youth were substantially higher than the rates for other youth



- Compared with 2005, 2019 person offense case rates were lower for all racial groups. In fact, person offense case rates were at their highest level for all race groups in 2005 and decreased substantially through 2019—down 59% for Asian youth, 45% for Hispanic youth, 44% for Black youth, 41% for White youth, and 35% for American Indian youth.
- Property case rates were at their highest levels in 2005 for White, American Indian, and Asian youth, and in 2008 for Black and Hispanic youth. From their respective peaks, property offense case rates decreased the most for Asian youth (down 80%), followed by Hispanic youth (71%), White youth (68%), American Indian youth (61%), and Black youth (54%).
- The drug offense case rate for Black youth increased slightly (3%) between 2005 and the peak in 2007, then decreased 57% through 2019. Drug offense case rates for all other racial groups were at their highest in 2005 and decreased to their lowest levels in 2019 for White, American Indian, and Hispanic youth. The drug offense case rate for Asian youth was slightly higher in 2019 than in 2018.
- In 2019, the decrease in the public order offense case rate was similar for all racial groups: 69% for Hispanic youth, 62% for American Indian youth, 55% each for White and Black youth, and 51% for Asian youth.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchara's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Although older teens dominated delinquency caseloads, trends were similar for all age groups

For all ages, 2019 delinquency case rates were lower than rates in the mid- to late 1990s

In 2019, juvenile courts handled 22.7 delinquency cases for every 1,000 juveniles (youth subject to original juvenile court jurisdiction) in the U.S. population. The overall delinquency case rate peaked in 1996, 43% above the 1985 rate, and then declined 64% to the 2019 level. For all ages, delinquency case rates showed similar trend patterns, although the peak years varied slightly between age groups. Case rates for youth between ages 11 and 14 peaked in 1995, while case rates for older youth peaked in 1996 or 1997. The case rate for youth age 10 peaked in 1991. Between 1985 and 2019, case rate declines were greater for youth younger than 15 than for older teens; however, in the 10-year period between 2010 and 2019, case rate declines were greater for youth ages 16 and 17 than for all other ages.

Most delinquency cases involved older teens

High-school-age youth (ages 14 and older) made up 82% of the delinquency caseload in 2019; older teens (ages 16 and older) accounted for 45%. In comparison, middle-school-age youth (ages 12 and 13) were involved in 15% of delinquency cases, while youth younger than 12 accounted for 4%. The 2019 age profile of delinquency cases was similar to the 2010 profile.

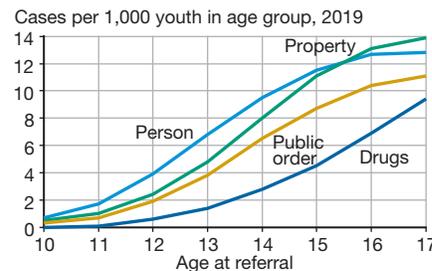
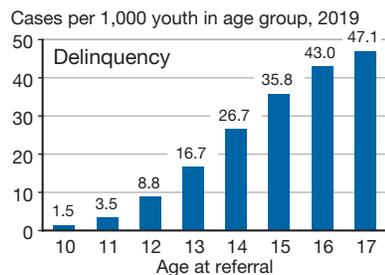
Age profile of delinquency cases:

Age	2019	2010
Total	100%	100%
Under 12	4	3
12	5	4
13	10	9
14	15	15
15	21	21
16	24	26
17	19	19
Over 17	3	3

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

Age profiles varied somewhat across

The delinquency case rate increased with the referral age of the youth in 2019



- In 2019, the delinquency case rate for 16-year-olds was 1.6 times the rate for 14-year-olds, and the rate for 14-year-olds was 3 times the rate for 12-year olds.
- Age-specific case rates increased steadily through age 17 for all offense types. The case rate for 17-year-olds was nearly double the case rate for 13-year-olds for person offenses and nearly triple the rate for property and public order offenses.
- The increase in rates between age 13 and age 17 was sharpest for drug offenses; the rate for drug offenses for 17-year-olds was 6.7 times the rate for 13-year-olds.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

offenses but have not changed substantially since 2010

Age profile of delinquency cases, 2019:

Age	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Under 12	5	3	1	3
12	7	5	2	5
13	12	9	6	9
14	17	16	12	15
15	20	22	20	21
16	22	25	29	24
17	16	19	28	18
Over 17	2	2	3	5

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

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 2019, the number of juvenile court cases involving 17-year-olds (135,800), was lower than the number involving 16-year-olds (173,000). The

explanation lies primarily in the fact that 8 states exclude 17-year-olds from the original jurisdiction of the juvenile court (see Chapter 4). 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. Of the more than 31 million youth under juvenile court jurisdiction in 2019, youth ages 10 through 15 accounted for 78%, 13% were age 16, and 9% were age 17.

In 2019, offense profiles of younger and older youth differed

Compared with the delinquency caseload involving older youth, the caseload of youth age 15 or younger in 2019 included a larger proportion of person offense cases and a smaller proportion of drug offense cases.

Compared with 2010, the caseloads for

both age groups in 2019 involved greater proportions of person offense cases and smaller proportions of property offense cases.

Offense profile of delinquency cases by age:

Offense	Age 15 or younger	Age 16 or older
2019		
Delinquency	100%	100%
Person	37	28
Property	30	30
Drugs	10	17
Public order	24	25
2010		
Delinquency	100%	100%
Person	29	22
Property	38	36
Drugs	9	15
Public order	24	27

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

The age profile of delinquency cases did not differ substantially by gender or race in 2019

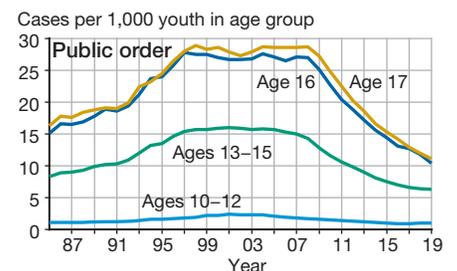
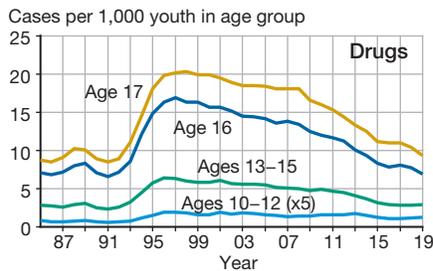
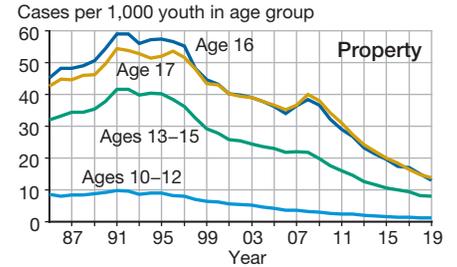
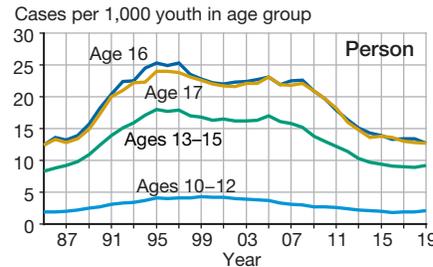
At each age, the proportion of cases was not more than 2 percentage points different for males compared to females. For both males and females, the largest proportion of delinquency cases involved 16-year-olds. Age profiles across racial groups were also similar.

Age profile of delinquency cases by gender, 2019:

Age	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%
Under 12	4	3
12	5	6
13	9	11
14	15	16
15	21	21
16	24	23
17	19	18
Over 17	3	2

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

Between 1985 and 2019, trends in case rates were generally similar across age groups



- With the exception of 10- to 12-year-olds, person offense case rates increased from 1985 through the mid-1990s and then declined through 2019.
- Property offense case rates peaked in 1991 for all age groups, then declined 75% or more through 2019 for each age group.
- For all age groups, drug offense case rates were at their lowest levels in 1991. Between 1991 and their respective peaks in the mid to late 1990s, case rates more than doubled for ages 13–15, 16, and 17 and nearly tripled for youth ages 10–12. Rates then decreased for all ages through 2019.
- Public order offense case rates nearly doubled for each age group between 1985 and the early 2000s. In the 10-year period between 2010 and 2019, the case rate decreased 54% for youth age 16 and 55% for youth age 17.

Note: Because of the relatively low volume of cases involving youth ages 10–12 for drug offenses, their case rates are inflated by a factor of 5 to display the trend over time.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Age profile of delinquency cases by race, 2019:

Age	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Under 12	4	4	2	4	2
12	5	5	4	6	5
13	10	10	9	12	10
14	15	16	15	16	15
15	20	21	21	20	20
16	24	24	25	21	23
17	19	18	19	19	21
Over 17	3	3	4	2	5

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



In 1 in 4 delinquency cases, the youth is detained 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. 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, detention is used 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 most delinquency cases, the youth is not detained.

In all states, law requires that a detention hearing be held within a few days (generally within 24 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 detention during a calendar year. As a case is processed, the youth may be detained and released more than once between referral and disposition. Juvenile court data do not count individual

detentions, nor do they count the number of youth detained. In addition, although in a few states youth 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.

The proportion of detained cases involving person offenses has increased

Compared with 2010, the offense characteristics of the 2019 detention caseload changed, involving a greater proportion of person cases and slightly smaller proportions of all other offense groups.

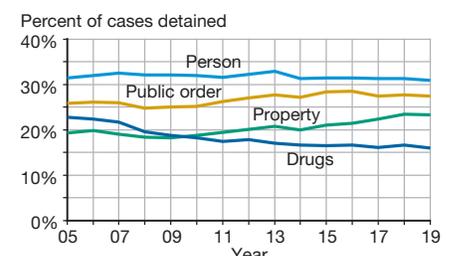
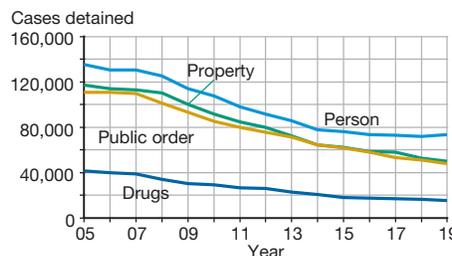
Person offense cases represented 39% of all detained delinquency cases in 2019, while property offense cases accounted for 27% and public order offense cases accounted for 26%. Drug offense cases made up the smallest share of detained cases (8%).

Offense profile of delinquency cases:

Offense	All cases		Detained cases	
	2010	2019	2010	2019
Delinquency	100%	100%	100%	100%
Person	19	24	34	39
Property	59	42	29	27
Drugs	5	11	9	8
Public order	17	23	27	26

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

The number of cases involving detention was lower in 2019 than in 2005 for all offense types



- The number of delinquency cases involving detention decreased 54% between 2005 and 2019, from 404,900 to 186,600. The largest relative decrease was for drug offense cases (63%), followed by property and public order offense cases (57% each) and person offense cases (46%).
- Despite the decrease in the volume of delinquency cases involving detention, the proportion of cases detained was about the same in 2019 (26%) as in 2005 (25%). The percent of cases detained was lowest in 2009 (23%).
- Between 2005 and 2019, the proportion of cases detained decreased for all but property offense cases. The proportion of property cases involving detention increased from 19% in 2005 to 23% in 2019.
- Drug offense cases were the least likely to involve detention—youth were detained in 16% of drug offense cases in 2019. In comparison, youth were detained in 23% of property cases, 27% of public order cases, and 31% of person cases.
- In 2013, youth were detained in 33% of person offense cases—the highest proportion of cases detained for any offense during the 2005–2019 period. In fact, no other offense category ever had more than 28% of cases detained.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzzanhera's *Juvenile Court Statistics* 2019.

Detention data prior to 2005 is not compatible with data for 2005 and later

In 2018, the Archive project improved the coverage of detention data used to generate national estimates. As a result of this change, detention data prior to 2005 is no longer compatible with data for 2005 and later. Therefore, data presentations within this chapter only display detention data information for the 2005–2019 data period.

Use of detention varied not only by offense but also by gender, race, and age

In 2019, the gender disparity in the likelihood of detention was greatest for property cases

In 2019, the likelihood of detention in delinquency cases for males was 1.4 times the likelihood for females (28% vs. 20%). Males were more likely than females to be detained in each of the four general offense categories: 1.6 times more likely for property offenses, 1.5 for drug offenses, and 1.3 each for person offenses and public order offenses.

Percent of cases detained, 2019:

Offense	Male	Female
Delinquency	28%	20%
Person	33	26
Property	26	16
Drugs	17	12
Public order	29	22

Delinquency cases involving youth age 16 or older were more likely to be detained than were cases involving youth age 15 or younger. Person offense cases for both age groups were more likely to involve detention than were other offenses.

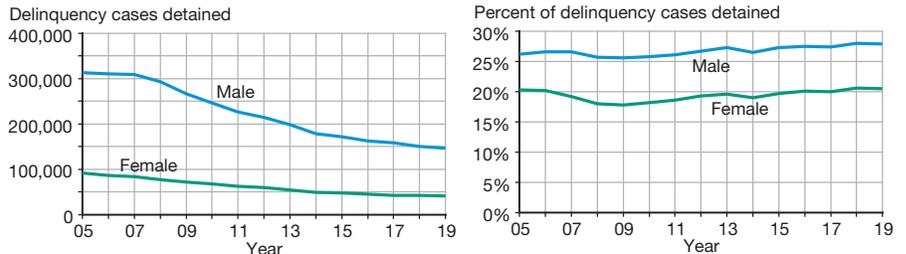
Percent of cases detained, 2019:

Offense	Age 15 or younger	Age 16 or older
Delinquency	25%	27%
Person	29	34
Property	23	24
Drugs	15	17
Public order	24	31

The degree of racial disparity in the likelihood of detention varied across offenses

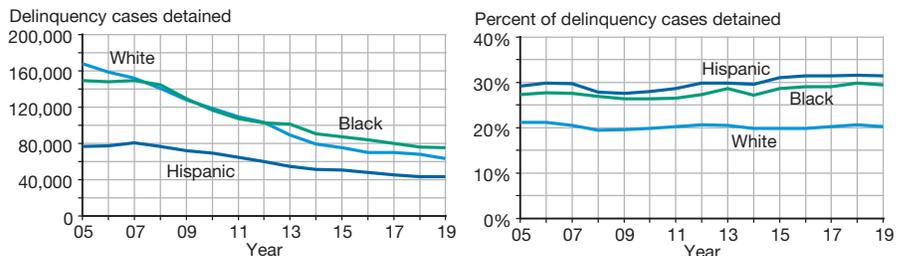
In 2019, the likelihood of detention was greatest for Hispanic youth for person and public order offenses. In 2019, Black and Hispanic youth were equally as likely to be detained for a property offense (27%), while Black youth were more likely than any other race group to be detained for a drug offense (23%). For all years between

Males accounted for most delinquency cases involving detention and were consistently more likely than females to be detained



- The number of cases detained decreased at a similar pace for both males and females between 2005 and 2019; down 53% for males and 55% for females.
- The likelihood of detention was higher for males than for females, but the 2005-2019 trend lines for the percent of cases detained ran in tandem.

Black youth accounted for the largest number of delinquency cases involving detention, but Hispanic youth were most likely to be detained



- The number of delinquency cases involving detention was its highest level in 2005 for both White and Black youth and decreased through 2019; down 62% for White youth and 50% for Black youth. For Hispanic youth, the number of detained delinquency cases peaked in 2007, then decreased 47% through 2019.
- Although the likelihood of detention for Black and Hispanic youth increased slightly between 2005 and 2019, the likelihood of detention was fairly stable for all racial groups during the reporting period. The proportion of cases involving detention remained lower for White youth than all other races for all years during the period.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

2005 and 2019, White youth were less likely to be detained than Black or Hispanic youth. The overall percent of cases detained for Black youth was 1.4 times that for White youth, and Hispanic youth were 1.7 times more likely

to be detained than White youth. The greatest disparity between Black and White youth was in the likelihood of detention in drug cases—the proportion for Black youth was 2 times that for White youth.

Percent of cases detained:

Race/ethnicity	Delinquency	
	2010	2019
White	20%	20%
Black	26	29
Hispanic	28	32
American Indian	26	25
Asian	21	26

Percent of cases detained, 2019:

Race/ethnicity	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
White	26%	18%	12%	22%
Black	33	27	23	29
Hispanic	37	27	20	36
American Indian	29	23	16	30
Asian	31	20	14	34

The racial profile for detained delinquency cases was similar for males and females in 2019

In 2019, the Black proportion of detained delinquency cases (40%) was substantially greater than the Black proportion of the juvenile population (15%) and also greater than the Black proportion of delinquency cases handled during the year (35%). The overrepresentation of Black youth in the detention caseload was greatest among property offenses (45%) and males (41%). Across offenses, for males and females, the Black proportion of detained cases was in the 30%–40% range. The one exception was among detained females referred for drug offenses. Black youth accounted for just 16% of cases involving females—close to their representation in the population (14%).

Racial profile of detained cases by gender, 2019:

Race/ethnicity	Delinquency	
	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%
White	33	36
Black	41	38
Hispanic	23	23
American Indian	2	2
Asian	1	1

Race/ethnicity	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
Male	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	35	32	37	31
Black	41	46	30	39
Hispanic	22	20	31	27
American Indian	2	2	2	2
Asian	1	1	1	1
Female	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	34	35	48	36
Black	41	40	16	37
Hispanic	22	21	30	23
American Indian	2	3	4	2
Asian	1	1	2	2

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

The offense profile of detained cases varied by race and by gender in 2019

For males, the person offense share of delinquency cases involving detention was similar for White and Black youth (39% and 38%, respectively) and slightly greater than Asian youth (36%) and Hispanic and American Indian youth (35% each). For Black male youth, drug offense cases accounted for 6% of detained cases, compared with 11% for

Hispanic males, 10% for White males, 9% for American Indian males, and 8% for Asian males.

Among females, Black youth had a higher proportion of person offenses in the detention caseload (49%) than did White and Hispanic youth (44% each), American Indian youth (41%), or Asian youth (37%). For American Indian females, drug offense cases accounted for 14% of detained cases, compared with 10% each for White and Hispanic females, 8% for Asian females, and 3% for Black females.

Offense profile of detained cases by gender, 2019:

Race/ethnicity	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
Total				
White	40%	26%	10%	25%
Black	40	30	6	25
Hispanic	37	23	11	29
American Indian	36	30	11	23
Asian	36	25	8	31
Male				
White	39%	27%	10%	24%
Black	38	32	6	24
Hispanic	35	24	11	30
American Indian	35	32	9	25
Asian	36	26	8	30
Female				
White	44%	20%	10%	26%
Black	49	22	3	26
Hispanic	44	19	10	27
American Indian	41	26	14	20
Asian	37	21	8	34

Note: Rows total 100%; however, detail may not total 100% because of rounding.



The petitioned caseload decreased 26% from 1985 to 2019 as formal case handling became less likely

In a formally processed case, petitioners ask the court to order sanctions

Formal case handling involves the filing of a petition requesting that the court hold an adjudicatory or waiver hearing. Decisionmakers (police, probation, intake, prosecutor, or other screening officer) may consider informal case handling if they believe that accountability and rehabilitation can be achieved without formal court intervention. Compared with informally handled (nonpetitioned) cases, formally processed (petitioned) delinquency cases tend to involve more serious offenses, older youth, and youth with longer court histories.

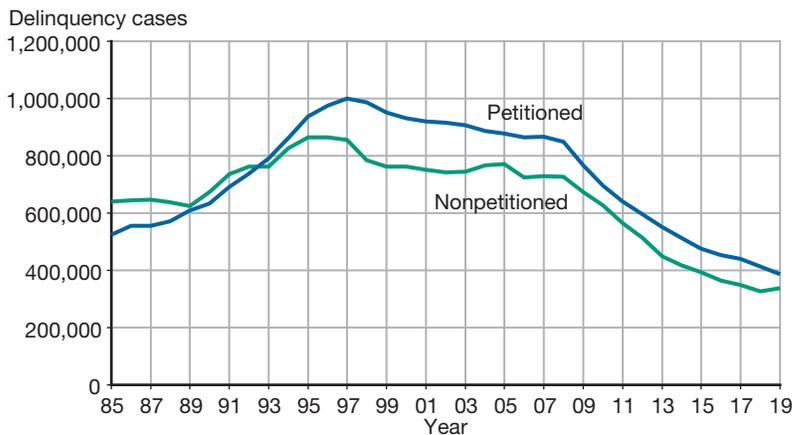
If the court decides to handle the matter informally, the youth agrees to comply with one or more sanctions, such as community service, victim restitution, or voluntary probation supervision. Informal cases are generally held open pending successful completion of the disposition. If the court's conditions are met, the charges are dismissed. If, however, the youth does not fulfill the conditions, the case is likely to be petitioned for formal processing.

The use of formal handling has been stable for several years

The use of formal handling changed little between 2010 and 2019, increasing one percentage point from 2010 (53%) to 2019 (54%). Property, and public order offense cases were more likely to be handled formally in 2019 than in 2010. Drug offense cases were less likely to be handled formally, and person offense cases were equally as likely in both years.

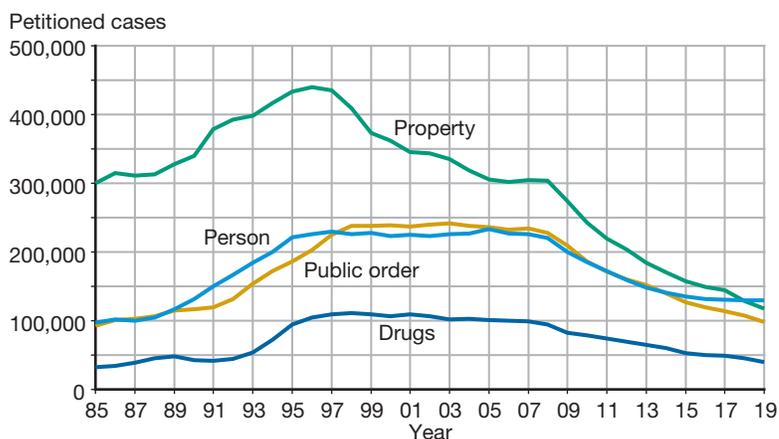
In 2010, property and drug offense cases were less likely than person and public order offense cases to be petitioned for formal handling. In 2019, drug offense cases were least likely.

The number of petitioned delinquency cases increased 91% between 1985 and the peak in 1997 and then declined 61% by 2019



- The number of delinquency cases petitioned in 2019 (386,600) was 26% less than the number petitioned in 1985 (522,900). In comparison, the overall number of delinquency cases referred decreased 38% in that time.
- The trend for nonpetitioned cases was similar to that of petitioned cases. The number of nonpetitioned delinquency cases increased 35% between 1985 and the peak in 1995 and then declined 61% by 2019 for an overall decrease of 47%.

The petitioned caseload decreased for all offense categories in the 15 years between 2005 and 2019



- Between 2005 and 2019, petitioned person offense cases decreased 44%, property offense cases decreased 61%, drug offense cases decreased 60%, and public order cases decreased 58%.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Percent of delinquency cases petitioned:

Offense	2010	2019
Delinquency	53%	54%
Person	55	55
Property	50	55
Drugs	50	42
Public order	55	56

The proportion of petitioned cases changed little for all demographic groups between 2010 and 2019

The likelihood of formal case processing increased slightly from 2010 to 2019 for both males and females as well as for Black and Hispanic youth and for all ages.

Percent of adjudicated delinquency cases, 2019:

Demographic	2010	2019
Gender		
Male	56%	57%
Female	43	45
Race/ethnicity		
White	49	48
Black	59	60
Hispanic	50	52
American Indian	58	56
Asian	52	52
Age		
15 or younger	49	51
16 or older	56	57

In 2019, as in 2010, courts petitioned a larger share of delinquency cases involving males than females. This was true for each of the general offense categories. In both 2010 and 2019, courts petitioned a larger share of delinquency cases involving Black youth than youth of any other race.

In 2019, juvenile courts petitioned more than 5 in 10 delinquency cases for formal handling, and adjudicated youth delinquent in more than half of those petitioned cases

Most serious offense	Number of petitioned cases	Percent of delinquency cases petitioned	Number of adjudicated cases	Percent of petitioned cases adjudicated
Total delinquency	386,600	54%	203,600	53%
Person offense	129,800	55	65,600	51
Violent Crime Index	41,300	77	23,800	58
Criminal homicide	900	82	500	50
Forcible rape	6,000	73	3,200	54
Robbery	15,900	85	9,900	62
Aggravated assault	18,400	72	10,200	55
Simple assault	72,200	47	33,000	46
Other violent sex offense	5,500	72	2,900	53
Other person offense	10,800	48	5,900	54
Property offense	118,200	55	62,600	53
Property Crime Index	82,600	57	44,700	54
Burglary	27,300	71	16,000	59
Larceny-theft	42,700	48	21,500	50
Motor vehicle theft	11,200	73	6,400	58
Arson	1,300	65	700	50
Vandalism	17,900	50	8,800	49
Trespassing	8,500	44	3,700	44
Stolen property offense	5,800	83	3,600	62
Other property offense	3,400	52	1,800	52
Drug law violation	40,400	42	20,400	51
Public order offense	98,300	56	55,000	56
Obstruction of justice	56,200	69	34,100	61
Disorderly conduct	19,700	41	9,200	47
Weapons offense	10,100	63	5,600	55
Liquor law violation	1,100	27	500	45
Nonviolent sex offense	5,300	46	2,700	52
Other public order offense	5,900	43	2,900	49

- Generally, more serious offenses were more likely to be petitioned for formal processing than were less serious offenses.
- For criminal homicide and robbery, at least 82% of cases were petitioned. The proportion of cases petitioned was lower than 50% for simple assault, larceny-theft, trespassing, disorderly conduct, liquor law violations, and nonviolent sex offenses.
- For most offenses, the youth was adjudicated delinquent in about half of petitioned cases.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

From 1985 to 2019, the number of cases in which the youth was adjudicated delinquent fell 40%

Adjudication was more likely for some types of cases than others

Youth were adjudicated delinquent in a smaller proportion of person offense cases than in cases involving other categories of offenses. This lower rate of adjudication in person offenses cases may reflect, in part, reluctance to divert these cases from the formal juvenile justice system without a judge's review.

Adjudication rates also varied by gender, race, and age of the youth. The likelihood of adjudication in 2019 was less for females than for males. This was true across all offense categories. Black youth were less likely to be adjudicated than were youth of other races. Cases involving youth ages 15 or

younger were equally as likely as cases involving older youth to result in adjudication, although older youth had a greater share of cases waived to criminal court.

Percent of petitioned delinquency cases adjudicated:

Demographic	2010	2019
Gender		
Male	63%	54%
Female	57	47
Race		
White	62	53
Black	59	50
Hispanic	66	58
American Indian	69	57
Asian	58	52
Age		
15 or younger	62	53
16 or older	61	53

Offense profiles for petitioned and adjudicated cases shows a shift away from property cases

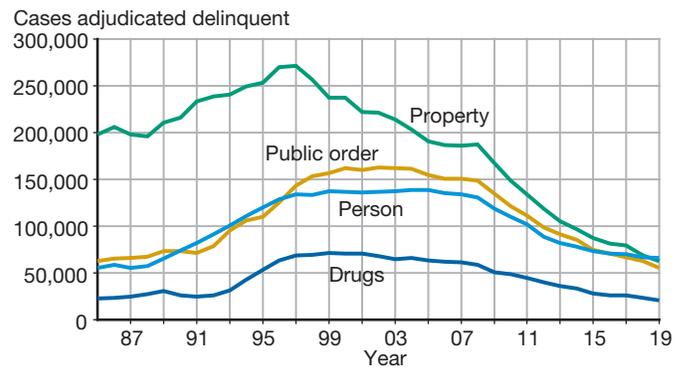
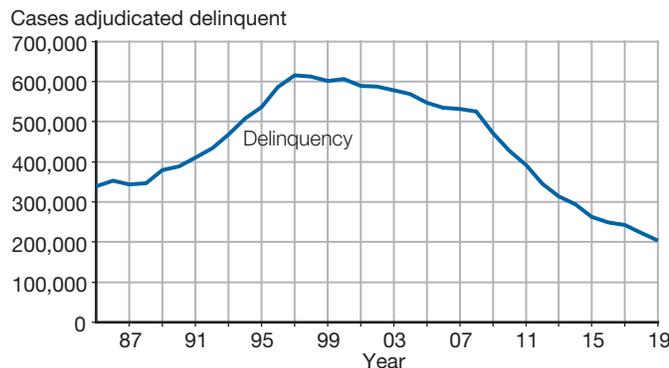
Compared with 2010, both petitioned and adjudicated cases had increased proportions of person offenses in 2019 and smaller proportions of property, drug, and public order offenses.

Offense profile of delinquency cases:

Offense	2010	2019
Petitioned cases	100%	100%
Person	27	34
Property	35	31
Drugs	11	10
Public order	27	25
Adjudicated cases	100%	100%
Person	26	32
Property	35	31
Drugs	11	10
Public order	28	27

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

Since 1997, the number of cases adjudicated delinquent decreased for all general offense categories



- Although the number of cases in which the youth was adjudicated delinquent decreased 53% since the 2005 peak for person offense cases, the number in 2019 was 19% above the level reported in 1985. For all other offense categories, the number of cases that resulted in a delinquency adjudication was at the lowest level in 2019.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Most adjudicated delinquency cases result in residential placement or formal probation

Residential placement and formal probation caseloads saw a shift away from property cases

Compared with 2010, both residential placement and formal probation cases had increased proportions of person offenses in 2019. In 2019, cases ordered to residential placement had a greater share of public order cases and a smaller share of property and drug cases than cases ordered to formal probation.

Offense profile of delinquency cases:

Offense	2010	2019
Residential placement	100%	100%
Person	27	33
Property	32	30
Drugs	8	6
Public order	33	31
Formal probation	100%	100%
Person	26	33
Property	36	31
Drugs	13	11
Public order	26	25

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

Residential placement and probation caseloads decreased between 2010 and 2019

The number of delinquency cases in which adjudicated youth were ordered out of the home to some form of residential placement declined 51% between 2010 and 2019, from 113,000 to 55,100. Similarly, the number of delinquency cases receiving formal probation as the most severe initial disposition following adjudication decreased 53% from 2010 to 2019, from 278,700 to 132,200. The decrease in cases ordered to out-of-home placement or formal probation was consistent with the decrease in delinquency cases at referral (45%) and adjudication (52%).

In 2019, residential placement or formal probation was ordered in 92% of cases in which the youth was adjudicated delinquent

Most serious offense	Adjudicated cases			
	Number ordered to placement	Percent ordered to placement	Number ordered to probation	Percent ordered to probation
Total delinquency	55,100	27%	132,200	65%
Person offense	18,400	28	43,600	66
Violent Crime Index	8,800	37	14,100	59
Criminal homicide	300	61	200	37
Forcible rape	1,000	30	2,200	67
Robbery	4,300	43	5,300	54
Aggravated assault	3,300	32	6,500	64
Simple assault	7,800	24	22,900	69
Other violent sex offense	600	20	2,200	76
Other person offense	1,100	19	4,400	74
Property offense	16,700	27	40,600	65
Property Crime Index	13,000	29	28,400	64
Burglary	5,500	35	9,900	62
Larceny-theft	4,700	22	14,400	67
Motor vehicle theft	2,600	40	3,700	57
Arson	100	23	500	72
Vandalism	1,800	21	6,000	69
Trespassing	600	17	2,500	68
Stolen property offense	900	24	2,400	67
Other property offense	400	23	1,200	69
Drug law violation	3,200	16	14,900	73
Public order offense	16,800	31	33,100	60
Obstruction of justice	12,900	38	19,200	56
Disorderly conduct	1,100	12	5,800	63
Weapons offense	1,600	29	3,800	67
Liquor law violation	100	19	400	74
Nonviolent sex offense	600	22	2,000	74
Other public order offense	500	17	1,900	64

- Cases involving youth adjudicated for serious person offenses, such as homicide or robbery, were the most likely cases to result in residential placement.
- Probation was the most restrictive disposition used in 132,200 cases adjudicated delinquent in 2019—65% of all such cases handled by juvenile courts.
- Obstruction of justice had a relatively high residential placement rate, stemming from the inclusion in the category of certain offenses (e.g., escapes from confinement, violations of probation or parole) that have a high likelihood of placement.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' analyses of the National Center for Juvenile Justice's *National Juvenile Court Data Archive: Juvenile court case records 1985–2019* [machine-readable data file].

The number of adjudicated cases receiving other sanctions (e.g., community service, restitution) as their most severe disposition decreased 55% from 2010 to 2019, from 36,500 to 16,300. However, the majority of cases resulting in other sanctions were handled informally.

Probation was more likely than residential placement

In 27% of adjudicated delinquency cases, the court ordered the youth to residential placement, such as a training school, treatment center, drug treatment or private placement facility, or group home. In 65% of adjudicated delinquency cases, probation was the most severe sanction ordered.

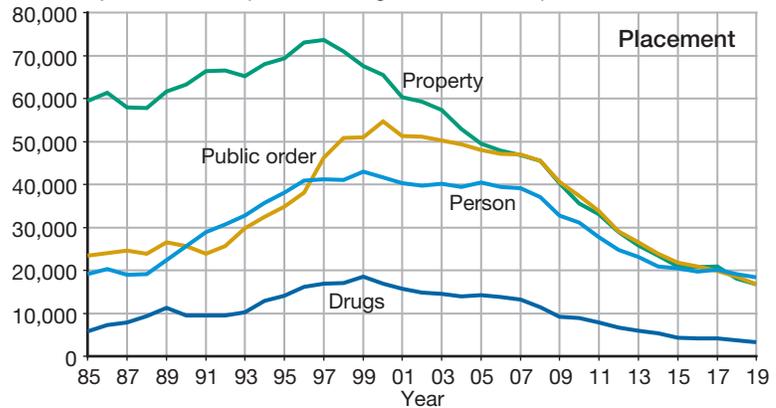
Percent of adjudicated delinquency cases, 2019:

Demographic	Residential placement	Formal probation
Total	27%	65%
Gender		
Male	29	64
Female	21	68
Race/ethnicity		
White	22	68
Black	31	61
Hispanic	31	65
American Indian	25	65
Asian	21	75
Age		
15 or younger	25	67
16 or older	29	63

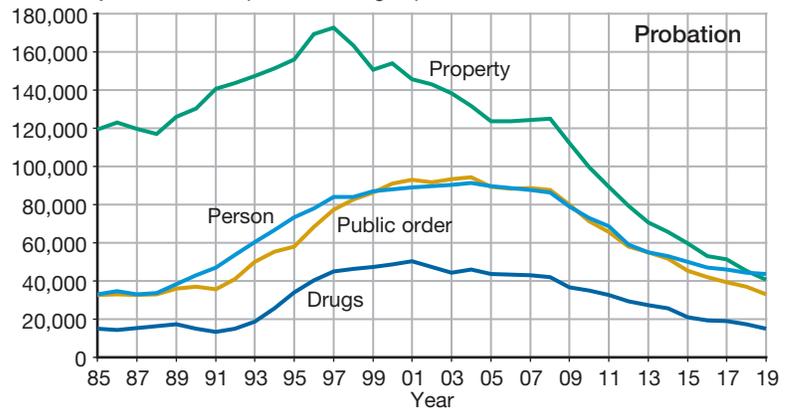
Once adjudicated, females were less likely than males, and White youth were less likely than Black, Hispanic, or American Indian youth to be ordered to residential placement. These demographic patterns in the use of residential placement or probation, however, do not control for criminal histories and other risk factors related to dispositional decisions and increased severity of sanctions.

In 2019, across offenses, the number of adjudicated cases resulting in residential placement or probation reached their lowest level since 1985

Cases adjudicated delinquent, resulting in out-of-home placement



Cases adjudicated delinquent, resulting in probation



- The number of property offense cases ordered to residential placement peaked in 1997, while person and drug offense cases peaked 2 years later, and public order offense cases peaked in 2000. Since their respective peaks and 2019, the number of cases ordered to residential placement declined considerably: property (77%), drugs (83%), person (57%), and public order (69%).
- The pattern for cases ordered to formal probation was similar to that of residential placement. The number of property offense cases ordered to probation peaked in 1997, drug offense cases peaked in 2001, and person and public order offense cases peaked in 2004. For each offense, the decline in the number of cases ordered to probation between their peak and 2019 was similar to the decline for cases ordered to placement: property (76%), drugs (70%), person (52%), and public order (65%).
- As a result, property offenses accounted for a smaller share of cases ordered to placement or probation in 2019 than in 1985, while person and public order offenses accounted for a larger share.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

How were delinquency cases processed in juvenile courts in 2019?

Juvenile courts can impose a range of sanctions

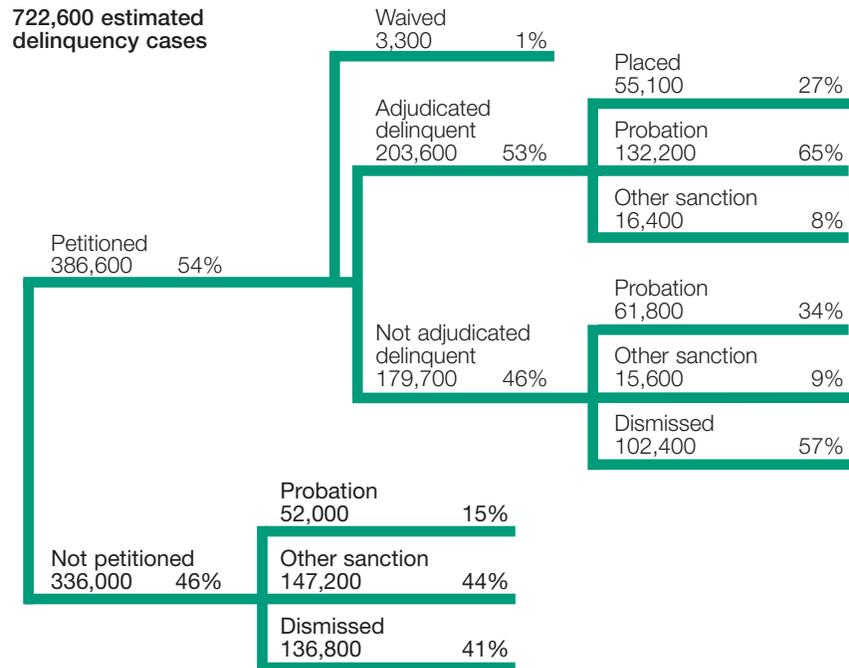
Although juvenile courts handled 46% of delinquency cases without the filing of a petition, more than half of these nonpetitioned cases received some sort of sanction. Youth may have agreed to informal probation, restitution, or community service, or the court may have referred them to another agency for services. Although probation staff monitor the youth's compliance with the informal agreement, such dispositions generally involve little or no continuing supervision by probation staff.

In 46% of all petitioned delinquency cases, the youth was not adjudicated delinquent. The court dismissed 57% of these cases. The cases dismissed by the court, together with the cases that were dismissed at intake, accounted for 239,200 cases (or 331 of 1,000 cases handled).

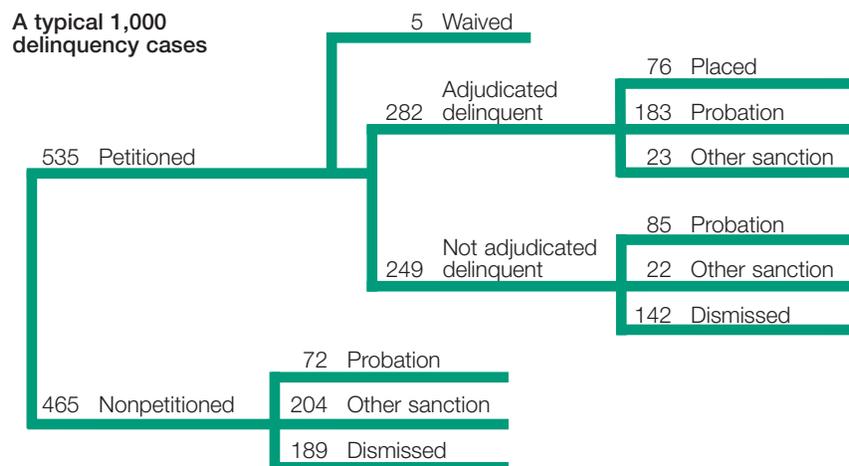
In 54% of all petitioned cases, the courts imposed a formal sanction or waived the case to criminal court. Thus, of every 1,000 delinquency cases handled in 2019, 286 resulted in a court-ordered sanction or waiver.

In 2019, 53% (203,600) of the cases that were handled formally (with the filing of a petition) resulted in a delinquency adjudication. In 65% (132,200) of cases adjudicated delinquent in 2019, formal probation was the most severe sanction ordered by the court. In contrast, 27% (55,100) of cases adjudicated delinquent resulted in placement outside the home in a residential facility.

The most severe sanction ordered in 16,400 adjudicated delinquency cases (8%) in 2019 was something other than residential placement or probation, such as restitution or community service



Adjudicated cases receiving sanctions other than residential placement or probation accounted for 23 out of 1,000 delinquency cases processed during the year



Notes: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Annual case processing flow diagrams for 1985 through 2010 are available online at ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/court/faqs.asp.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Variations in delinquency case processing were more evident between males and females than between younger and older youth in 2019

Offense/ demographic	Number of cases	Intake decision profile (percent of all cases)		Judicial decision profile (percent of petitioned cases)			Judicial disposition profile (percent of adjudicated cases)			Judicial disposition profile (percent of non- adjudicated cases)			Informal disposition profile (percent of non- petitioned cases)		
		Petitioned	Not petitioned	Waived	Adjudicated delinquent	Not adjudicated delinquent	Placed	Probation	Other	Probation	Other	Dismissed	Probation	Other	Dismissed
Delinquency	722,600	54%	46%	0.9%	53%	46%	27%	65%	8%	34%	9%	57%	15%	44%	41%
Male	522,300	57	43	1.0	54	45	29	64	7	35	8	57	16	42	42
Female	200,300	45	55	0.3	47	52	21	68	11	33	9	58	15	47	38
15 and younger	393,400	51	49	0.2	53	47	25	67	8	35	9	56	17	45	38
16 and older	566,400	52	48	0.5	53	46	26	66	8	35	9	56	17	44	39
Person	237,000	55	45	1.6	51	48	28	66	6	34	9	56	15	39	46
Male	164,000	58	42	2.0	53	45	30	65	5	35	9	56	15	37	48
Female	73,000	47	53	0.3	45	55	22	71	7	34	10	56	15	43	42
15 and younger	144,400	52	48	0.4	50	49	25	69	6	36	9	55	16	42	42
16 and older	92,600	60	40	3.1	51	46	31	63	6	33	9	58	13	35	52
Property	214,500	55	45	0.7	53	46	27	65	8	34	9	57	16	45	39
Male	160,500	59	41	0.8	55	45	28	64	7	35	9	56	16	43	41
Female	54,000	44	56	0.3	46	54	18	68	13	32	10	58	15	50	36
15 and younger	117,100	54	46	0.1	54	46	25	67	8	35	9	55	17	46	37
16 and older	97,400	57	43	1.3	52	47	29	63	9	33	9	58	14	43	43
Drugs	96,400	42	58	0.6	51	49	16	73	11	38	10	51	20	52	29
Male	71,700	44	56	0.6	51	48	17	73	10	38	10	52	19	51	30
Female	24,800	36	64	0.5	48	51	12	73	15	40	11	49	21	52	27
15 and younger	39,400	37	63	0.1	52	48	16	74	10	38	10	51	22	52	26
16 and older	57,000	46	54	0.8	50	49	16	72	12	39	10	51	17	51	31
Public order	174,700	56	44	0.3	56	44	31	60	9	32	7	61	14	43	44
Male	126,200	59	41	0.3	57	42	32	59	8	34	7	60	13	41	45
Female	48,500	50	50	0.1	52	48	25	63	12	29	7	64	14	46	40
15 and younger	92,500	51	49	0.0	55	45	28	62	10	32	7	60	14	45	40
16 and older	82,200	62	38	0.5	57	43	33	58	9	32	6	62	12	39	48

- Without exception, cases involving males were more likely to receive formal sanctions than cases involving females. For example, in 2019, 55% of all petitioned delinquency cases involving males were adjudicated delinquent or waived to criminal court, compared with 48% of cases involving females.
- Regardless of offense, cases involving youth age 16 and older were more likely to be petitioned and, once petitioned, more likely to be judicially waived to criminal court than cases involving youth age 15 and younger. Although cases involving older youth were equally as likely to result in a delinquency adjudication as those involving their younger peers, older youth were more likely to receive a disposition of out-of-home placement following adjudication.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' analysis of Puzzanchera et al.'s *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Delinquency case processing outcomes varied considerably by race in 2019

Offense/ demographic	Number of cases	Intake decision profile (percent of all cases)		Judicial decision profile (percent of petitioned cases)			Judicial disposition profile (percent of adjudicated cases)			Judicial disposition profile (percent of non- adjudicated cases)			Informal disposition profile (percent of non- petitioned cases)		
		Petitioned	Not petitioned	Waived	Adjudicated delinquent	Not adjudicated delinquent	Placed	Probation	Other	Probation	Other	Dismissed	Probation	Other	Dismissed
Delinquency	722,600	54%	46%	0.9%	53%	46%	27%	65%	8%	34%	9%	57%	15%	44%	41%
White	310,200	48	52	0.7	53	46	22	68	10	36	9	54	18	47	35
Black	254,800	60	40	1.1	50	49	31	61	8	32	8	60	12	39	49
Hispanic	136,100	52	48	0.6	58	41	31	65	4	38	8	54	15	44	42
American Indian	12,900	56	44	0.6	57	42	25	65	11	22	6	71	14	43	43
Asian	8,700	52	48	0.6	52	47	21	75	5	26	10	64	16	49	36
Person	237,000	55	45	1.6	51	48	28	66	6	34	9	56	15	39	46
White	97,800	50	50	1.2	50	49	22	71	6	37	10	54	18	40	42
Black	90,200	60	40	2.0	48	50	31	62	6	31	9	60	11	37	52
Hispanic	42,300	54	46	1.3	57	42	32	65	3	40	8	52	14	41	45
American Indian	4,000	57	43	1.2	55	44	32	63	5	26	7	67	14	41	45
Asian	2,600	56	44	1.4	53	46	21	76	3	25	14	61	20	39	42
Property	214,500	55	45	0.7	53	46	27	65	8	34	9	57	16	45	39
White	89,400	49	51	0.6	54	46	22	68	10	36	10	54	19	49	32
Black	82,100	62	38	0.9	50	49	31	61	9	32	9	59	12	39	49
Hispanic	36,100	54	46	0.4	57	42	29	66	4	40	9	52	14	44	42
American Indian	4,200	57	43	0.2	59	41	21	67	12	19	7	74	17	44	40
Asian	2,800	45	55	0.4	53	47	20	73	7	25	10	65	15	48	37
Drugs	96,400	42	58	0.6	51	49	16	73	11	38	10	51	20	52	29
White	51,500	40	60	0.6	51	49	13	74	13	40	12	48	21	54	25
Black	18,200	52	48	0.7	47	52	19	70	11	33	9	58	16	44	40
Hispanic	23,200	38	62	0.4	53	47	18	75	7	43	9	48	19	50	30
American Indian	2,200	46	54	0.3	58	42	18	65	17	21	7	72	12	50	37
Asian	1,300	43	57	0.2	43	56	14	74	11	31	9	61	19	57	25
Public order	174,700	56	44	0.3	56	44	31	60	9	32	7	61	14	43	44
White	71,500	51	49	0.3	57	43	25	61	14	33	7	59	16	45	38
Black	64,200	61	39	0.2	51	48	34	58	8	32	6	62	11	40	49
Hispanic	34,600	57	43	0.2	64	36	35	61	3	32	6	62	11	41	47
American Indian	2,500	60	40	0.2	59	40	23	64	13	21	5	74	11	36	53
Asian	2,000	61	39	0.2	55	45	22	75	3	25	6	69	9	59	33

■ Overall, cases involving Black youth (60%) or American Indian youth (56%) were more likely to be formally processed (i.e., petitioned) than cases involving Asian or Hispanic youth (52% each) or White youth (48%). Once petitioned, cases involving Hispanic or American Indian youth were more likely to receive formal sanctions than cases involving youth of other races. In 2019, 59% of all petitioned cases involving Hispanic youth and 58% of cases involving American Indian youth were adjudicated delinquent or waived to criminal court, compared with 54% of cases involving White youth, 53% involving Asian youth, and 51% involving Black youth.

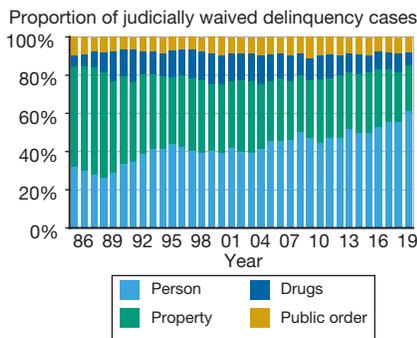
Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' analysis of Puzanchera et al.'s *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

By 2019, the number of cases waived from juvenile court to criminal court had decreased to a level below that of 1985

The profile of waived cases has changed

In the late 1980s, property cases accounted for at least half of all delinquency cases judicially waived from juvenile court to criminal court. In the early 1990s, the property offense share of waived cases diminished as the person offense share grew. By 1993, the waiver caseload had a greater proportion of person offense cases than property cases and in 2019, person offenses accounted for 61% of all waived cases. Drug and public order cases made up smaller proportions of waived cases across all years. For example, in 2019, 7% of waived cases were drug offenses and 8% were public order cases.



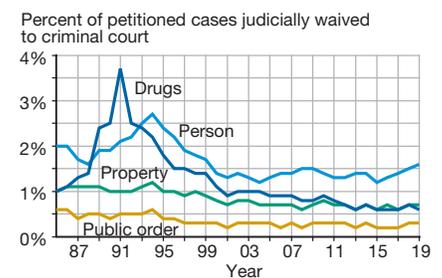
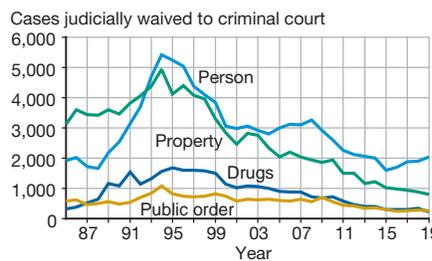
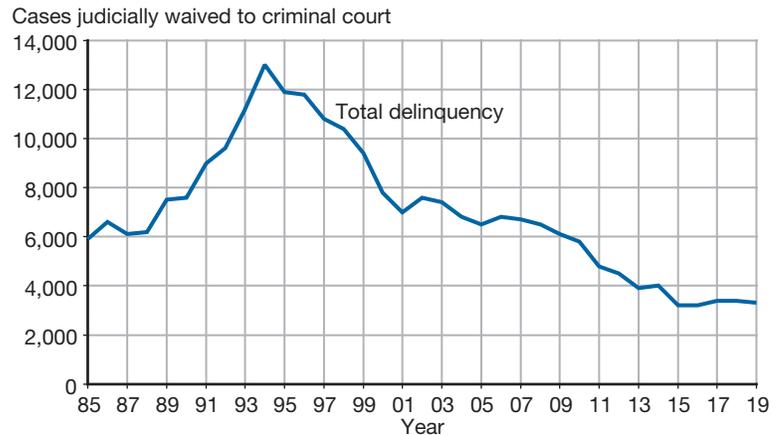
The demographic characteristics of judicially waived cases have changed since the 1990s

Demographic profiles of judicially waived delinquency cases:

Demographic	1994	2010	2019
Gender			
Male	95%	93%	94%
Female	5	7	6
Race			
White	NA	40	33
Black	NA	45	52
Hispanic	NA	12	12
American Indian	NA	2	2
Asian	NA	1	2
Age			
15 or younger	13	12	12
16 or older	87	88	88

Note: Data for 1994 are displayed because that was the year with the greatest number of total waived cases. Race data for 1994 are not compatible with 2010 and 2019.

Juvenile courts waived 75% fewer delinquency cases to criminal court in 2019 than in 1994 (the peak year)



- The number of delinquency cases waived to criminal court climbed 120% from 1985 to 1994, from 5,900 cases to 13,000. By 2019, the number of waived cases was 75% below the 1994 peak, an overall decrease of 44% since 1985.
- Between 1993 and 2019, person offenses outnumbered property offenses among waived cases. Prior to 1993, property cases outnumbered person offense cases among waivers—sometimes by a ratio of 2 to 1.
- The number of waived person offense cases nearly tripled (182%) from 1985 to 1994 and then declined 63% to 2019, an overall increase of 6% between 1985 and 2019. Over the 1985–2019 period, waived property offense cases were down 75%, and waived public order offense cases were down 55%.
- The overall proportion of petitioned delinquency cases that were waived was 1.1% in 1985, reached 1.5% in 1994, and then dropped to 0.9% by 2019.
- For most years between 1985 and 2019, person offense cases were the most likely type of case to be waived to criminal court. The exception was 1989–1992, when drug offense cases were the most likely to be waived.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

The proportions of judicially waived cases changed little for males and females and youth of all ages between 2010 and 2019. In both 2010 and 2019, Black youth accounted for the largest proportion of waived cases.

The likelihood of waiver varied across case characteristics

In 2019, the proportion of cases waived was greater for males than for females. This was true in each of the four general offense categories. For example, males charged with person offenses were 6 times as likely as females charged with person offenses to have their cases waived to criminal court. However, this comparison does not control for differences in the seriousness of offenses or a youth's offense history.

Percent of petitioned cases judicially waived to criminal court, 2019:

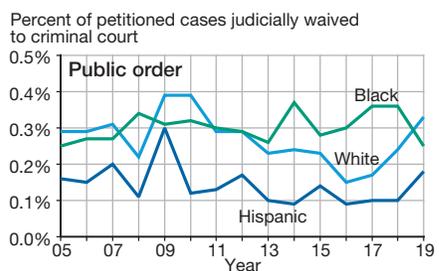
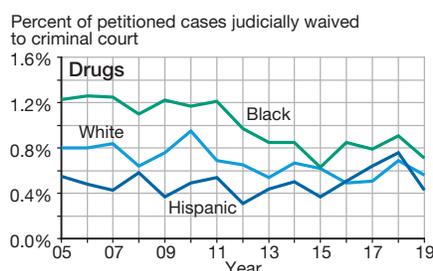
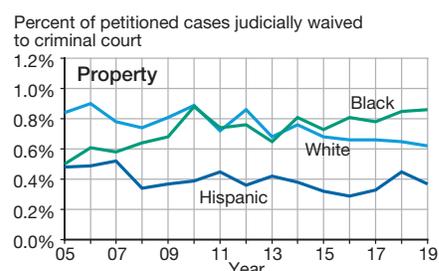
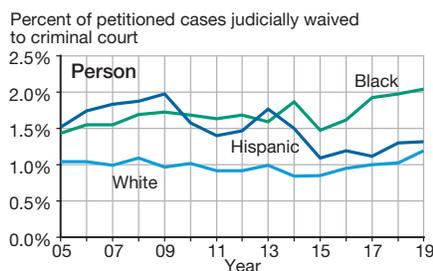
Offense	Male	Female
Delinquency	1.0%	0.3%
Person	2.0	0.3
Property	0.8	0.3
Drugs	0.6	0.5
Public order	0.3	0.1

In 2019, with the exception of public order offenses, Black youth were more likely than other youth to be waived for all offense types. Regardless of race, person offenses were more likely to be waived than cases involving other offenses.

Percent of petitioned cases judicially waived to criminal court:

Race/ethnicity	Delinquency	
	2010	2019
White	0.8%	0.7%
Black	1.0	1.1
Hispanic	0.6	0.6
American Indian	0.9	0.6
Asian	0.4	0.6

Racial differences in case waivers stemmed primarily from differences in person and drug offense cases



- For most of the period from 2005 to 2019, the likelihood of waiver was greater for Black youth than for White or Hispanic youth, regardless of offense category. These data, however, do not control for racial differences in offense seriousness within the general offense categories or differences in the seriousness of youth's offense histories.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Percent of petitioned cases judicially waived to criminal court, 2019:

Race/ethnicity	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order
White	1.2%	0.6%	0.6%	0.3%
Black	2.0	0.9	0.7	0.2
Hispanic	1.3	0.4	0.4	0.2
American Indian				
Indian	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
Asian	1.4	0.4	0.2	0.2

Cases involving younger youth were less likely to be waived than were cases involving older youth. This was true for each of the four general offense categories. For example, among person

offense cases, youth age 16 or older were 8 times more likely to be waived than youth age 15 or younger.

Percent of petitioned cases judicially waived to criminal court, 2019:

Offense	Age 15 or younger	Age 16 or older
Delinquency	0.2%	1.6%
Person	0.4	3.1
Property	0.1	1.3
Drugs	0.1	0.8
Public order	0.0	0.5

Identifying disparity in justice system processing helps target efforts to address racial and ethnic fairness

Racial and ethnic disparities have been a long-standing challenge in the juvenile justice system

Youth from racial and ethnic minority groups experience the juvenile justice system differently than their White peers. For example, youth from racial and ethnic minority groups are (and have been) more likely to be arrested, detained, and ordered to residential placement than White youth, and are more likely to be tried as adults in criminal court. Such racial and ethnic disparities often leads to the overrepresentation of racial and ethnic minority youth—particularly Black youth—at various stages of the juvenile justice system. Despite decades of research to understand and address these disparities, national data suggests that considerably more work is needed to ensure that youth served by the juvenile justice system are treated fairly, and that case processing decisions ensure public safety and equal justice, regardless of youths’ race/ethnicity.

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 of the juvenile justice system (such as intake, detention, and residential placement) 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 youth differently from another group of youth based wholly, or in part, on their gender, racial, and/or ethnic status.

Neither overrepresentation nor disparity necessarily implies discrimination

Discrimination is one possible explanation for disparity and overrepresentation. This line of reasoning suggests that because of discrimination on the part of justice system decisionmakers, youth in racial and ethnic minority groups 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 overrepresentation.

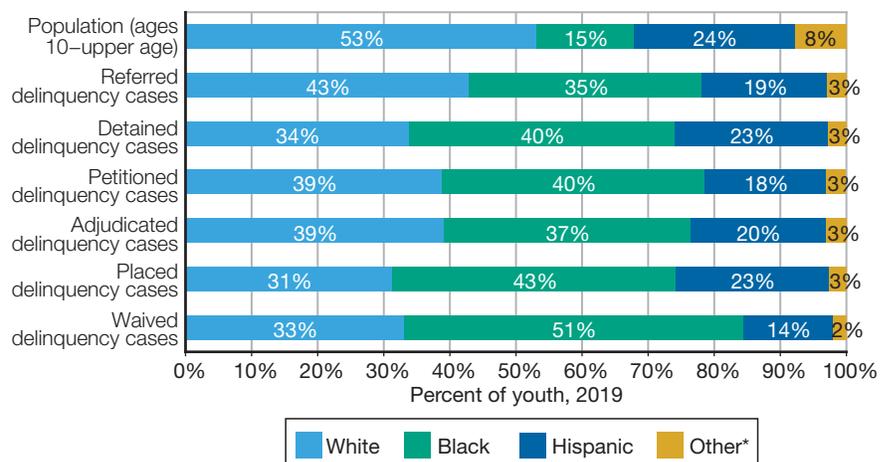
Disparity and overrepresentation, however, can result from factors other than discrimination. Factors relating to the nature and volume of crime committed

by youth in racial and ethnic minority groups may explain disproportionality. This line of reasoning suggests that if youth from certain demographic subgroups (e.g., gender or race/ethnicity) commit proportionately more crime than other youth, are involved in more serious incidents, and have more extensive criminal histories, they will be overrepresented, even if no discrimination by system decisionmakers occurred. Thus, some demographic subgroups may be overrepresented within the juvenile justice system because of behavioral, legal, or structural factors. In any given jurisdiction, either or both of these causes may be operating.

Overrepresentation and disparity exist at many stages of the juvenile justice system

Common methods of assessing racial and ethnic fairness include comparing

Compared with their proportion in the population, Black youth are overrepresented at various juvenile justice decision points



- Disproportionality or overrepresentation refers to a situation in which a larger proportion of a particular group is present at various stages within the juvenile justice system than would be expected based on its proportion in the general population.
- The proportion of Black youth at various stages of juvenile court processing was at least twice their proportion of the youth population in 2019.

*Because American Indian and Asian proportions are too small to display individually, they are combined in the category “other races.”

Source: Authors’ analysis of Puzanchera, Sladky, and Kang’s *Easy Access to Juvenile Populations 1990-2020* and Sickmund, Sladky, and Kang’s *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics 1985-2019*.

In 2019, disparities existed in delinquency case processing between White youth and youth from racial and ethnic minority groups

Case processing stage	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
Case rates						
Cases referred per 1,000 population (10–upper age)	22.7	18.3	53.9	17.6	21.5	4.5
Cases diverted per 100 cases referred	27.6	33.5	20.1	27.9	25.3	31.0
Cases detained per 100 cases referred	25.8	20.3	29.5	31.5	25.2	25.6
Cases petitioned per 100 cases referred	53.5	48.4	60.3	52.3	55.7	51.9
Cases adjudicated per 100 cases petitioned	52.7	52.9	49.6	58.3	57.4	52.3
Probation cases per 100 adjudicated cases	64.9	68.0	61.1	65.4	64.5	74.5
Placement cases per 100 adjudicated cases	27.1	21.7	31.0	30.6	24.6	20.6
Waived cases per 100 petitioned cases	0.9	0.7	1.1	0.6	0.6*	0.6*
Ratio of rates[†]						
Referral rate			2.9	1.0	1.2	0.2
Diversion rate			0.6	0.8	0.8	0.9
Detention rate			1.4	1.6	1.2	1.3
Petitioned rate			1.2	1.1	1.2	1.1
Adjudication rate			0.9	1.1	1.1	1.0
Probation rate			0.9	1.0	0.9	1.1
Placement rate			1.4	1.4	1.1	1.0
Waiver rate			1.5	0.9	0.8	0.9

- In 2019, cases involving Black youth were nearly 3 times more likely to be referred to juvenile court for a delinquency offense than cases involving White youth.
- The diversion rate for cases involving Black, Hispanic, and American Indian youth was less than the diversion rate for cases involving White youth.
- Delinquency cases involving racial and ethnic minority youth were more likely to involve detention than cases involving White youth.
- Cases involving Black youth were more likely to be petitioned than cases involving White youth, but were less likely to result in a delinquency adjudication.
- Cases involving Hispanic youth were 60% more likely to involve detention than cases involving White youth, and 40% more likely to receive a placement disposition.

*Rate based on fewer than 50 cases

[†]The ratio of rates is created by dividing the rates for each racial or ethnic minority group by the White rate. A ratio of 1.0 indicates parity, i.e., the rates for the comparison group are equal. For example, if White youth and Black youth were referred at the same rate, the ratio would be 1.0, indicating the rates for these groups are equal. A ratio greater than 1.0 means that the rate for the racial or ethnic minority group is greater than the rate for White youth. A ratio less than 1.0 means that the rate for the racial and ethnic minority group is less than the rate for White youth.

Note: Calculations are based on unrounded numbers.

Source: Authors' analysis of Puzanchera et al's *Easy Access to Juvenile Populations 1990-2020* and Sickmund et al's *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics 1985-2019*.

proportions or using a combination of case processing rates and ratios. When using proportions, the racial/ethnic profile of youth in the general population is compared to the profile at stages of the juvenile justice system. For example, the 2019 youth population was 53% White, 15% Black, 24% Hispanic, 2% American Indian, and 6% Asian, whereas the profile of juvenile court referrals was 43% White, 35% Black, 19% Hispanic, 2% American Indian and 1% Asian. At the point of court referral, Black youth were overrepresented, while White, Hispanic, and Asian youth were underrepresented.

Disparity and overrepresentation are present at arrest

Unlike the national estimates of juvenile court data, national arrest estimates do not account for ethnicity. Nonetheless, there is considerable evidence of racial inequities at the point of arrest. Black youth accounted for 17% of the youth population in 2019 (ages 10–17), but accounted for 34% of juvenile arrests. For specific offenses, the level of overrepresentation for Black youth was more substantial: in 2019, Black youth accounted for 48% of juvenile arrests for violent crimes, nearly 3 times their proportion of the youth population.

Profile, 2019:

Race	Population (ages 10–17)	Juvenile arrests
Total	100%	100%
White	75	63
Black	17	34
American Indian	2	2
Asian	6	1

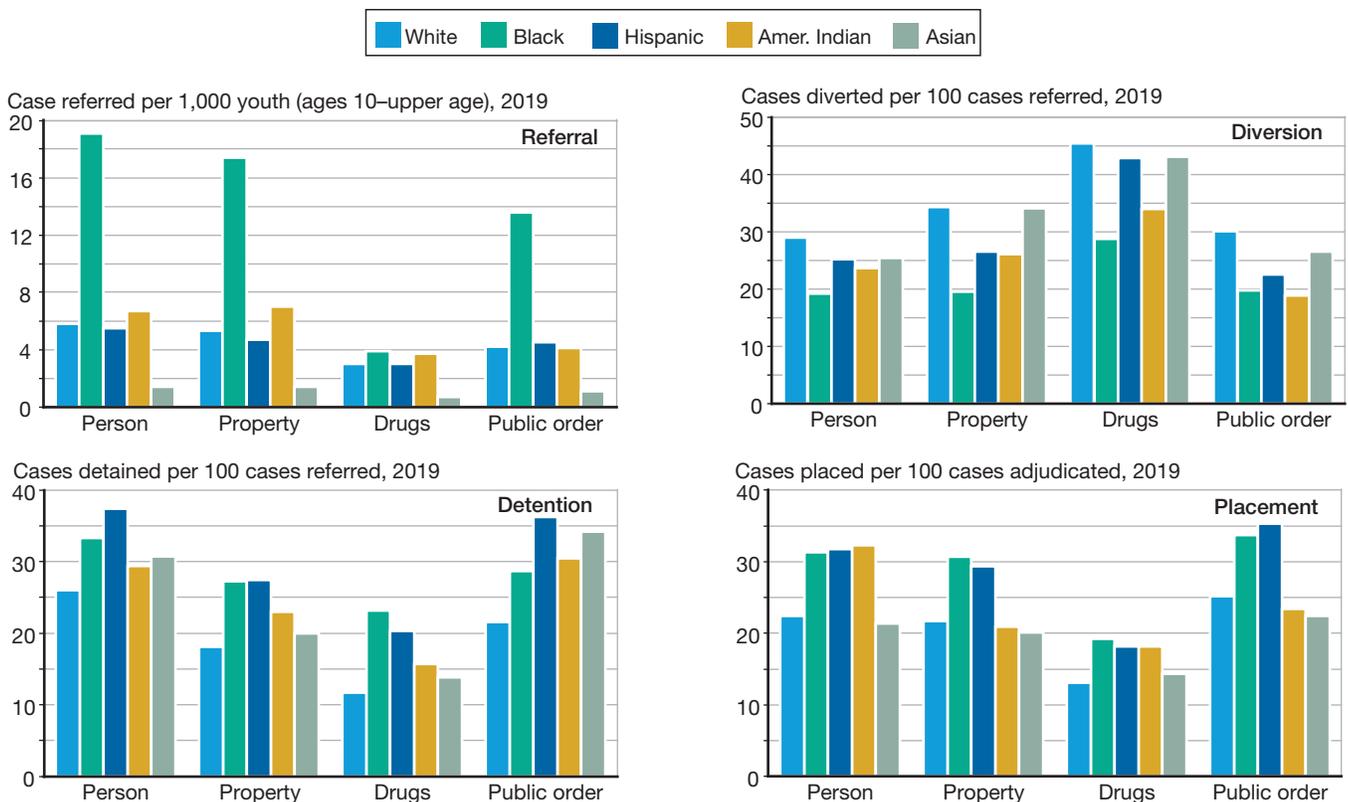
Comparing arrest rates (per 100,000 youth ages 10–17) reveals similar disparities. In 2019, the overall juvenile arrest rate for Black youth was 60% above the rate for American Indian youth, more than double the rate for White youth, and nine times the rate for Asian youth.

Alternatively, calculating case processing rates by race/ethnicity at multiple stages of the juvenile justice system can help identify disparities between racial and ethnic subgroups at different decision points. Comparing the ratio of these rates between racial and ethnic

minority youth and White youth indicate how much more (or less) likely racial and ethnic minority youth experience certain case processing outcomes compared with their White peers. For example, the 2019 juvenile court referral rate for Black youth was 53.9 (per

1,000 youth ages 10 to the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction) compared with a rate of 18.3 for White youth. In other words, Black youth were nearly 3 times ($53.9 / 18.3 = 2.9$) more likely to be referred to juvenile court than their White peers.

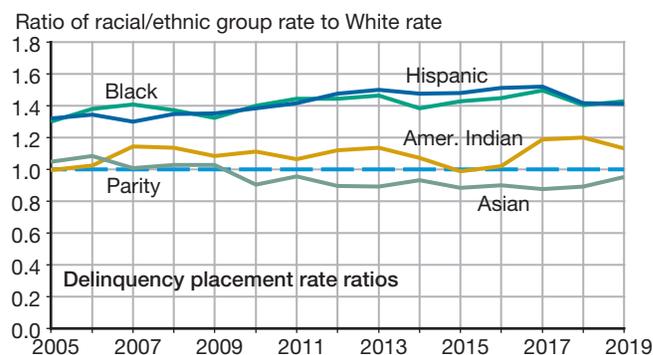
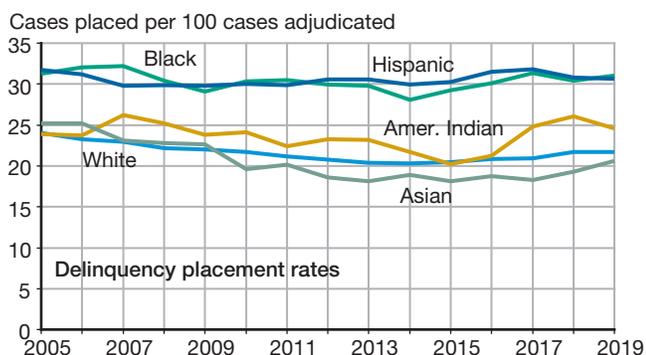
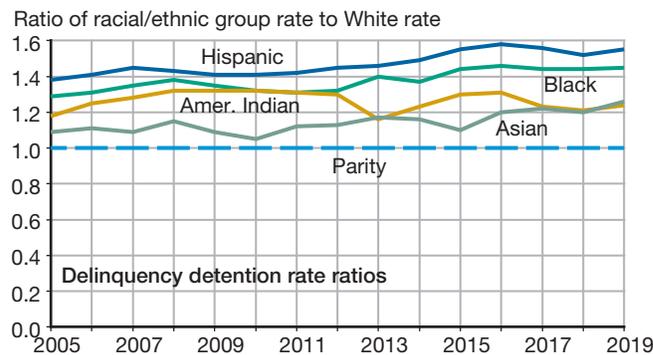
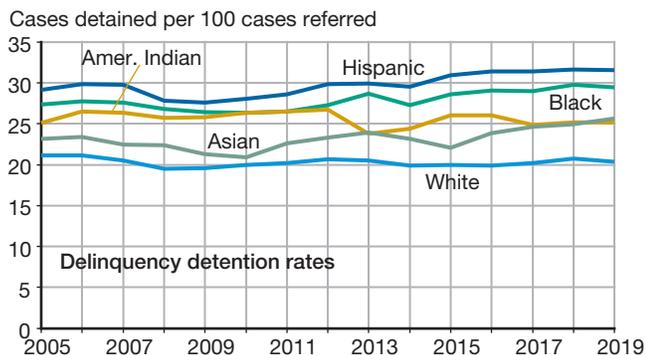
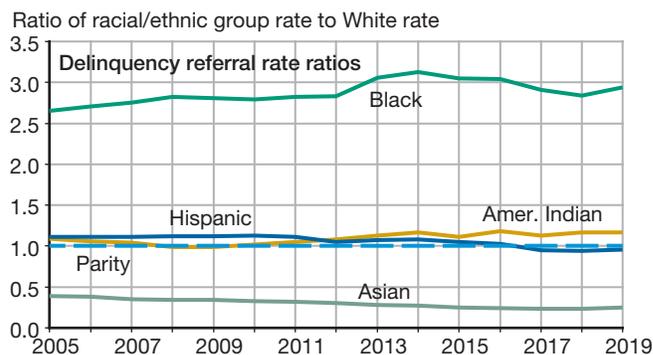
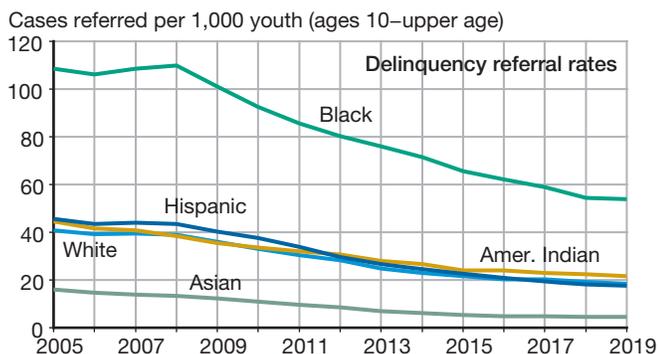
Regardless of offense, detention and placement rates in 2019 were higher for cases involving Black or Hispanic youth than for cases involving White youth



- Across offenses, the referral rate for cases involving Black youth exceeded the referral rates for cases involving youth of other racial/ethnic groups in 2019. For example, the referral rate for cases involving Black youth was more than 3 times the referral rate for cases involving White or Hispanic youth for all but drug offense cases.
- Once referred, cases involving youth in racial and ethnic minority groups were less likely than cases involving White youth to be diverted from formal court processing, regardless of offense. With the exception of public order cases, cases involving Black youth were least likely to be diverted.
- Detention rates were higher for cases involving youth in racial and ethnic minority groups than for cases involving White youth for all offenses in 2019.
- Residential placement rates for adjudicated delinquency cases were higher for cases involving Black and Hispanic youth than for cases involving White youth. On average, placement rates for Black and Hispanic youth were at least 30% higher than the rate for White youth for each offense in 2019.

Source: Authors' analysis of Puzanchera et al's *Easy Access to Juvenile Populations 1990-2020* and Sickmund et al's *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics 1985-2019*.

Since 2005, the disparity in referral, detention, and placement rates for delinquency offenses between Black youth and White youth has remained high

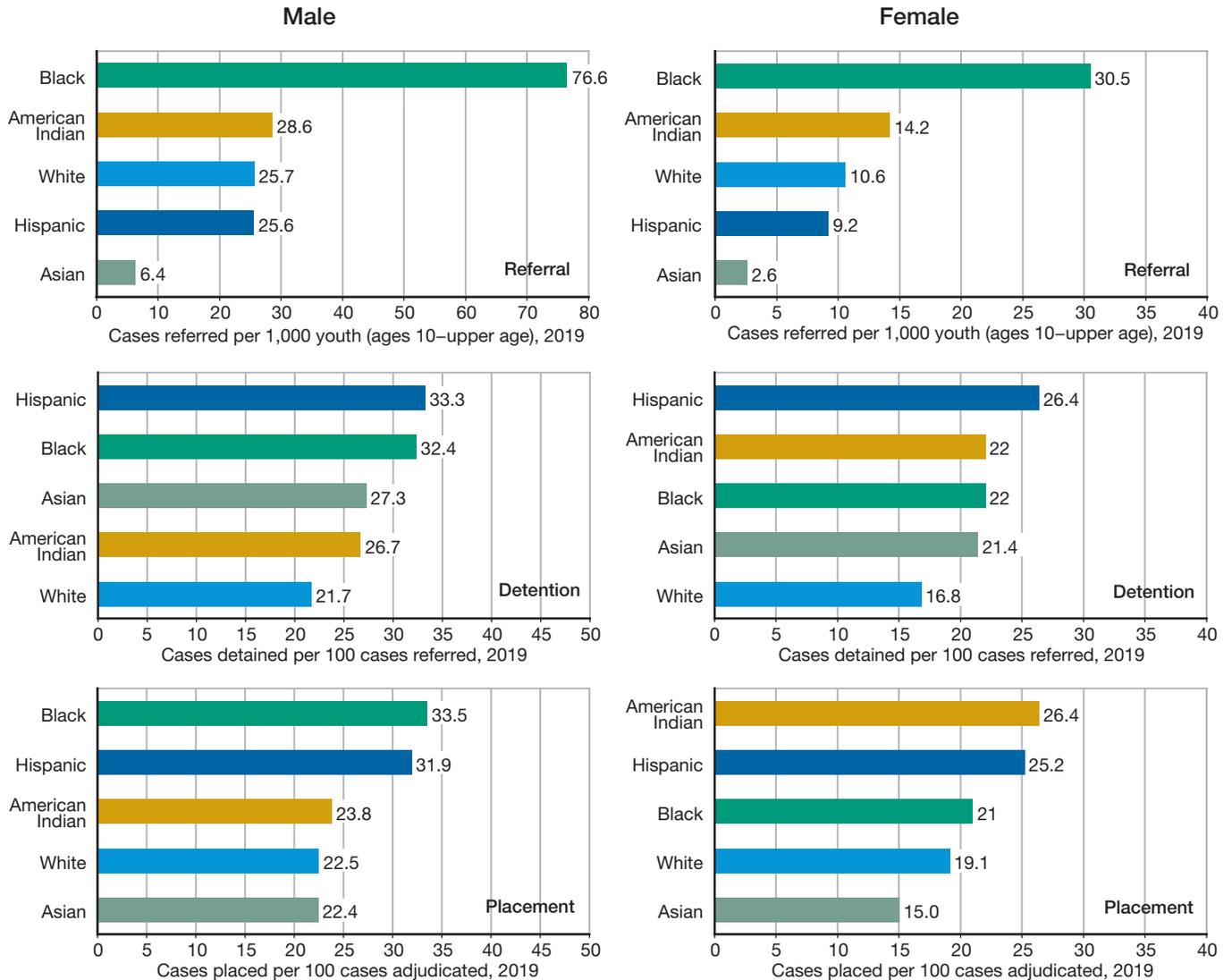


- Each year since 2005, Black youth were considerably more likely to be referred to juvenile court for a delinquency offense than youth of other racial/ethnic groups. On average, the annual referral rate for cases involving Black youth was 3 times the rate for cases involving White youth, more than twice the rate for cases involving American Indian and Hispanic youth, and 10 times the rate for cases involving Asian youth.
- Since 2005, the ratio of Black-to-White detention rates ranged from 1.3 to 1.5, meaning that delinquency cases involving Black youth were 30%–50% more likely to involve detention than cases involving White youth. During the same period, cases involving Hispanic youth were 40%–60% more likely to be detained than cases involving White youth. Similarly, placement rates for delinquency cases involving Black and Hispanic youth were 30%–50% higher than the placement rate for cases involving White youth.

Note: The “parity” line displays a ratio of 1.0, which indicates the ratio of rates if the racial/ethnic minority group and White youth rates were equal.

Source: Authors’ analysis of Puzanchera et al’s *Easy Access to Juvenile Populations 1990-2020* and Sickmund et al’s *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics 1985-2019*.

Regardless of gender, delinquency cases involving Black youth were most likely to be referred to juvenile court, while cases involving White youth were least likely to involve detention in 2019



- Referral rates in 2019 were highest for cases involving Black youth, regardless of gender. For both males and females, the referral rate for cases involving Black youth was more than twice the rate for cases involving American Indian youth, about 3 times the rate for cases involving White and Hispanic youth, and more than 11 times the rate for cases involving Asian youth.
- For both males and females, detention rates in 2019 were highest for cases involving Hispanic youth. For females, cases involving Hispanic youth were 60% more likely to result in detention than cases involving White youth. Similarly, for males, cases involving Hispanic youth were 50% more likely to result in detention than cases involving White youth.
- Among males, placement rates were highest for cases involving Black and Hispanic youth, each of which were 40–50% higher than the rates for American Indian, White, and Asian youth. Among females, placement rates were highest for American Indian and Hispanic youth, which were 20–30% higher than the rate for Black youth, 30–40% higher than the rate for White youth, and 70–80% higher than the rate for Asian youth.

Source: Authors' analysis of Puzzanchera et al's *Easy Access to Juvenile Populations 1990-2020* and Sickmund et al's *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics 1985-2019*.

Between 1995 and 2019, the juvenile court's formal status offense caseload decreased 19%

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. Youth who engage in the behaviors may be classified as dependent children, which gives child protective ser-

vices 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

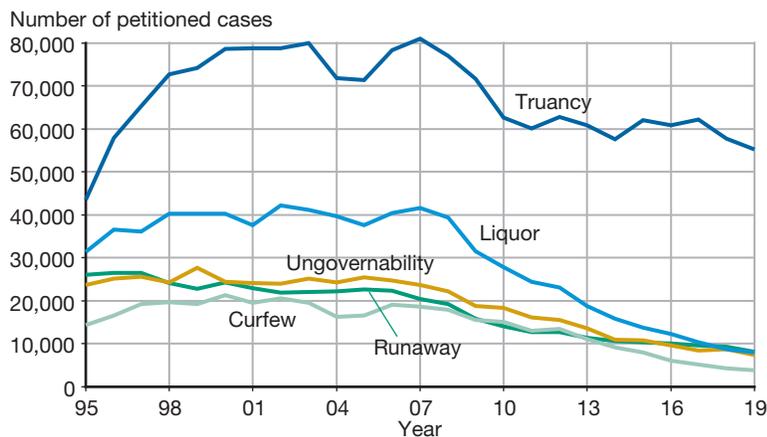
status-offending behavior fail or when formal intervention is needed, the matter is referred to a juvenile court.

Compared with delinquency caseloads, status offense caseloads are small

Juvenile courts formally processed an estimated 90,500 status offense cases in 2019. These cases accounted for about 11% of the court's formal delinquency and status offense caseload in 2019. In 2019, juvenile courts formally processed approximately:

- 8,200 runaway cases,
- 55,300 truancy cases,
- 3,800 curfew cases,
- 7,400 ungovernability cases,
- 7,900 status liquor law violation cases,
- 8,000 other status offense cases (e.g., smoking tobacco and violations of a valid court order).

Between 1995 and 2002, the formally handled status offense caseload increased considerably (43%) and then declined 57% through 2019



- The degree of change in formally processed status offense cases from 1995 through 2019 varied across the major offense categories. Truancy cases increased during the period (27%), while all other offense categories decreased; down 75% for liquor law violations, 74% for curfew violations, and 69% each for runaway and ungovernability cases.
- In 2019, juvenile courts formally processed 5.3 status offense cases for every 1,000 youth age 10 through the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Compared with delinquency cases, status offense cases are less often referred by police

Law enforcement agencies referred 18% of the petitioned status offense cases processed in juvenile courts in 2019, compared with 83% of delinquency cases. Law enforcement agencies were more likely to be the referral source for curfew violation cases than for other status offense cases.

Percent of cases referred by law enforcement:

Offense	2010	2019
Status offense	34%	18%
Running away	47	33
Truancy	4	1
Curfew	93	93
Ungovernability	36	31
Liquor	92	86

Females were involved in 4 in 10 status offense cases formally processed in 2019

Another major difference between delinquency and status offense cases is the proportion of cases that involve females. Although females were involved in only 28% of the delinquency cases formally processed in 2019, they were involved in 44% of status offense cases.

Profile of formally processed cases by gender, 2019:

Offense	Male	Female
Status offense	56%	44%
Runaway	45	55
Truancy	55	45
Curfew	66	34
Ungovernability	57	43
Liquor	58	42

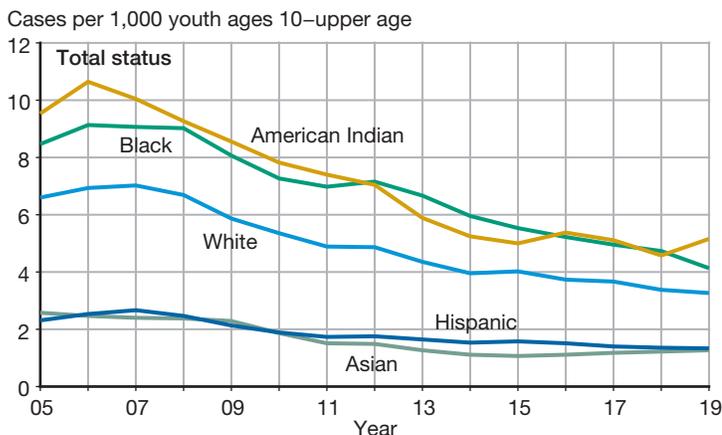
The proportion of cases involving females varied substantially by offense. In fact, the majority of cases processed in court for running away from home in 2019 involved females (55%).

In 2019, youth were placed out of the home in 6% of all status offense cases adjudicated

Youth were adjudicated as status offenders in 36% of formally processed status offense cases in 2019. Of these cases, 6% resulted in out-of-home placement and 58% in formal probation. The remaining 36%, largely curfew violation cases, resulted in other sanctions, such as fines, community service, restitution, or referrals to other agencies for services.

Among status offense cases not adjudicated, 80% were dismissed, 7% resulted in informal sanctions other than probation or out-of-home placement, 13% resulted in informal probation, and none resulted in out-of-home placement.

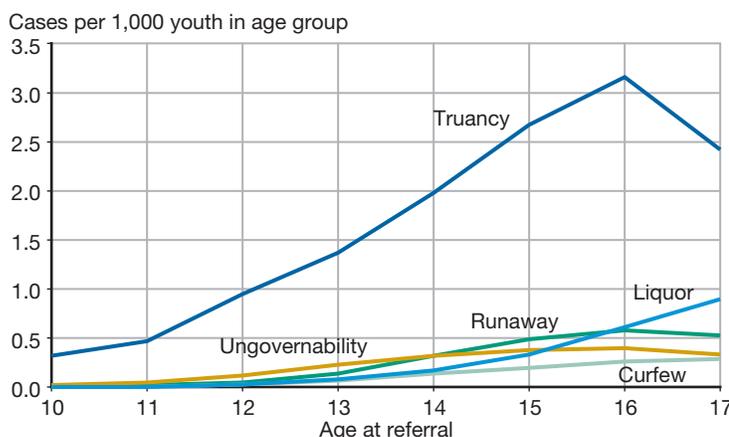
For most years between 2005 and 2019, the total petitioned status offense case rate for American Indian youth was higher than that for youth of all other racial categories



- Between 2005 and 2019, petitioned status offense case rates decreased for all racial groups: 51% each for Black and Asian youth, 50% for White youth, 46% for American Indian youth, and 43% for Asian youth.
- In 2019, the overall case rate for petitioned status offense cases was 5.1 for American Indian youth, 4.1 for Black youth, 3.3 for White youth, 1.3 for Hispanic youth and 1.2 for Asian youth

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

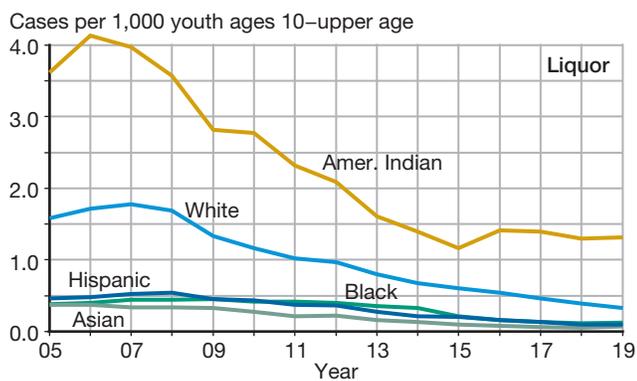
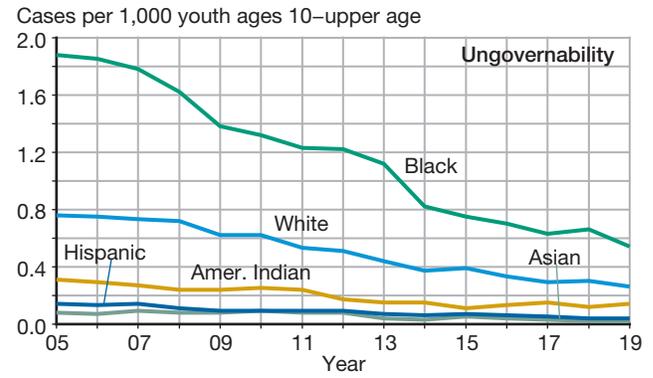
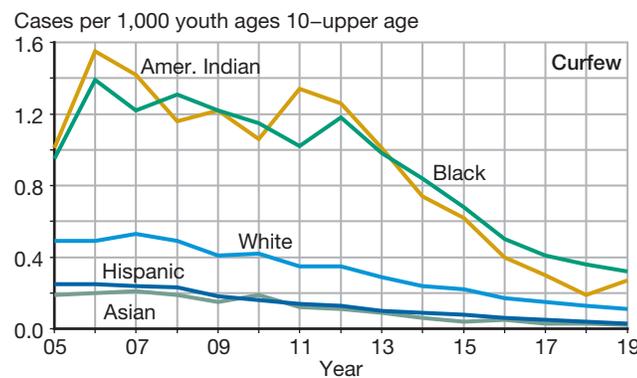
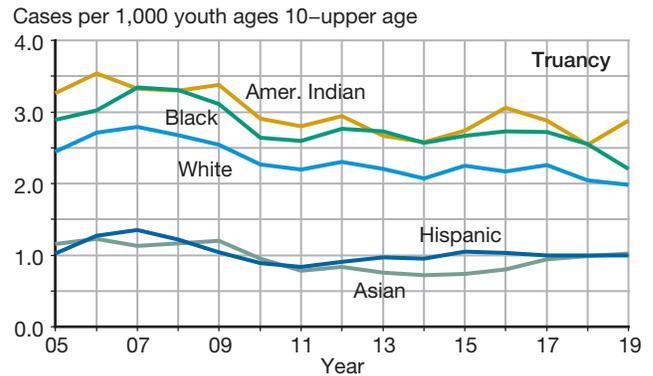
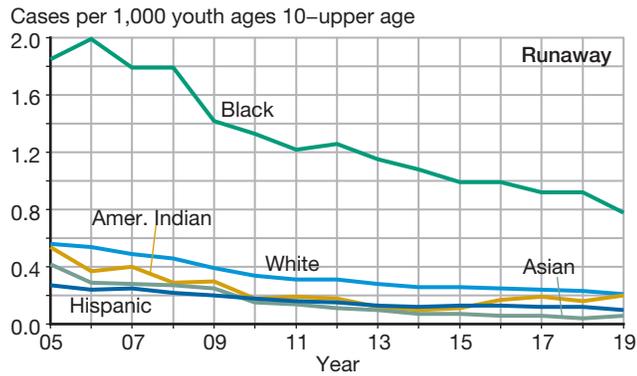
Case rates for most status offenses declined in the older age groups; liquor law violation case rates, however, increased substantially through the juvenile years



- In 2019, 16 was the peak age for truancy, runaway, and ungovernability case rates. For liquor law and curfew violation cases, case rates peaked at age 17. The age-specific case rate patterns were not substantially different for males and females.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

Between 2005 to 2019, petitioned case rates decreased for all racial/ethnic groups across all status offense categories



- Runaway case rates decreased for all youth between 2005 and 2019. In 2019, the runaway case rate for Black youth was nearly 4 times the rate for White youth.
- Truancy case rates decreased the most for Black youth between 2005 and 2019, down 23% compared with 19% for White youth, 12% each for American Indian and Asian youth, and 2% for Hispanic youth.
- Curfew violation case rates in 2019 were at least 67% lower than case rates in 2005 for all racial groups.
- American Indian youth had the highest case rate for liquor law violations in each year between 2005 and 2019.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.

How were petitioned status offense cases processed in juvenile court in 2019?

Of every 1,000 petitioned status offense cases handled in 2019, 209 resulted in formal probation and 23 resulted in residential placement following adjudication

Of every 1,000 status offense cases referred to juvenile court:

364	Adjudicated a status offender	23	Placed
		209	Probation
		131	Other sanction
636	Not adjudicated a status offender	126	Informal sanction
		510	Dismissed

Of every 1,000 runaway cases referred to juvenile court:

315	Adjudicated a status offender	59	Placed
		221	Probation
		34	Other sanction
685	Not adjudicated a status offender	64	Informal sanction
		622	Dismissed

Of every 1,000 truancy cases referred to juvenile court:

278	Adjudicated a status offender	10	Placed
		191	Probation
		77	Other sanction
722	Not adjudicated a status offender	141	Informal sanction
		581	Dismissed

Of every 1,000 curfew violation cases referred to juvenile court:

457	Adjudicated a status offender	8	Placed
		116	Probation
		333	Other sanction
543	Not adjudicated a status offender	74	Informal sanction
		469	Dismissed

Of every 1,000 ungovernability cases referred to juvenile court:

462	Adjudicated a status offender	74	Placed
		325	Probation
		63	Other sanction
538	Not adjudicated a status offender	105	Informal sanction
		433	Dismissed

Of every 1,000 liquor law violation cases referred to juvenile court:

522	Adjudicated a status offender	18	Placed
		246	Probation
		258	Other sanction
478	Not adjudicated a status offender	199	Informal sanction
		279	Dismissed

Note: Cases are categorized by their most severe or restrictive sanction. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Juvenile Court Statistics 2019*.



Most youth referred to juvenile court are not subsequently referred

Official juvenile court records can be used to understand subsequent offending by youth

Subsequent offending can be examined in a variety of ways, for example selecting youth who were disposed in a specific year or years and determining whether they return to the system for subsequent charges or have subsequent guilty findings. A birth cohort sample, i.e., examining all juvenile court referrals of youth born in a given year, enables an understanding of onset and desistance that is not possible with annual measures of reoffending and can be used to clarify the onset in serious, violent, and chronic offending by youth.

Drawing on data from more than 900 counties from 17 states provided to the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, Puzanchera and Hockenberry documented the official juvenile court referral history of 161,057 youth born

in calendar year 2000 who had at least one referral to juvenile court before they aged out of juvenile court jurisdiction in their state. The prevalence rate of juvenile court referral among this sample was 12%, that is, of all youth born in 2000 from the sample counties, about 1 of every 8 youth were referred to juvenile court at least once before reaching the age of majority in their state.

Few youth were initially referred to juvenile court for a violent crime

About 1 in 14 (7%) youth in the cohort were charged with a violent offense (i.e., murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) at their first referral to juvenile court; violent sexual assault and aggravated assault were the most common violent crimes. Although not considered a violent crime, simple assault was by far the most common charge among youth referred for a person offense. Youth re-

ferred for simple assault outnumbered those referred for a violent crime by more than 2-to-1.

Compared with youth referred for a violent crime, a larger proportion (29%) of youth were referred for a property offense, and larceny-theft was by far the most common property offense. About in 1 in 6 (17%) youth were first referred to juvenile court for a status offense, and truancy was most common.

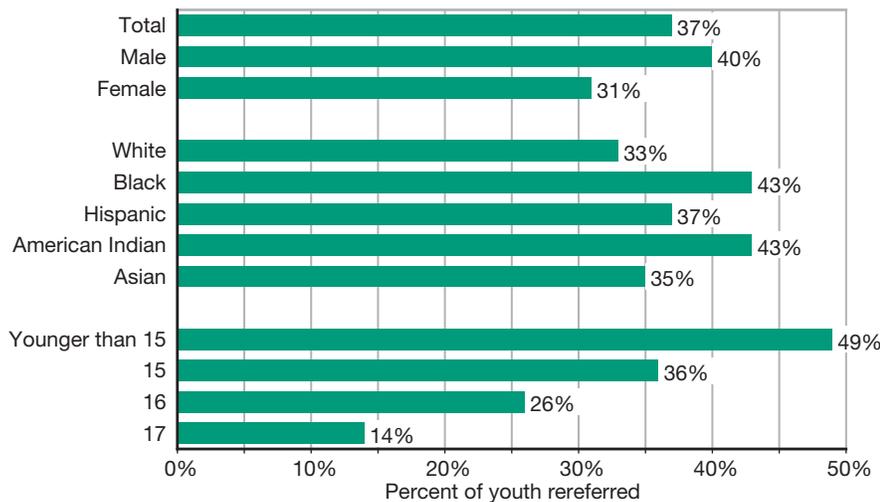
Fewer than 4 in 10 youth were referred to juvenile court more than once

The majority of youth born in 2000 who had been referred to juvenile court for an offense at least once before reaching the upper age of jurisdiction in their state did not return on a subsequent referral. In fact, more than 6 in 10 (63%) of the youth in this cohort were “one and done”—these youth had no evidence of subsequent contact with the juvenile court. Conversely, 37% were subsequently referred to juvenile court.

Overall, males were more likely to return to court than their female peers (40% vs. 31%, respectively), and youth under the age of 15 at their first referral were more likely to return on a subsequent referral than their older peers. Compared with youth of all other races, Black and American Indian youth (43% each) were most likely to be referred more than once, followed by Hispanic youth (37%), Asian (35%), and White youth (33%).

The majority of youth with two or more referrals were male (71%). White youth accounted for the largest proportion (39%) of youth referred more than once, followed by Black youth (35%) and Hispanic youth (22%). Nearly 1 in 4 (23%) youth referred more than once were younger than age 13 at the time of their first referral,

Compared with their counterparts, males, Black and American Indian youth, and youth younger than 15 at first referral were most likely to be rereferred to juvenile court



Source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzanchera's *Patterns of Juvenile Court Referrals of Youth Born in 2000*.

and nearly 4 in 10 (39%) were age 13 or 14.

Characteristic	Profile of youth rereferred
Gender	100%
Male	71
Female	29
Race/ethnicity	100%
White	39
Black	35
Hispanic	22
American Indian	2
Asian	2
Age at first referral	100%
Younger than 10	3
11 to 12	20
13 to 14	39
15	19
16	14
17	5
Older than 17	0

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

Rereferral rates were higher for youth referred for specific offenses in their first case

Overall, youth with a first referral for motor vehicle theft or burglary had the highest likelihood of returning to juvenile court (50% and 49%, respectively). Among youth first referred for a delinquent offense, these two offenses had the highest rereferral rate among males and for all race/ethnicity groups, while robbery and motor vehicle theft had the highest rereferral rates among females. Among youth first referred for a status offense, running away had the highest rereferral rate across gender and age groups, and for White and American Indian youth.

Youth who were initially referred for murder were least likely to return to court (18%). However, this may be in part due to sanctioning of those referred for murder; these youth may have had less opportunity to reoffend if they were serving time in a residential facility or were waived to criminal

court and perhaps incarcerated in an adult prison.

Most serious offense at first referral	Percent of youth rereferred
Motor vehicle theft	50%
Burglary	49
Robbery	47
Running away	46
Ungovernability	46
Vandalism	42
Disorderly conduct	41
Simple assault	40
Aggravated assault	40
Arson	40

Rereferral rates varied by initial case outcome

Returning to juvenile court on a new referral was related to the case disposition of a youth's first referral. Approximately half (49%) of youth who received a formal sanction (i.e., judicially waived to criminal court, or a sanction resulting from being adjudicated for a delinquency or status offense) for their first referral were referred for a subsequent offense.

Of the formal sanctions available in juvenile court, a disposition of residential placement following adjudication is the most restrictive. Nearly 6 in 10 (59%) youth who received a placement disposition returned to court again, compared with 36% of youth whose first referral was dismissed, and 34% of youth who received an informal sanction on their first referral.

The referral histories of youth who were rereferred were long

A juvenile court referral history is defined as the number of times a youth is referred to juvenile court before reaching the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction in their state. Overall, the average history length for youth in the cohort was 2.1 referrals, but this value is strongly influenced by the large num-

ber of youth whose official juvenile court referral histories ended after the first referral. Removing those who were "one and done" allows a better understanding of chronicity among youth with multiple juvenile court referrals.

Of the 59,318 youth with more than one juvenile court referral, nearly two-thirds (63%) recorded two or three referrals over the course of their court, more than one-third (37%) had histories that included four or more juvenile court referrals, and more than one-fourth (26%) had histories involving five or more referrals. The impact that chronically referred youth had on the juvenile justice workload cannot be ignored: chronically referred youth—those with 4 or more court referrals—accounted for 14% of the sample, but accounted for 45% of all the cases generated by the cohort.

Most court referral histories involved nonviolent offenses and fewer than 4 referrals

In broad terms, the continuum of offense seriousness ranges from violent crimes (the most serious) to status offenses (the least serious). For the purpose of discussing the composition of juvenile court referral histories, serious offenses include violent crimes, as well as the following nonviolent crimes: burglary, larceny-theft (excluding shoplifting), motor vehicle theft, arson, drug trafficking, and weapon offenses. Nonserious offenses include a broad range of delinquent acts, such as simple assault, shoplifting, other drug offenses (not trafficking), disorderly conduct, stolen property offenses, and vandalism, as well as status offenses (running away, curfew violations, ungovernability, liquor law violations, and truancy). An individual's referral history may have many attributes: a youth may have one or more violent referrals in the

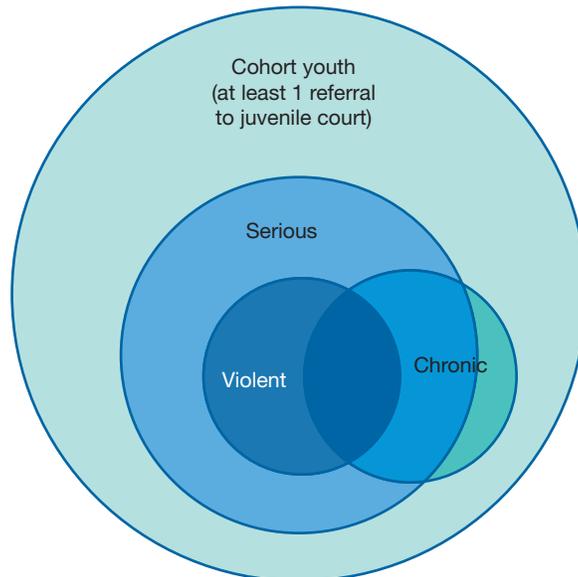
course of their history while also having one or more referrals for a serious nonviolent offense as well as four or more total referrals in their history (chronic). A youth may have a chronic referral history, however, without ever being referred for a violent or serious nonviolent offense. Or they may be referred for one or more serious nonviolent offenses but never for a violent offense.

More than 6 in 10 (61%) youth in the cohort had no serious offenses in their referral history. In fact, the most common referral history for the cohort was not chronic and involved no serious offenses (58%). These histories did not involve any referrals for violence, nor did they include any referrals for serious nonviolent offenses, and the referral history contained fewer than four referrals.

About 1 in 5 youth (21%) had non-chronic histories that included at least one referral for a serious nonviolent offense and no referrals for violence. Additionally, 6% of youth in the cohort had four or more referrals and at least one referral that included a serious nonviolent offense and no referrals for violence. This was the most common referral history pattern for youth with four or more referrals. Taken together, youth with serious but no violent offenses accounted for 27% of youth in the cohort.

About 1 in 8 (12%) youth in the cohort had referral histories that included at least one referral for a violent offense, but only 4% of youth in the cohort had chronic histories—four or more referrals—with at least one referral for a violent offense. The proportion of youth who were chronically violent—youth with four or more referrals for violent offenses—was very small, accounting for 0.1% of youth in the cohort.

A small proportion of youth had court referral histories that were both chronic and violent



Violent includes those referred for the offenses of murder, robbery, violent sexual assault, and aggravated assault.

Serious includes those referred for violent offenses as well as the following nonviolent offenses: burglary, larceny-theft (excluding shoplifting), motor vehicle theft, arson, drug trafficking, and weapons offenses.

Chronic includes those with four or more referrals to juvenile court.

The outer circle represents all officially recognized juvenile court referral histories. The portion of the large circle not covered by the chronic, serious, and violent circles represents referral histories with fewer than four referrals and no referrals for a serious offense. Overlaps represent histories with multiple attributes. The circles and their overlaps are drawn proportional to the number of referral histories with those attributes.

Of a typical 1,000 youth in the cohort:

- 579 had nonchronic and nonserious referral histories; these youth had fewer than four referrals in their history, and none of their referrals involved a serious offense;
- 137 had chronic referral histories;
- 386 were referred at least once for a serious offense;
- 269 were referred at least once for a serious, nonviolent offense;
- 117 had at least one referral that included a violent offense;
- 40 were chronic and violent;
- 1 was chronically violent (four or more referrals for violent offenses).

Data source: Authors' adaptation of Hockenberry and Puzzanhera's *Patterns of Juvenile Court Referrals of Youth Born in 2000*.

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Chapter 7

Youth in corrections

Juvenile correctional systems have many different components. Some juvenile correctional facilities look very much like adult prisons. Others are designed to be more home-like. Private facilities played an important role in the long-term residential treatment of youth; in fact, through 2008, there were more privately operated juvenile facilities than publicly operated facilities, although private facilities held less than half as many youth as were held in public facilities. That trend has reversed, as public facilities have outnumbered private facilities since 2010, and nearly three-fourths of youth in placement on a given day are held in public facilities.

This chapter describes the population of youth detained in and committed

to public and private facilities in terms of demographics, offenses, average time in the facility, and facility type. The chapter also includes descriptions of youth held in adult jails and prisons. The information is based on data collected by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement and the Juvenile Residential Facility Census. Information on youth held in adult correctional facilities is drawn from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' Census of Jails, Annual Survey of Jails, and National Prisoner Statistics. Information about sexual victimization experiences of youth in facilities draws on the National Survey of Youth in Custody, also conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

OJJDP's data collections are the primary source of information on youth in residential placement

Detailed data are available on youth in residential placement

Since its inception, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has collected information on the youth held in juvenile detention and correctional facilities. Until 1995, these data were gathered through the biennial Census of Public and Private Juvenile Detention, Correctional, and Shelter Facilities, better known as the Children in Custody (CIC) Census. In the late 1990s, OJJDP initiated two new data collection programs to gather comprehensive and detailed information about youth in residential placement who were charged with or adjudicated for an offense and the facilities that house them:

- Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement (CJRP);
- Juvenile Residential Facility Census (JRFC).

CJRP and JRFC are generally administered in alternating years and collect information from all secure and nonsecure residential placement facilities that house "juvenile offenders," defined as persons younger than 21 who are held in a residential setting as a result of some contact with the justice system (they are charged with or adjudicated for a delinquency or status offense). These censuses do not include federal facilities or those exclusively for drug or mental health treatment or for abused/neglected youth. They also do not capture data from adult prisons or jails. Therefore, CJRP and JRFC do not include all youth sentenced to incarceration by criminal courts.

As used in this chapter, "youth" refers to persons under 21 in residential placement who were charged with or adjudicated for a law violation.

The term resident refers to all persons (i.e., those held for an offense, those held for nonoffense reasons, and some

adults) in a facility on the reference date. The resident count is used when discussing facility size and crowding, as these are characteristics related to all persons in the facility.

CJRP typically takes place on the fourth Wednesday in October of the census year. However, the census collections that would have occurred October 26, 2005 and October 28, 2009, were both postponed until the fourth Wednesday in February of the following year. CJRP asks all juvenile residential facilities in the U.S. to describe each youth under age 21 assigned a bed in the facility on the census date. Facilities report individual-level information on gender, date of birth, race, placement authority, most serious offense charged, court adjudication status, admission date, and security status.

JRFC also uses the fourth Wednesday in October as its census date and, in addition to information gathered on the census date, it includes some information about the past month and past year. JRFC collects information on how facilities operate and the services they provide. It includes detailed questions on facility security, capacity and crowding, injuries and deaths in placement, and facility ownership and operation. Supplementary information is also collected in various years on specific services, such as mental and physical health, substance abuse, and education.

One-day count and admission data give different views of residential populations

CJRP provides a one-day population count of juveniles in residential placement facilities. Such counts give a picture of the standing population in facilities. One-day counts are substantially different from annual admission or release data, which provide a measure of facility population flow.

Youth 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 youth are admitted voluntarily in lieu of adjudication as part of a diversion agreement. Because detention stays tend to be short compared with commitment placements, detained youth represent a much larger share of population flow data than of one-day count data.

State variations in upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction influence placement rates

Although state placement rate statistics control for upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction, comparisons among states with different upper ages are problematic. Youth ages 16 and 17 constitute 25% of the youth population ages 10–17, but they account for more than 49% of arrests of youth under age 18, more than 40% of delinquency court cases, and more than 50% of youth in residential placement. If all other factors were equal, one would expect higher residential placement rates in states where older youth are under juvenile court jurisdiction.

Differing age limits of extended jurisdiction also influence placement rates. Some states may keep a youth in placement for several years beyond the upper age of original jurisdiction; others cannot. Laws that control the transfer of juveniles to criminal court also have an impact on juvenile placement rates. If all other factors were equal, states with broad transfer provisions would be expected to have lower juvenile placement rates than other states.

Demographic variations among jurisdictions should also be considered. The urbanicity and economy of an area are thought to be related to crime and placement rates. Available bedspace

also influences placement rates, particularly in rural areas. Both CJRP and JRFC asks respondents to indicate the operation status of the facility as well as to classify what type of facility they are.

Operation status options include:

- **Public:** operated by State or local (county or municipality) government agencies in which the employees working daily in the facilities and directly with the residents are state or local government employees.
- **Private:** operated by private non-profit or for-profit corporations or organizations in which the employees working daily in the facilities and directly with the residents are employees of that private corporation or organization.

Facility classification is a self-identified question in both collections and respondents are able to select more than one classification type. The classification types include:

- **Detention center:** a short-term facility that provides temporary care in a physically restricting environ-

ment for juveniles in custody pending court disposition and, often, for youth who are adjudicated delinquent and awaiting disposition or placement elsewhere, or are awaiting transfer to another jurisdiction. In some jurisdictions, detention centers may also hold youth committed for short periods of time as part of their disposition (e.g., weekend detention).

- **Training school/long-term secure facility:** a specialized type of facility that provides strict confinement and long-term treatment generally for post-adjudication committed juvenile offenders. Includes training schools, juvenile correctional facilities, and youth development centers.
- **Reception or diagnostic center:** a short-term facility that screens juvenile offenders committed by the courts and assigns them to appropriate correctional facilities.
- **Group home/halfway house:** a long-term facility that is generally non-secure and intended for post-adjudication commitments in which young persons are allowed extensive

contact with the community, such as attending school or holding a job.

- **Residential treatment center:** a facility that focuses on providing some type of individually planned treatment program for youth (substance abuse, sex offenders, mental health, etc.) in conjunction with residential care. Such facilities generally require specific licensing by the state that may require that treatment provided is Medicaid-reimbursable.
- **Ranch, forestry camp, wilderness or marine program or farm:** long-term generally nonsecure residential facilities often located in a relatively remote area. The juveniles participate in a structured program that emphasizes outdoor work, including conservation and related activities.
- **Runaway and homeless shelter:** a short-term facility that provides temporary care in a physically unrestricted environment. It can also provide longer-term care under a juvenile court disposition order.



The number of youth in residential placement declined considerably between 1997 and 2019

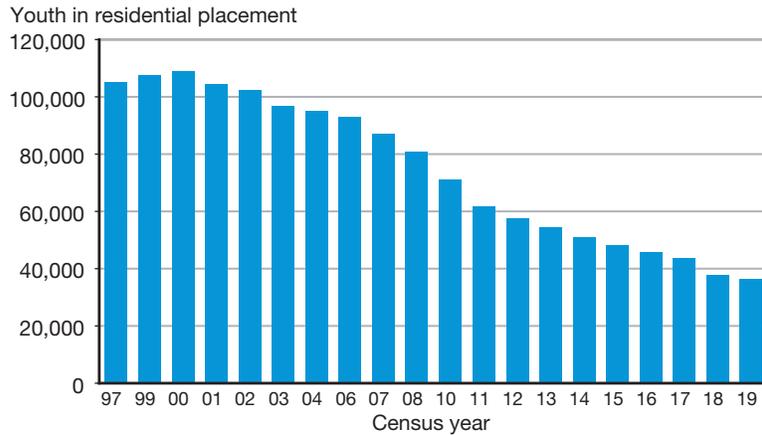
The number of youth in placement peaked in 2000 and has since declined

The number of youth in placement increased 4% from 1997 (105,055) to the 2000 peak (108,802) and then decreased 66% to the lowest level (36,479) in 2019. The relative decline in the number of youth in state and privately operated facilities was about the same (73% and 71%, respectively) between 2000 and 2019, while the number of youth in locally operated facilities fell 52%. As a result, a larger proportion of youth in 2019 were in locally operated facilities (39%) than were in state operated facilities (35%) or privately operated facilities (26%).

The number of facilities also reached a new low in 2019

After a period of increase through 2000, the number of facilities fell considerably. By 2019, the number of facilities was half the number of the

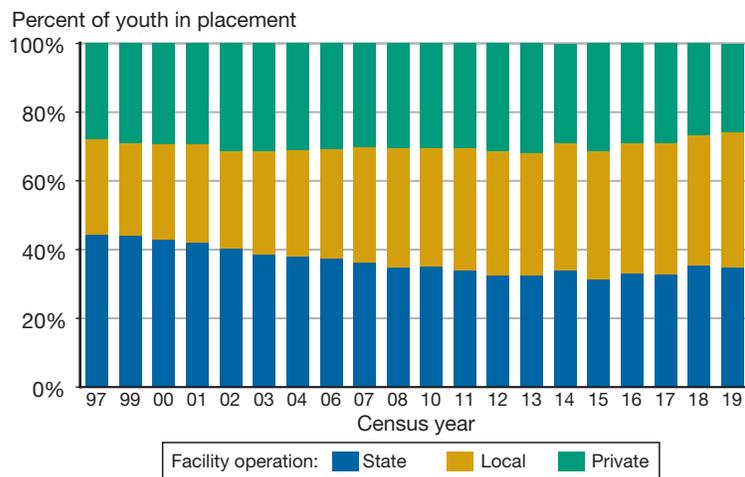
The number of youth in placement in 2019 was one-third that of the 2000 peak



- The number of youth in placement was cut in half between 2000 and 2013, then fell 33% through 2019.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* and *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 1997 through 2019.

Compared with 1997, youth in 2019 were more likely to be held in locally operated facilities than in state or privately operated facilities



- The proportion of youth held in locally operated facilities increased from 28% in 1997 to 39% in 2019. During the same period, the proportion of youth in state operated facilities declined from 44% to 35%.
- Nearly three-quarters of youth were held in public facilities (i.e., state or locally operated) in 2019, and more than half (53%) of these youth were in local facilities.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* and *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 1997 through 2019.

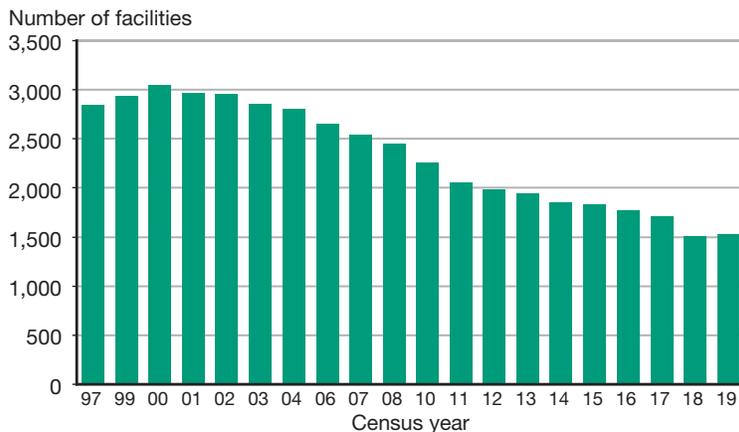
Several factors may affect the placement population

Residential placement data cannot explain the continuing decline in the number of youth held in placement for an offense, however they may reflect a combination of contributing factors. For example, the number of arrests involving youth decreased 58% between 2010 and 2019, which in turn means that fewer youth were processed through the juvenile justice system. Additionally residential placement reform efforts have resulted in the movement of many youth from large, secure public facilities to less secure, small private facilities. Finally, budgetary factors have resulted in a shift from committing youth to high-cost residential facilities to providing lower cost options, such as probation, day treatment, or community-based sanctions.

2000 peak. Most of the decline was associated with private facilities, which declined 67% since 2000, compared with a 24% decline for public facilities. Among public facilities, the decline was

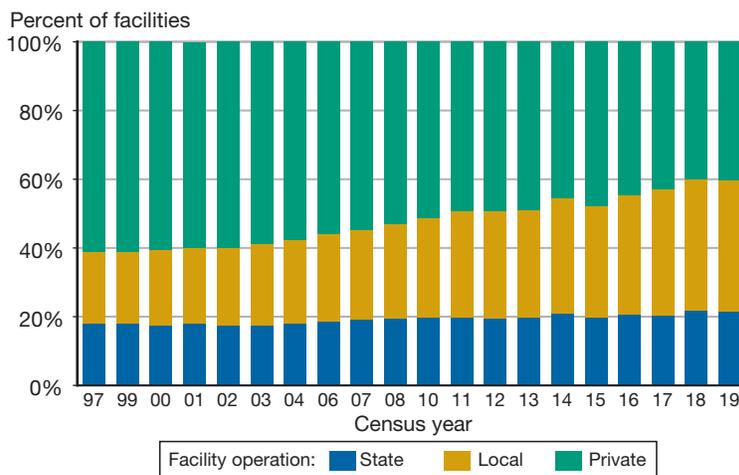
greater for state-operated (38%) than for locally operated (14%) facilities. As a result, public facilities have outnumbered private facilities each year since 2011.

The number of residential placement facilities declined 50% between 2000 and 2019



Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement and Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 1997 through 2019.

The proportion of locally operated facilities increased steadily since 2000, while the proportion of privately operated facilities decreased



■ Since 2000, the proportion of facilities that were locally operated increased from 22% to 38%, while the proportion that were privately operated fell from 61% to 40%.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement and Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 1997 through 2019.

Local facilities held more youth than state or private facilities

Private facilities have outnumbered local facilities since 1997, and through the mid-2000s, private facilities held more youth than local facilities. However, given the disproportionate decline in the number of private facilities and the youth they hold, by 2019, more youth were held in local facilities, and the number of local facilities was about the same as private facilities.

Operation profile:

Facility operation	Facilities		Youth	
	1997	2019	1997	2019
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Public	39	60	72	74
State	18	22	44	35
Local	21	38	28	39
Private	61	40	28	26

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

The decrease in facilities varied by facility type

Since 2003, all facility types experienced declines in the number of facilities and the number of youth held, but the declines varied by type of facility. Detention centers outnumbered and held more youth than other facility types, but the relative decline in the number of such facilities (17%) and youth held (51%) was less than other facility types. For example, the number of residential treatment centers (RTC), introduced to the collections in 2003, fell 37% by 2019, and the number of youth in RTCs fell 56%, while the number of training schools and youth held in such facilities declined 37% and 71%, respectively.

Percent change, 2003–2019:

Facility type	Facilities	Youth
Detention center	-17%	-51%
Residential treatment center	-37	-56
Group home	-72	-62
Training school	-37	-71
Shelter	-52	-56
Ranch/forestry camp	-78	-84
Reception/diagnostic center	-79	-84

The number of youth held in large facilities—those with more than 100 residents—has declined

Fewer youth were held in large facilities in 2019 than in 1997

Facility size is based on the number of residents assigned a bed on the census reference date. Small facilities hold between 1 and 20 residents, medium facilities hold between 21 and 100 residents, and large facilities hold more than 100 residents.

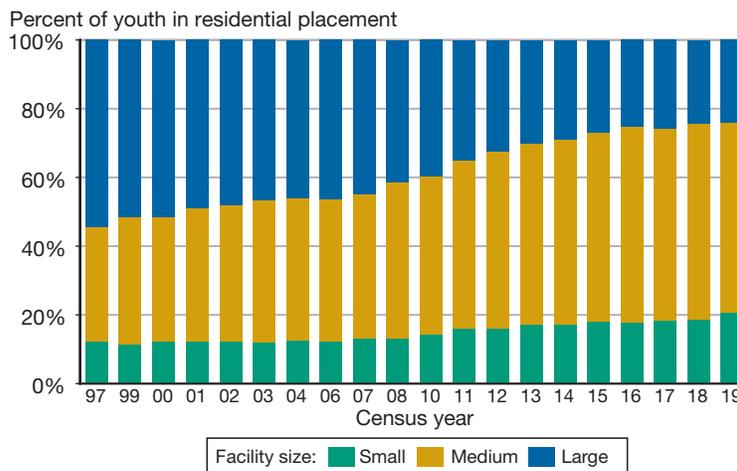
The number of large facilities fell 74% since 1997, and the number of youth in large facilities fell 85%. During the same period, the number of small facilities declined 46%, the number of medium facilities fell 39%, and the number of youth in small and medium facilities experienced the same relative decline (42% each).

Percent change, 1997–2019:

Facility size	Facilities	Youth
Small	-46%	-42%
Medium	-39	-42
Large	-74	-85

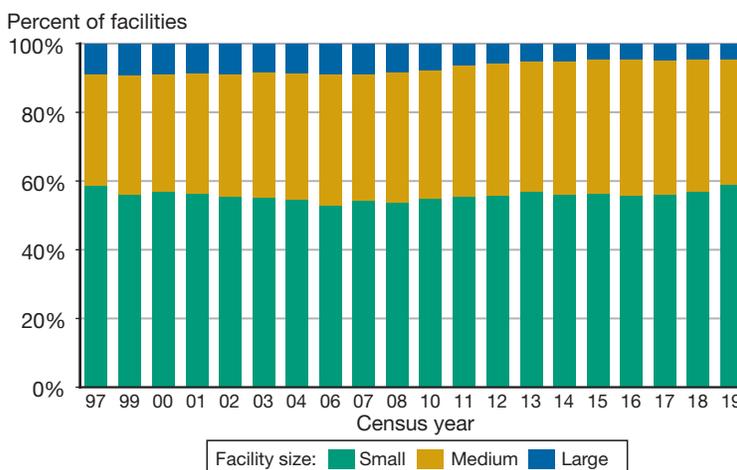
The net result of these changes was that, by 2019, large facilities accounted for a smaller share of facilities than in 1997 (4% vs. 9%), while medium facilities accounted for a larger share (37% vs. 33%). Similarly, a larger proportion of youth were held in medium size facilities (55%) than in large facilities (24%) in 2019, reversing the pattern that prevailed through 2007. Small facilities accounted for about the same proportion of facilities in 2019 as in 1997 (59%), but the proportion of youth in small facilities increased from 12% in 1997 to 21% in 2019.

More youth were held in large facilities than medium facilities through 2007, but that pattern has since reversed



- The proportion of youth in large facilities has declined steadily. In 1997, more than half (54%) of all youth were in large facilities; by 2019, about one-fourth (24%) of all youth were in large facilities. Conversely, the proportion of youth in medium facilities has increased steadily. By 2008, more youth were held in medium facilities than in large facilities, a pattern that persisted through 2019.
- The proportion of youth held in small facilities was relatively stable through the mid-2000s but has since increased. By 2019, one-fifth (21%) of youth were held in small facilities.

Small facilities outnumber medium and large facilities



- The proportion of large facilities decreased steadily since 2007, falling to 4% in 2019. Medium facilities accounted for 33% of facilities in 1997, increased to 40% in 2016, then fell to 37% in 2019. While the proportion of small facilities changed little during this period, small facilities accounted for more than half of all facilities each year since 1997.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* and *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 1997 through 2019.

The characteristics of the placement population varied by placement setting, offense, and youth demographics

Offense profiles varied based on where a youth was held

State or local government agencies operate public facilities. Private facilities include nonprofit and for-profit corporations and organizations. In general, private facilities are smaller than public facilities and tend to hold youth with less serious offenses. Therefore, private facilities house slightly different popu-

lations than public facilities. In 2019, youth held for a person offense accounted for the largest share of youth held in state, locally and privately operated facilities; youth held for a status offense accounted for a relatively larger proportion of youth in private facilities than state or local facilities. Local facilities had a larger share of youth held for technical violations than either state or private facilities.

Offense profile, 2019:

Offense	Facility operation		
	State	Local	Private
Total	100%	100%	100%
Person	51	41	36
Property	22	18	21
Drugs	3	4	6
Public order	13	14	15
Technical violation	9	21	11
Status offense	1	2	11

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

Females accounted for 15% of the residential placement population in 2019, youth ages 15–17 accounted for 71%, and Black youth accounted for 41%

Most serious offense	Number of youth in placement, 2019	Percent of youth in residential placement, 2019								
		Female	Younger than 15	Ages 15–17	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian	Two or more
Total	36,479	15%	15%	71%	33%	41%	20%	2%	1%	2%
Person	15,823	13	15	68	30	44	21	2	1	2
Criminal homicide	941	9	6	69	20	46	29	2	1	2
Sexual assault	2,362	1	18	59	55	25	16	2	1	2
Robbery	4,131	6	8	71	11	62	23	1	2	2
Aggravated assault	3,427	14	14	69	24	46	25	2	1	2
Simple assault	3,067	27	24	68	40	34	19	3	1	3
Other person	1,895	16	18	70	40	38	17	2	1	3
Property	7,503	13	16	73	32	45	17	2	1	2
Burglary	2,540	7	17	70	29	50	15	2	1	2
Theft	1,576	17	16	74	34	49	11	2	1	2
Auto theft	1,782	16	15	76	29	43	22	2	1	3
Arson	204	10	25	63	50	31	12	3	1	3
Other property	1,401	17	17	74	39	37	19	2	1	3
Drug	1,589	19	10	75	46	25	23	2	1	3
Drug trafficking	269	9	8	72	32	37	27	2	0	2
Other drug	1,320	21	10	76	49	23	22	2	1	3
Public order	5,077	10	15	71	34	40	21	2	1	2
Weapons offense	2,087	4	9	77	17	54	25	1	1	2
Other public order	2,990	14	19	66	46	31	18	2	1	2
Technical violation	5,063	22	15	74	33	36	25	2	1	3
Status offense	1,424	34	24	71	59	23	9	2	1	4

- Females accounted for a relatively larger share of youth held for a status offense (34%) or for simple assault (27%) than for other offenses.
- Across offenses, youth ages 15-17 accounted for the majority of youth in placement. However, youth younger than age 15 accounted for a relatively large share of youth held for simple assault (24%), arson (25%), or a status offense (24%).
- White youth accounted for half or more of youth held for sexual assault, arson, or a status offense, while Black youth accounted for at least half of all youth held for robbery, burglary, or a weapons offense.

Notes: Racial categories (i.e., White, Black, American Indian, and Asian) do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity. The American Indian racial category includes Alaska Natives; the Asian racial category includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. Totals include persons of unspecified race. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2019* [data file].

The majority of youth were in medium-sized facilities

More than half (55%) of all youth in placement in 2019 were in a medium-sized facility (21–100 residents), about one-fifth (21%) were in a small facility (20 or fewer residents), and one-fourth (24%) were in a large facility (more than 100 residents). However, the placement setting varied by offense. For example, youth held for a status offense were more likely to be in a small facility (35%) than those held for a delinquency offense (20%), and youth held for a delinquency offense were more likely to be in a medium-sized facility (56%) than those held for a status offense (44%).

Facility size profile, 2019:

Facility size	Offense		
	Total	Delinquency	Status
Total	100%	100%	100%
Small	21	20	35
Medium	55	56	44
Large	24	24	21

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

Most youth held for a status offense were in private facilities

Youth held for a status offense account for a small proportion of the overall placement population—4% in 2019. The overwhelming majority (72%) of these youth were in privately-operated facilities. Comparatively, 76% of youth

held for a delinquency offense were in a publicly operated facility.

Facility operation profile, 2019:

Offense	Facility operation		
	Total	Public	Private
Total	100%	74%	26%
Delinquency	100	76	24
Person	100	78	22
Property	100	73	27
Drugs	100	64	36
Public order	100	72	28
Tech. violation	100	80	20
Status offense	100	28	72

More than half (55%) of youth held for a status offense in 2019 were in residential treatment centers, and more than one-third (36%) were in group homes.

Detention centers held 40% of youth in placement on October 23, 2019

Percent of youth in residential placement, 2019

Most serious offense	Total	Residential placement					
		Detention center	Shelter	Group home	Residential treatment center	Training school	Other*
Total	100%	40%	2%	7%	23%	26%	3%
Person	100	40	1	7	19	31	2
Property	100	38	1	7	24	26	4
Drugs	100	34	2	7	34	18	5
Public order	100	39	1	7	27	23	3
Technical violation	100	53	2	4	17	21	3
Status offense	100	12	8	30	45	2	3

- More than half of youth in placement for a technical violation were in a detention center.
- Residential treatment centers and group homes were the most common placement setting for youth held for a status offense.

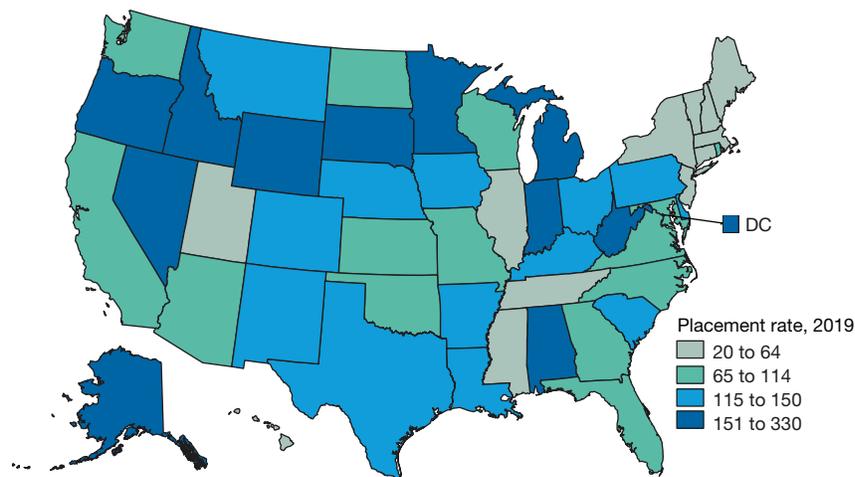
*Includes reception/diagnostic centers and ranch/wilderness camps.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2019* [data file].

In 2019, there were 36,749 youth in residential placement—114 for every 100,000 youth in the U.S. population

The national residential placement rate fell 49% between 2010 and 2019; across states, placement rates in 2019 were lower than in 2010 for all but one state

State	Youth in placement, 2019	Placement rate per 100,000		Percent change	State	Youth in placement, 2019	Placement rate per 100,000		Percent change
		2010	2019				2010	2019	
U.S. total	36,479	225	114	-49%	Missouri	588	214	108	-50%
Alabama	798	212	161	-24	Montana	138	192	133	-31
Alaska	255	342	330	-4	Nebraska	309	378	145	-62
Arizona	606	152	80	-47	Nevada	546	244	174	-29
Arkansas	465	230	146	-37	New Hampshire	24	97	20	-79
California	4,131	272	102	-63	New Jersey	513	123	58	-53
Colorado	753	286	130	-55	New Mexico	270	250	122	-51
Connecticut	96	93	27	-71	New York	837	180	54	-70
Delaware	129	270	139	-49	North Carolina	744	112	93	-17
Dist. of Columbia	117	430	262	-39	North Dakota	78	258	104	-60
Florida	2,001	261	104	-60	Ohio	1,746	227	148	-35
Georgia	1,119	220	110	-50	Oklahoma	345	157	80	-49
Hawaii	63	90	49	-46	Oregon	651	320	164	-49
Idaho	342	257	164	-36	Pennsylvania	1,566	317	129	-59
Illinois	834	178	64	-64	Rhode Island	108	236	114	-52
Indiana	1,155	276	161	-42	South Carolina	633	235	141	-40
Iowa	441	227	133	-41	South Dakota	171	575	180	-69
Kansas	360	264	113	-57	Tennessee	345	117	50	-57
Kentucky	588	186	130	-30	Texas	3,699	203	126	-38
Louisiana	693	239	143	-40	Utah	246	190	58	-69
Maine	60	143	51	-64	Vermont	18	53	33	-38
Maryland	495	143	82	-43	Virginia	918	224	109	-51
Massachusetts	288	115	46	-60	Washington	693	183	94	-49
Michigan	1,353	208	157	-25	West Virginia	483	317	291	-8
Minnesota	948	159	161	1	Wisconsin	477	209	93	-56
Mississippi	198	106	61	-42	Wyoming	147	440	239	-46



Notes: Placement rate is the number of youth in placement per 100,000 youth ages 10 through the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction in each state. U.S. totals include 2,567 youth in placement in 2010 and 1,895 youth in placement in 2019 for whom state of offense was not reported.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* for 2010 and 2019 [data files].

Between 1997 and 2019, the decline in the committed population outpaced that of the detained population

CJRP documents the placement status of youth

Some youth are held in residential placement for detention purposes (e.g., youth awaiting an adjudicatory or disposition hearing in juvenile or criminal court) and those held after disposition while awaiting placement elsewhere.

Other youth are committed to a facility as part of a court-ordered sanction. In 2019, detained youth accounted for 39% of the placement population and committed youth accounted for 58%.

Offense profiles were similar for detained and committed youth

Youth held for a delinquency offense accounted for 98% of the detained population and 95% of the committed population. Youth held for a status offense accounted for 5% of the committed population and 2% of the detained population.

Offense profile of youth in placement, 2019:

Most serious offense	Detained (14,344)	Committed (21,141)
Total	100%	100%
Delinquency	98	95
Person	45	43
Criminal homicide	4	2
Sexual assault	4	8
Robbery	12	11
Aggravated assault	11	8
Simple assault	8	8
Other person	5	5
Property	20	21
Burglary	6	7
Theft	4	4
Auto theft	5	5
Arson	1	1
Other property	4	4
Drug	3	5
Drug trafficking	1	1
Other drug	3	4
Public order	13	14
Weapons	7	5
Other public order	6	9
Technical violation	16	12
Status offense	2	5

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

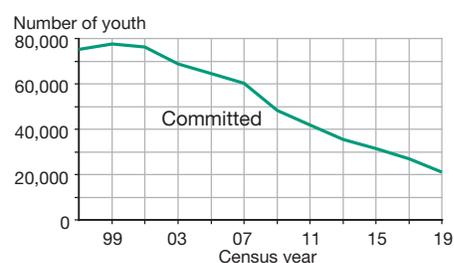
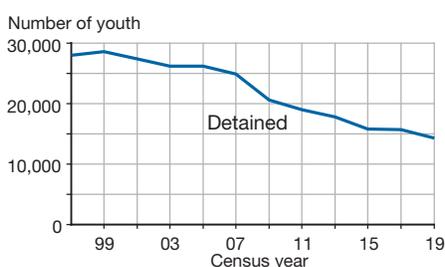
Detained and committed youth were held in different types of facilities

In 2019, 81% of detained youth were held in detention centers, 9% were in long-term secure facilities, and 6% were

in residential treatment centers.

Among committed youth, 38% were held in long-term secure facilities, and 33% were in residential treatment centers. Group homes and detention centers each held 11% of committed youth.

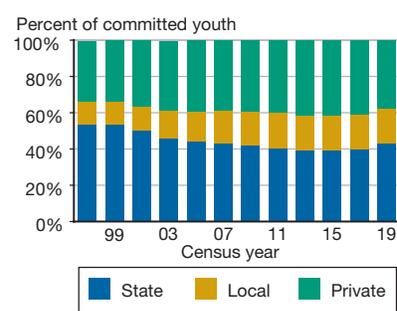
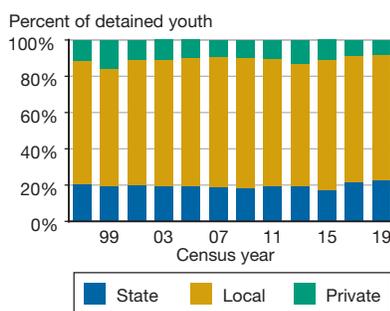
Between 1997 and 2019, the detained population decreased 47% and the committed population fell 72%



- Most of the decline in the number of youth detained took place between 2007 and 2019, during which time the population of youth in residential placement declined 42%, while the committed population declined consistently since 2001.
- Committed youth account for a larger share of the overall placement population than detained youth, but their share declined from 72% in 1997 to 58% in 2019, while detained youth accounted for a larger share in 2019 (39%) than in 1997 (27%).

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* for 1997 through 2019 [data files].

Most detained youth were held in locally operated facilities while most committed youth were in state operated facilities

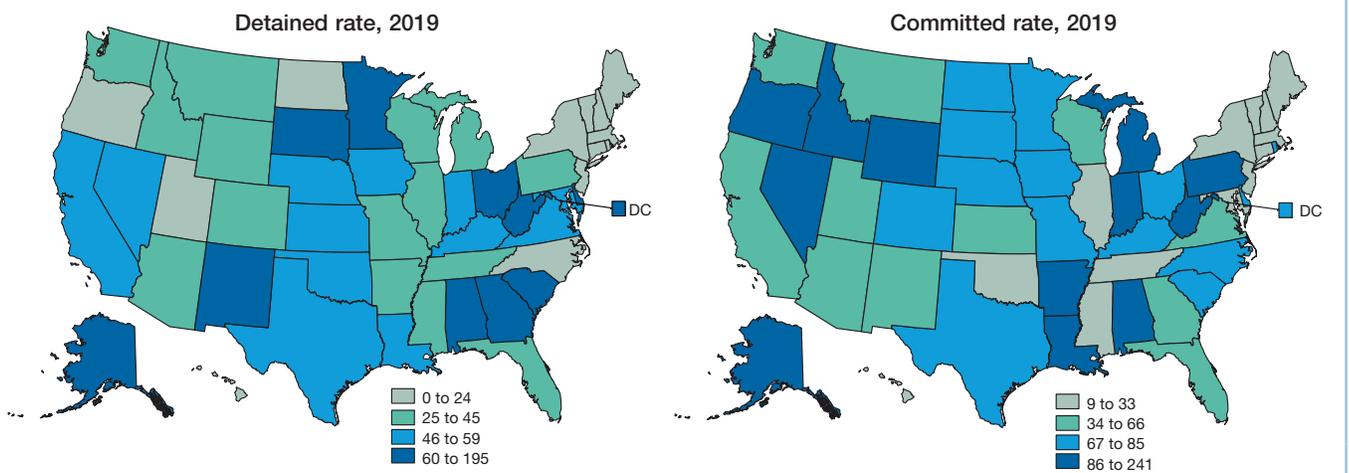


- The overwhelming majority of detained youth were held in locally operated facilities. In a typical year between 1997 and 2019, 70% of youth in detention were held in a locally operated facility.
- The number of committed youth held in state facilities fell 78% between 1997 and 2019, compared with 69% for those in private facilities and 56% for those in local facilities. As a result, a smaller proportion of committed youth were in state operated facilities in 2019 (43%) than in 1997 (54%).

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* for 1997 through 2019 [data files].

Commitment rates declined between 2010 and 2019 for all but four states, while detention rates declined for all but eight states

State	Rate per 100,000				State	Rate per 100,000			
	Detained		Committed			Detained		Committed	
	2010	2019	2010	2019		2010	2019	2010	2019
U.S. total	65	45	154	66	Missouri	41	27	170	81
Alabama	52	62 [†]	159	90	Montana	51	43	138	58
Alaska	124	85	211	241	Nebraska	106	58	269	85 [†]
Arizona	51	42	96	36	Nevada	80	56	163	108
Arkansas	47	45	182	101 [†]	New Hampshire	7*	5*	70	10
California	116	50 [†]	155	51 [†]	New Jersey	57	24	65	33 [†]
Colorado	74	44	200	85	New Mexico	72	68	176	53
Connecticut	38	17	54	9	New York	35 [†]	20	143	33
Delaware	106	71	164	68	North Carolina	22	17	68	74
Dist. of Columbia	222	195	208	67	North Dakota	28	16	230	84
Florida	48	28	211	66	Ohio	75	63	152	83
Georgia	48	60	102	50	Oklahoma	64	59	91	20
Hawaii	20	23	63	23	Oregon	38	14 [†]	281	147
Idaho	77	37	179	109	Pennsylvania	43	29	254	99
Illinois	52	39	123 [†]	24 [†]	Rhode Island	3*	22	201	76
Indiana	76	46 [†]	199	109	South Carolina	78	67	157	71
Iowa	41	48	182	75	South Dakota	123 [†]	101	432	76
Kansas	93	58	169	55	Tennessee	28	38 [†]	88	12
Kentucky	63	52	120	73	Texas	72	59	129	67
Louisiana	77	54	159	88	Utah	55	17	135	39
Maine	12	0*	127	28	Vermont	19 [†]	6*	10 ^{*†}	11*
Maryland	71	48	66	33	Virginia	76	56	144	52
Massachusetts	34	20	79	22	Washington	56	28	126	63
Michigan	57	43	151	110	West Virginia	164	115	152	170
Minnesota	37	82 [†]	119	67	Wisconsin	39	25	168	61
Mississippi	51	26	54	30	Wyoming	31	34	409	205



[†] Interpret data with caution. In these states, 30% or more of the information for placement status (i.e., detained or committed) was imputed.

*Rate is based on fewer than 10 youth.

Notes: Rate is the number of detained or committed youth in placement per 100,000 youth ages 10 through the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction in each state. U.S. totals include 493 detained youth and 1,359 committed youth for whom state of offense was not reported.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* for 2010 and 2019 [data files].



In four states, the proportion of youth detained for a technical violation exceeded the proportion detained for a person offense

The percent of youth detained for a person offense ranged from a low of 19% in Arizona to a high of 64% in Georgia

State	Offense profile of detained youth, 2019						State	Offense profile of detained youth, 2019					
	Person	Property	Drugs	Public order	Technical violation	Status		Person	Property	Drugs	Public order	Technical violation	Status
U.S. total	45%	20%	3%	13%	16%	2%	Missouri	47%	29%	2%	10%	10%	2%
Alabama	36 [†]	27 [†]	4 [†]	15 [†]	17 [†]	1	Montana*	40	20	7	0	33	0
Alaska*	36	23	5 [†]	9	23	5 [†]	Nebraska	37	17	7	17	22	0
Arizona	19	19	10	10	39	0	Nevada	27	17	12	17	25	2
Arkansas	40 [†]	21 [†]	4 [†]	6 [†]	27 [†]	0	New Hampshire	–	–	–	–	–	–
California	53 [†]	15 [†]	1	11	20 [†]	0	New Jersey	51	8	3	14	24	0
Colorado	52	23 [†]	2 [†]	19 [†]	2 [†]	1	New Mexico	30	8	4	12	44	2
Connecticut*	40	40	0	5	10	0	New York	60	19	5	8	7	1
Delaware*	45	18	0	27	5	0	North Carolina	41	37	2	11	4	7
Dist. of Columbia*	62	21	0	17	0	0	North Dakota	–	–	–	–	–	–
Florida	40	30	3	16	10	1 [†]	Ohio	50	16	2	15	15	2
Georgia	64	27	1	7	0	0	Oklahoma	49	22	4	11	13	0
Hawaii*	40	20	0	0	40	0	Oregon*	21	16 [†]	0	11 [†]	53 [†]	0
Idaho*	38	23	15	12	4	4	Pennsylvania	36	18	7	11	27	1
Illinois	36	19	3	31	12	0	Rhode Island*	29	29	0	43	0	0
Indiana	38 [†]	21 [†]	3 [†]	16 [†]	15 [†]	7	South Carolina	33	22	1 [†]	16	23	5
Iowa	49	28	9	9	4 [†]	0	South Dakota*	44	25	3	9 [†]	19	3 [†]
Kansas	56	18	3	18	10	6	Tennessee	57 [†]	14 [†]	2	11	11 [†]	2
Kentucky	54	13 [†]	1	19	5	8	Texas	42	16	6 [†]	14	22 [†]	0
Louisiana	38	30	2 [†]	8	17	6	Utah*	29	25	0	13	33	0
Maine	–	–	–	–	–	–	Vermont	–	–	–	–	–	–
Maryland	44	22	7	9	15	1	Virginia	42	20 [†]	2 [†]	14	19	3 [†]
Massachusetts	57	17	5	19	2	0	Washington	59	16	1	12	10	1
Michigan	42	20	2	12	21	4	West Virginia	47	27	2	9	2 [†]	14
Minnesota	41 [†]	23 [†]	3 [†]	14 [†]	18 [†]	3 [†]	Wisconsin	40	28	2	23	2	2 [†]
Mississippi*	39	25	4	18	11	4	Wyoming*	29	14	14	14	14	14

- The proportion of youth detained for a technical violation of probation or parole or a violation of a valid court order was less than 40% in each state except Hawaii (40%), New Mexico (44%), and Oregon (53%).
- Youth held for a status offense accounted for less than 10% of the detained population in all states but West Virginia and Wyoming.

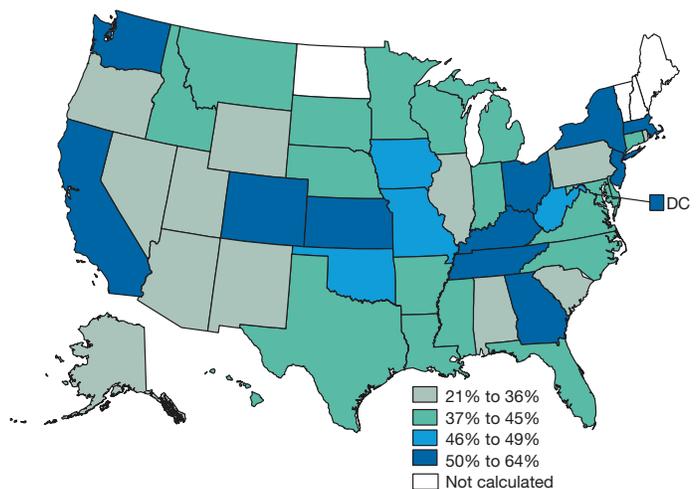
– Too few youth (fewer than 20) to calculate a reliable percentage.

*Percents in this state are based on a small denominator (fewer than 100, but at least 20 youth).

† Interpret data with caution. In these states, 30% or more of the information for offense and/or placement status (i.e., detained or committed) was imputed.

Notes: U.S. totals include 493 detained youth for whom state of offense was not reported.

Percent of detained youth held for person offenses, 2019



Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2019* [data file].



The proportion of youth in placement for a person offense has increased

More than 40% of youth were in residential placement for a person offense

In any given year, youth held for a person offense accounted for the largest share of the placement population. For example, in 1999, the year in which the CJRP population reached its peak, 35% of youth in placement were there as a result of a person offense and 29% were held for a property offense. However, declines in the placement population between 1999 and 2019 were not evenly spread across offenses. In fact, with the exception of youth held for a public order offense, the relative decline in the number of youth held for

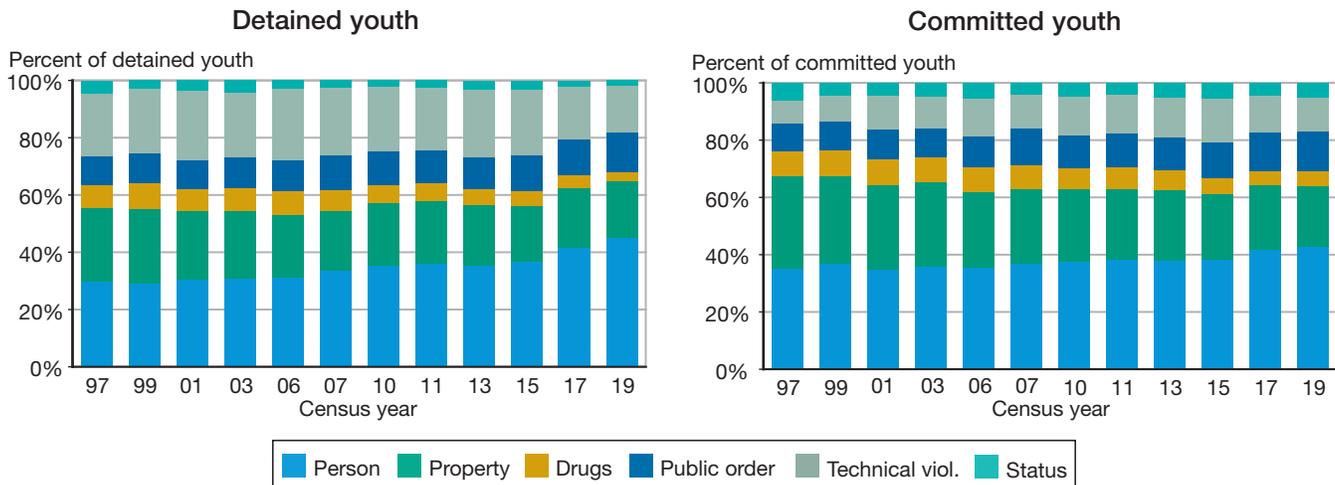
a person offense was less than the decline for youth held for other offenses. As a result, the proportion of youth in placement for a person offense increased to 43% in 2019.

Offense profile of youth in placement:

Offense	1999	2019	Percent change 1999–2019
Total	100%	100%	-66%
Delinquency	96	96	-66
Person	35	43	-58
Property	29	21	-76
Drugs	9	4	-84
Public order	10	14	-53
Tech. violation	13	14	-64
Status offense	4	4	-67

The trend in the number and proportion of youth in placement for a violent crime (criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault) mirrored the trend of youth held for person offenses: the number of youth in placement for a violent crime declined 59% between 1999 and 2019, but, given the larger declines in other offenses over the same period, the proportion of youth held for a violent crime increased from 25% in 1999 to 30% in 2019. Conversely, the number of youth held for a status offense declined considerably between 1999 and 2019, but the proportion of youth in placement for a status offense remained the same.

The offense profile of the detained and committed populations has changed



- The detained and committed populations have declined considerably between 1999—the year the CJRP population peaked—and 2019, but the declines varied based on offense. For example, among the detained population, the number of youth held for a drug offense declined more than 80%, and the number held for a status offense, technical violation, or a property offense fell more than 60%; the decline in youth detained for a public order (36%) or a person (21%) offense was considerably less.
- Among the committed population, the decline in the number of youth held for a drug offense (85%) or a property offense (81%) outpaced the decline in the number of youth held for other offenses: person (68%), public order (62%), technical violations (66%), and status offenses (67%).
- The net result of these declines was that the offense profile of the detained and committed populations included a larger proportion of youth held for a person offense, and a smaller proportion of youth held for a property or a drug offense. For example, in 2019, 45% of detained youth were in placement for a person offense, compared with 30% in 1997; among committed youth, the proportion held for a person offense increased from 35% to 43%. Conversely, the proportion of detained youth held for a property offense declined from 26% in 1997 to 20% in 2019; among committed youth, 22% were held for a property offense in 2019, down from 32% in 1997.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* for 1997–2019 [data files].

Females accounted for a relatively small proportion of the residential placement population

Females accounted for 15% of youth in residential placement

The juvenile justice system predominantly consists of male youth. This is especially true of the residential placement population. Males represent half of the youth population and are involved in approximately 70% of youth arrests and delinquency cases that juvenile courts handle each year, but they represented 85% of youth held in residential placement in 2019. Females accounted for a larger proportion of youth in private facilities (16%) than in public facilities (14%), a larger proportion

of the detained population (16%) than the committed population (14%). Although the number of females in placement has declined since 1997, their proportion of the placement population has remained stable.

Female percent of youth in placement:

Offense	1997	2019
Total	14%	15%
Facility operation:		
Public	12	14
Private	18	16
Placement status:		
Detained	17	16
Committed	12	14

Females in placement tended to be younger than their male counterparts

In 2019, 43% of females in placement were younger than age 16, compared with 32% of males. For females in placement, the peak age was 16, accounting for 27% of all females in placement facilities. For males, the peak age was 17 (27%).

Age profile of youth in placement, 2019:

Age	Total	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%
12 or younger	2	2	2
13	4	4	6
14	10	9	13
15	18	18	22
16	26	26	27
17	27	27	23
18–20	14	15	7

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

Females were more likely than males to be held for technical violations or status offenses

Offense profile of youth in residential placement, 2019

Most serious offense	All facilities		Public facilities		Private facilities	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Delinquency	97	91	99	96	91	78
Person	44	37	47	39	37	31
Violent Crime Index*	32	16	35	19	23	8
Other person	12	21	12	21	14	23
Property	21	19	21	18	21	21
Property Crime Index†	17	14	17	13	18	16
Other property	4	4	4	4	3	4
Drug	4	5	4	4	6	8
Drug trafficking	1	0	1	1	1	0
Other drug	3	5	3	4	5	8
Public order	15	9	14	10	17	7
Technical violation‡	13	21	13	24	11	11
Status offense	3	9	1	4	9	22

■ Compared with males, a larger proportion of females were in placement for a status offense (9% vs. 3%) or a technical violation (21% vs. 13%) in 2019.

■ More than 1 in 5 (22%) females in private facilities were there for a status offense, compared with less than 1 in 10 (9%) males.

* Violent Crime Index = criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault.

† Property Crime Index = burglary, theft, auto theft, and arson.

‡ Technical violations = violations of probation, parole, and valid court order.

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2019* [data file].

Females were committed to placement for different offenses than males

In 2019, nearly 3,000 females were committed to placement, that is, they were in placement as part of a court-ordered sanction. About 1 in 3 (34%) females were committed to placement for a person offense, compared with 44% of males. Conversely, larger proportions of females than males were committed to placement for a status offense (12% vs. 4%) or technical violations (17% vs. 11%).

Offense profile of committed youth, 2019:

Offense	Male	Female
Total	100%	100%
Delinquency	96	88
Person	44	34
Property	22	19
Drugs	5	7
Public order	15	10
Tech. violation	11	17
Status offense	4	12

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

Placement rates for Black youth and American Indian youth exceed the rate for White youth

Black youth accounted for the largest share of youth in placement

In 2019, the population of youth in residential placement was 41% Black, 33% White, and 20% Hispanic. Relative to their proportion in the general population, Black youth were overrepresented in the placement population. In 2019, Black youth accounted for 14% of the population ages 10–20 and 41% of the placement population. American Indian youth were also overrepresented in the placement population but not to the same extent as Black youth.

Race profile of youth ages 10–20, 2019:

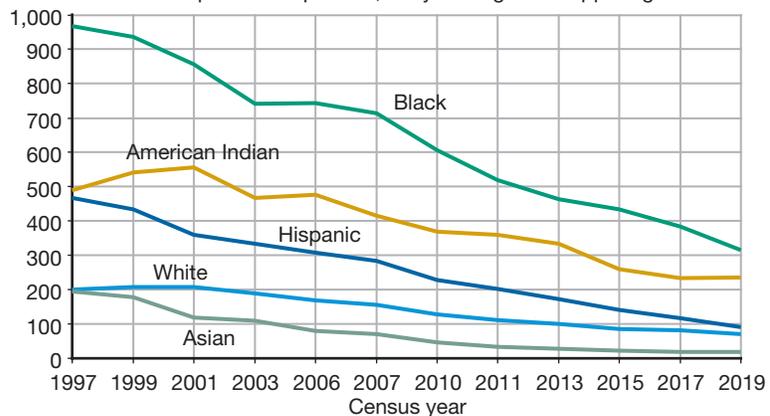
Offense	Population	Residential placement
Total	100%	100%
White	52	33
Black	14	41
Hispanic	25	20
American Indian	1	2
Asian	5	1
Two or more	4	2

Note: Racial categories (i.e., White, Black, American Indian, and Asian) do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity. The American Indian racial category includes Alaska Natives; the Asian racial category includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. Totals include persons of unspecified race. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

Black youth also accounted for a larger share of the detained population (46%) than White youth (26%) or Hispanic youth (23%). Among those committed to placement following a court-ordered sanction, White youth and Black youth accounted for the same proportion in 2019 (28%), while Hispanic youth accounted for 19%. American Indian, Asian/Pacific Islander, and youth of two or more races combined to account for 6% or less of the detained and committed populations.

Residential placement rates declined for all race groups since 1997, but the rates for Black, American Indian, and Hispanic youth remain higher than the rate for White youth

Youth in residential placement per 100,000 youth ages 10–upper age



- Between 1997 and 2019, the residential placement rate declined the most for Asian youth (90%), followed by Hispanic (80%), Black (67%), White (64%), and American Indian (52%) youth. Despite these declines, placement rates were higher for Black, Hispanic, and American Indian youth than White youth each year since 1997.

Notes: Racial categories (i.e., White, Black, American Indian, and Asian) do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity. The American Indian racial category includes Alaska Natives; the Asian racial category includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. Rates are based on the number of youth in placement per 100,000 youth ages 10 through the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* for 1997 through 2019 [data files].

Detention and commitment rates for Black youth and American Indian youth were well above the rates for White youth

Race/ethnicity	Rate per 100,000 youth ages 10–upper age			Ratio of rates (relative to rate for White youth)		
	Total	Detained	Committed	Total	Detained	Committed
White	72	22	47			
Black	315	139	168	4.4	6.3	3.6
Hispanic	92	41	50	1.3	1.9	1.1
American Indian	236	91	140	3.3	4.1	3.0
Asian	19	8	11	0.3	0.4	0.2

- The ratio is determined by dividing the rate of each racial/ethnic minority group by the rate for White youth. A ratio of 1.0 indicates statistical parity, i.e., the rates for the comparison groups are equal. For example, if White youth and Black youth were placed at the same rate, the ratio would be 1.0. When the ratio exceeds 1.0, the rate for a particular racial/ethnic minority group exceeds the rate for White youth; when it is below 1.0, the rate for a racial/ethnic minority group is less than the rate for White youth.

Note: Racial categories (i.e., White, Black, American Indian, and Asian) do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity. The American Indian racial category includes Alaska Natives; the Asian racial category includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. Rates are based on the number of youth in placement per 100,000 youth ages 10 through the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement*, 2019 [data file].

Nationally, residential placement rates were highest for Black youth

For every 100,000 Black youth living in the U.S., 315 were in a residential placement facility on October 23, 2019; for American Indian youth the rate was 236 and for Hispanic youth the rate was 92

State	Placement rate (per 100,000), 2019					State	Placement rate (per 100,000), 2019				
	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian		White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian	Asian
U.S. total	72	315	92	236	19	Missouri	80	288	24*	102*	21*
Alabama	106	294	65	0*	35*†	Montana	100	602*	101*	332	0*
Alaska	219	720	45*†	693	200	Nebraska	69	641	197	1,145	47*
Arizona	62	240	67	101	22*	Nevada	140	488	117	102*	47
Arkansas	96†	307	129†	113*†	119*†	New Hampshire	14	183*	38*	0*	0*
California	48	433	113†	212	14	New Jersey	14	245	58	0*	3*
Colorado	76	557	160	145*	52	New Mexico	277	467	58	62	0*
Connecticut	7†	74†	36†	1,163†	16*	New York	30	168	37	44*	5*
Delaware	44	390	61*	0*	0*	North Carolina	37	250	34	296	0*
Dist. of Columbia	35*†	388	84*	0*	0*	North Dakota	70	356	71*	319	247*
Florida	90	295	7	0*	9*	Ohio	84	433	86	220*	9*
Georgia	40	233	47	0*	13*	Oklahoma	53	281	37	105	26*
Hawaii	25*	0*	61	0*	30	Oregon	146	547	169	362	52
Idaho	137	980	176	580	167*	Pennsylvania	73	413	108	0*	24
Illinois	32†	218	39†	231*†	4*†	Rhode Island	72	434	77	479*	0*
Indiana	138	298	72	0*	15*†	South Carolina	63	315	49	0*	0*
Iowa	83	721	116	474*	0*	South Dakota	109	512	219	486	0*
Kansas	81	405	110	185*	56*	Tennessee*	27	124	42	0*	19*
Kentucky	89	393	75	0*	32*	Texas	74	345	116	34*	13
Louisiana	49	294	41	81*	0*	Utah	38	336	110	143*	41*
Maine	42	288	0*	0*	0*	Vermont	30	206*	0*	0*	0*
Maryland	29	182	55	0*	0*	Virginia	57	273	103	0*	14*†
Massachusetts	19	133	108	0*	6*	Washington	60	310	112	257	39
Michigan	85	458	88	174	27*	West Virginia	249	803	344	0*	0*
Minnesota	73†	621†	198†	852	46†	Wisconsin	43	485	53	328	30*
Mississippi	27	105	40*	0*	0*	Wyoming	202	556*	242	760	0*

■ In all but seven states, the residential placement rate for Black youth exceeded the rate for other race/ethnicity groups. In six states, the placement rate for American Indian youth exceeded the rate for other race/ethnicity groups.

*Rate is based on fewer than 10 youth.

†Interpret data with caution. In these states, 30% or more of the information for offense or placement status (i.e., detained or committed) was imputed.

Notes: Racial categories (i.e., White, Black, American Indian, and Asian) do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity. The American Indian racial category includes Alaska Natives; the Asian racial category includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. U.S. totals include 1,895 youth for whom state of offense was not reported.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement* for 2019 [data file].

Youth held for person offenses had been committed or detained longer than youth held for other offenses

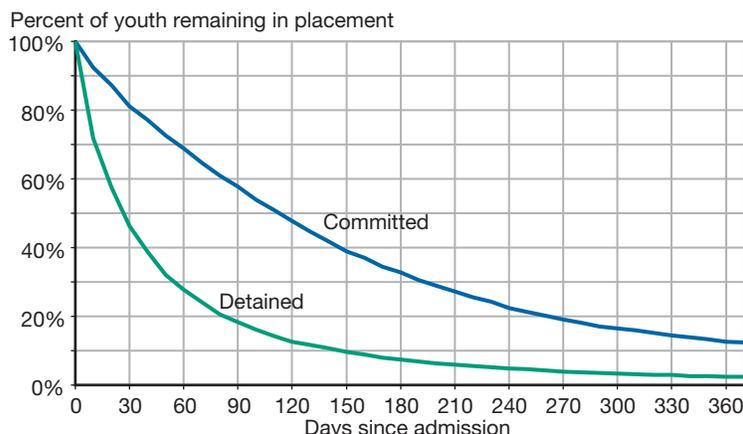
CJRP provides individual-level data on time spent in placement

Information on length of stay is key to understanding the justice system’s handling of youth in residential placement. Ideally, length of stay would be calculated for individual youth by totaling the days of their stay in placement, from their initial admission to their final release relating to a particular case. These individual lengths of placement would then be averaged for different release cohorts of youth (cohorts would be identified by year of release, offense, adjudication status, or demographic characteristics).

CJRP captures information on the number of days since admission for each youth in residential placement. These data represent the number of days the youth had been in the facility up to the census date. Because CJRP data reflect only a youth’s placement at one facility, the complete length of stay—from initial admission to the justice system to final release—cannot be determined. Nevertheless, CJRP provides an overall profile of the time youth had been in the facility at the time of the census—a 1-day snapshot of time in the facility.

Because CJRP data are reported for individuals, averages can be calculated for different subgroups of the population. In addition, analysts can use the data to get a picture of the proportion of residents remaining after a certain number of days (e.g., what percentage of youth have been held longer than a year). This sort of analysis provides juvenile justice policymakers with a useful means of comparing the time spent in placement for different categories of youth.

In 2019, 33% of committed youth but just 8% of detained youth remained in placement 6 months after admission



- Among detained youth (those awaiting adjudication, disposition, or placement elsewhere), 80% had been in the facility for at least a week, 64% for at least 15 days, and 46% for at least 30 days.
- Among committed youth (those held as part of a court-ordered disposition), 81% had been in the facility for at least 30 days, 69% for at least 60 days, and 58% for at least 90 days. After a full year, 12% of committed youth remained in placement

Source: Authors’ analysis of OJJDP’s *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement*, 2019 [data file].

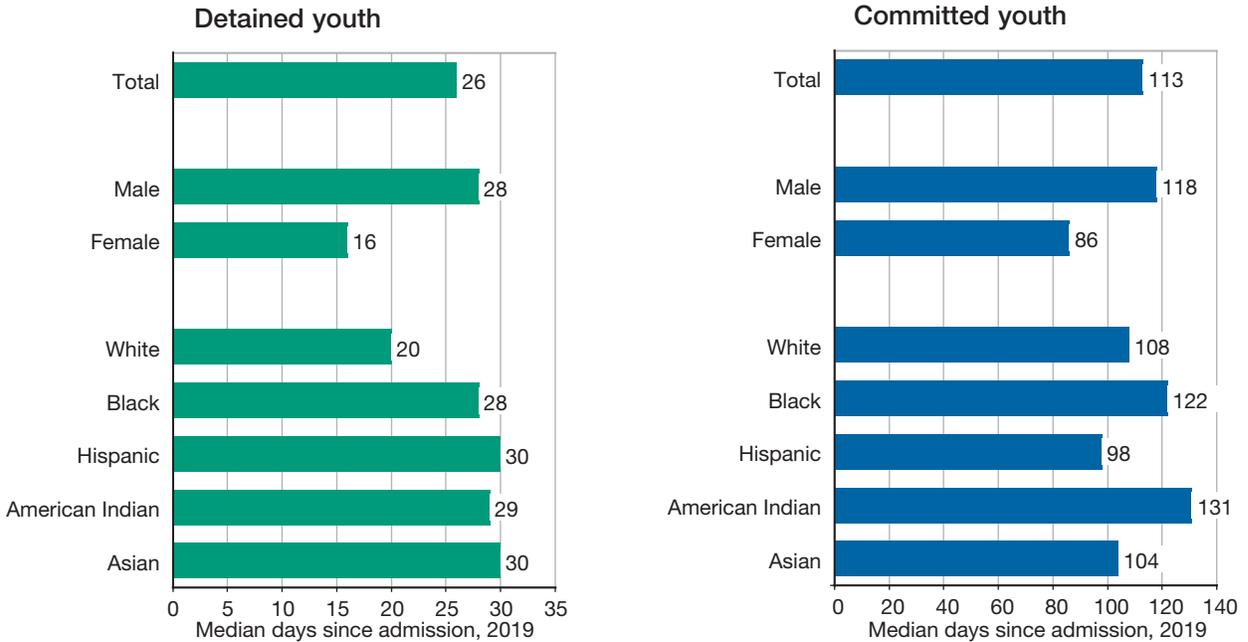
Youth’s average time in the facility varied by placement status, offense, and facility type

Most serious offense	Median days in placement, 2019		
	Detained (all facilities)	Committed Public	Committed Private
Total	26	112	115
Person	36	147	129
Property	20	97	104
Drugs	18	78	97
Public order	24	104	134
Technical violation	16	63	84
Status offense	16	83	126

- Half of all youth detained for a person offense were in a facility 36 days, twice as long as youth in detention for a drug offense (18 days).
- With the exception of those adjudicated for person offenses, youth committed to private facilities had been in the facilities longer than those committed to public facilities.
- Time in placement is influenced by both punishment and treatment goals and, therefore, does not always coincide with offense seriousness. For example, among youth committed to private facilities, the average time in placement for youth held for a status offense was longer than the average for those held for a person offense.

Source: Authors’ analysis of OJJDP’s *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement*, 2019 [data file].

Among detained youth, racial and ethnic minority youth had been in placement longer than White youth



- Half of detained White youth remained in placement about 3 weeks, while half of Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian youth had been in detention about 1 month.
- On average, half of all detained males had been in placement about 1 month, compared with about two weeks for detained females.
- Among committed youth, half all females had been in placement about 3 months, while committed males had been in placement about 4 months.
- Half of all American Indian youth committed to placement had been in the facility more than 4 months, about a month longer than Hispanic youth.

Note: Racial categories (i.e., White, Black, American Indian, and Asian) do not include youth of Hispanic ethnicity. The American Indian racial category includes Alaska Natives; the Asian racial category includes Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, 2019* [data file].



Nearly half of youth in residential placement on the 2018 census date were held in detention centers

JRFC provides data on residential facility operations

In 2018, the Juvenile Residential Facility Census (JRFC) collected data from 2,208 juvenile residential facilities. Analyses were based on data from 1,510 facilities, which held a total of 37,529 youth younger than age 21 who were held for an offense on the census date (October 24, 2018). Data were excluded from 1 facility in the Virgin Islands, 16 tribal facilities, and 681 facilities that held no youth who were charged with an offense on the reference date.

Residential treatment centers and detention centers outnumbered other types of facilities

JRFC asks respondents to identify the type of facility (e.g., detention center, shelter, reception/diagnostic center, group home/halfway house, ranch/forestry/wilderness camp/marine program, training school/long-term secure facility, or residential treatment center). Respondents were allowed to select more than one facility type category, although the vast majority (84%) selected only one. More than 600 facilities identified themselves as detention centers in 2018; they accounted for

41% of all facilities and held 46% of youth.

There were 553 facilities that identified themselves as residential treatment centers. They made up 37% of all facilities and held 37% of youth in 2018.

Facilities identified as detention centers most commonly also identified themselves as residential treatment centers (45 facilities) and training schools (44). There were 59 facilities that identified themselves as both residential treatment centers and training schools, the most common type of facility combination.

Training schools tend to be state facilities, detention centers tend to be local facilities, and group homes tend to be private facilities

Facility operation	Total	Facility type						
		Detention center	Shelter	Reception/diagnostic center	Group home	Ranch/wilderness camp	Training school	Residential treatment center
Number of facilities	1,510	625	116	37	240	27	164	553
Operation profile								
All facilities	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Public	60	93	34	81	28	59	77	35
State	22	21	3	68	14	26	59	19
Local	38	72	30	14	14	33	19	16
Private	40	7	66	19	72	41	23	65
Facility profile								
All facilities	100%	41%	8%	2%	16%	2%	11%	37%
Public	100	64	4	3	7	2	14	21
State	100	40	1	8	10	2	29	32
Local	100	78	6	1	6	2	5	16
Private	100	7	13	1	29	2	6	59

- Detention centers, reception/diagnostic centers, ranch/wilderness camps, and training schools were more likely to be public facilities than private facilities.
- Most shelters, group homes, and residential treatment centers were private facilities.
- Detention centers made up more than three quarters of all local facilities and nearly two-thirds of all public facilities.
- Detention centers and residential treatment centers accounted for the largest proportions of all state facilities (40% and 32%, respectively); training schools accounted for 29%.
- Residential treatment centers accounted for 59% of all private facilities, and group homes accounted for 29%.

Notes: Counts (and row percentages) may sum to more than the total number of facilities because facilities could select more than one facility type. Detail may not sum to total because of rounding.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census 2019* [data file].



Security features varied across types and size of facilities

Facilities varied in their degree of security

In 2018, 49% of facilities said that, at least some of the time, youth were locked in their sleeping rooms. Among public facilities, 81% of local facilities and 69% of state facilities reported locking youth in sleeping rooms. Few private facilities locked youth in sleeping rooms (8%).

Among facilities that locked youth in sleeping rooms, most did this at night (87%) or when a youth was out of control (80%). Locking doors whenever youth were in sleeping rooms (61%) and locking youth in their rooms during shift changes (55%) were also fairly common. Fewer facilities reported locking youth in sleeping rooms for a part of each day (21%) or when they were suicidal (22%).

Very few facilities reported that they locked youth in sleeping rooms most of each day (1%) or all of each day (less than 1%). Seven percent (7%) had no set schedule for locking youth in sleeping rooms.

Facilities indicated whether they had various types of locked doors or gates to confine youth within the facility. Of all facilities that reported confinement information, 64% said they had one or more confinement features (other than locked sleeping rooms), with a greater proportion of public facilities using these features than private facilities (87% vs. 30%).

Confinement profile of facilities, 2019:

Facility operation	No confinement features	One or more confinement features
Total	36%	64%
Public	13	87
State	13	87
Local	13	87
Private	70	30

Note: Percentages are based on facilities that reported security information (12 of 1,510 facilities [1%] did not report).

Among detention centers, training schools, and reception/diagnostic centers that reported confinement information, more than 9 in 10 said they had one or more features (other than locked sleeping rooms).

Facilities reporting one or more confinement features (other than locked sleeping rooms), 2019:

Facility type	Number	Percentage
Total	960	64%
Detention center	605	97
Shelter	33	28
Reception/ diagnostic center	35	95
Group home	42	18
Ranch/wilderness camp	10	37
Training school	158	96
Residential treatment center	268	50

Note: Detail sums to more than the total because facilities could select more than one facility type.

Among group homes, nearly 1 in 5 facilities said they had locked doors or gates to confine youth. The presence of facility staff also serves to confine youth. For some facilities, their remote location is a feature that also helps to keep youth from leaving.

Security features increased as facility size increased

Although the majority of facilities reported using more than one confinement feature in 2018, the proportion varied by facility size. For example, about half (53%) of small facilities (those holding between 1 and 20 residents) reported using multiple confinement features, compared with 78% of medium facilities (those holding between 21 and 50 residents), and 79% of large facilities (those holding between 101 and 200 residents).

Although the use of razor wire is a far less common confinement feature—overall, less than one-third (29%) of facilities reported using razor wire—46%

of large facilities said they had locked gates in fences or walls with razor wire.

Percent of facilities reporting confinement feature, 2019:

Facility size	Youth locked in sleeping rooms	One or more confinement features	Razor wire
Total	49%	64%	29%
Small	40	53	20
Medium	61	78	41
Large	66	79	46

Note: Percentages are based on facilities that reported security information (12 of 1,510 facilities [1%] did not report).

The Juvenile Residential Facility Census asks facilities about their confinement features

Are any young persons in this facility locked in their sleeping rooms by staff at any time to confine them?

Does the facility have any of the following features intended to confine young persons within specific areas?

- Doors for secure day rooms that are locked by staff to confine young persons within specific areas?
- Wing, floor, corridor, or other internal security doors that are locked by staff to confine young persons within specific areas?
- Outside doors that are locked by staff to confine young persons within specific buildings?
- External gates in fences or walls without razor wire that are locked by staff to confine young persons?
- External gates in fences or walls with razor wire that are locked by staff to contain young persons?



Facility crowding affected a relatively small proportion of youth in residential placement

Few youth were in facilities with more residents than standard beds

Facilities reported both the number of standard beds and the number of makeshift beds they had on the census date. Occupancy rates provide the broadest assessment of the adequacy of living space. Although occupancy rate standards have not been established, as a facility's occupancy passes 100%, operational functioning may be comprised.

Crowding occurs when the number of residents occupying all or part of a facility exceeds some predetermined limit based on square footage, utility use, or even fire codes. Although it is an im-

perfect measure of crowding, comparing the number of residents to the number of standard beds gives a sense of the crowding problem in a facility. Even without relying on makeshift beds, a facility may be crowded. For example, using standard beds in an infirmary for youth who are not sick or beds in seclusion for youth who have not committed infractions may indicate crowding problems.

In 2018, 1% of facilities reported being over capacity (having fewer standard beds than they had residents or relying on makeshift beds). These facilities held 1% of youth. In comparison, 8% of facilities in 2000 reported being over capacity and they held 20% of youth.

In 2018, only public facilities reported operating above capacity

No privately operated facilities exceeded standard bed capacity or had residents occupying makeshift beds on the 2018 census date. For publicly operated facilities, the proportion was 1%. In contrast, a larger proportion of private facilities (25%) compared with public facilities (12%) said they were operating at 100% capacity.

Percent of facilities under, at, or over their standard bed capacity, 2019:

Facility operation	<100%	100%	>100%
Total	82%	17%	1%
Public	87	12	1
State	81	17	2
Local	90	9	1
Private	75	25	0

In 2000, 257 facilities from 41 states were over capacity; by 2018, just 11 facilities in 9 states were over

State	Number of facilities		Percent of facilities over capacity		Percent of youth in over capacity facilities		State	Number of facilities		Percent of facilities over capacity		Percent of youth in over capacity facilities	
	2000	2018	2000	2018	2000	2018		2000	2018	2000	2018	2000	2018
U.S. total	3,047	1,510	8%	1%	20%	1%	Missouri	65	50	9%	2%	16%	2%
Alabama	46	38	7	0	11	0	Montana	18	13	6	0	8	0
Alaska	19	18	5	6	6	5	Nebraska	22	11	14	0	40	0
Arizona	51	17	12	0	16	0	Nevada	15	11	27	9	39	3
Arkansas	45	24	0	0	0	0	New Hampshire	8	3	0	*	0	*
California	285	104	9	0	21	0	New Jersey	57	24	14	0	24	0
Colorado	72	21	8	5	30	18	New Mexico	27	16	15	0	44	0
Connecticut	25	3	4	*	6	*	New York	210	75	5	0	22	0
Delaware	7	8	29	0	59	0	North Carolina	67	27	12	0	22	0
Dist. of Columbia	17	5	0	0	0	0	North Dakota	13	7	0	0	0	0
Florida	166	62	10	2	23	1	Ohio	106	67	15	1	15	5
Georgia	50	30	28	0	25	0	Oklahoma	52	25	0	0	0	0
Hawaii	7	3	14	*	66	*	Oregon	48	33	13	0	23	0
Idaho	22	17	14	0	25	0	Pennsylvania	163	94	5	0	5	0
Illinois	46	28	7	4	4	6	Rhode Island	11	9	9	0	58	0
Indiana	97	62	11	0	34	0	South Carolina	42	17	10	0	15	0
Iowa	76	33	0	0	0	0	South Dakota	22	14	0	7	0	28
Kansas	51	20	4	0	25	0	Tennessee	63	20	3	0	3	0
Kentucky	58	29	2	0	4	0	Texas	138	86	16	0	38	0
Louisiana	64	30	5	0	3	0	Utah	51	25	14	0	15	0
Maine	17	1	0	*	0	*	Vermont	5	2	0	*	0	*
Maryland	43	24	7	0	13	0	Virginia	74	38	22	0	32	0
Massachusetts	71	36	8	0	14	0	Washington	42	31	7	0	24	0
Michigan	107	46	7	0	5	0	West Virginia	27	46	22	7	31	11
Minnesota	121	39	4	0	17	0	Wisconsin	94	40	1	0	22	0
Mississippi	20	16	5	0	4	0	Wyoming	24	12	0	0	0	0

*To protect the identity of specific facilities, no detail is displayed if the total number of facilities is greater than 0 and less than 5.

Notes: A single bed is counted as one standard bed, and a bunk bed is counted as two standard beds. Makeshift beds (e.g., cots, roll-out beds, mattresses, and sofas) are not counted as standard beds. Facilities are counted as over capacity if they reported more residents than standard beds or if they reported any occupied makeshift beds. "State" is the state where the facility is located. Youth sent to out-of-state facilities are counted in the state where the facility is located, not the state where they committed their offense.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 2000 and 2018 [data files].

Most facilities evaluate youth for educational, substance abuse, and mental health service needs

The JRFC asked facilities about procedures regarding educational, substance abuse, and mental health screening

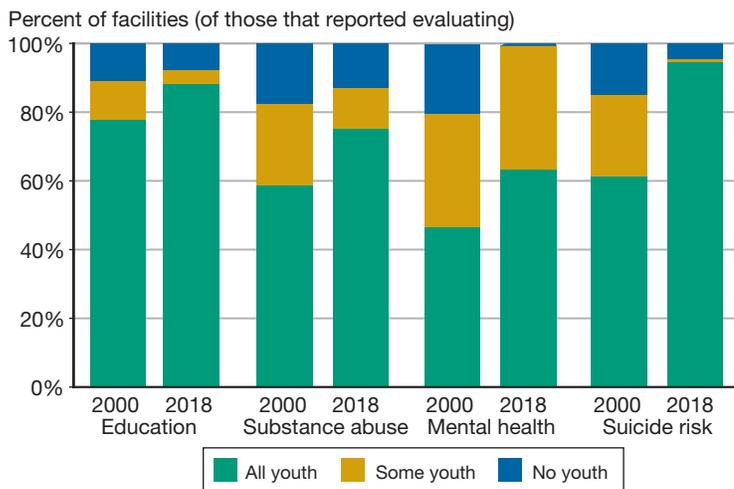
As part of the information collection on educational, substance abuse, and mental health services, the JRFC questionnaire asked facilities which youth are screened for services and when this screening takes place. Additionally, facilities are also asked to provide information about services they provide youth.

Most reporting facilities indicated they screened at least some youth for service needs. However, the proportion of facilities that screen all youth for education, substance abuse, and mental health service needs increased between 2000 and 2018.

Compared with other services, screening for substance abuse needs was least likely to occur among facilities in both 2000 and 2018. Despite this, 87% of reporting facilities indicated they screened all or some youth for substance abuse needs in 2018.

Most reporting facilities screened youth for service needs within one week of admission. In 2018, 99% of facilities screened youth within one week for suicide risk, 96% for education needs, 92% for substance abuse needs, and 77% for mental health needs. The proportion of facilities that screened youth for suicide risk within the first 24 hours increased from 69% in 2000 to 92% in 2018.

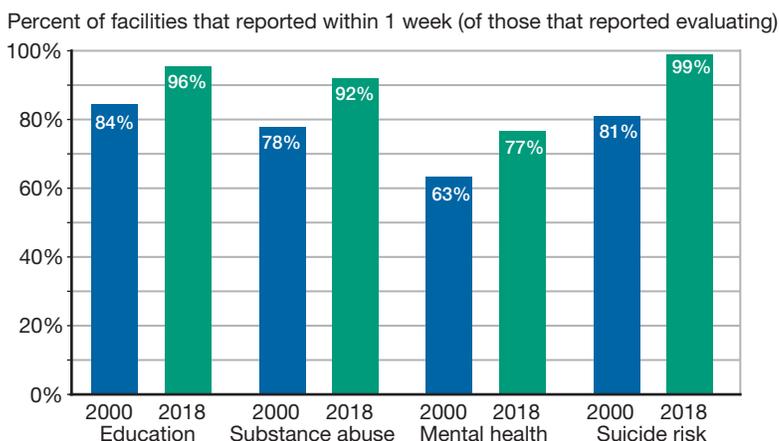
The proportion of facilities that screened all youth for service needs increased between 2000 and 2018



- Screening all youth for service needs varied by service need in 2018; 88% of reporting facilities screened all youth for educational needs, 75% screened all youth for substance abuse needs, 63% screened all youth for mental health needs, and 95% screened all youth for suicide risk.
- The practice of screening all youth increased the most for suicide risk screening between 2000 and 2018—up 33 percentage points from 61% in 2000.

Source: Authors' analysis of the OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 2000 and 2018 [data files].

The majority of facilities reported screening youth within one week of admission



- With the exception of mental health screening, more than 9 in 10 facilities screened youth for services within the first week of admission in 2018.
- Screening within the first week of admission increased across all service needs between 2000 and 2018.

Source: Authors' analysis of the OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 2000 and 2018 [data files].

Most youth were evaluated for educational needs and attended school while held in facilities

Facilities that screened all youth for educational needs held 89% of youth in placement

Since 2000, there has been an increase in the proportion of facilities that reported evaluating all youth for grade level and educational needs. For example, in 2018, 88% of reporting facilities said they screened all youth for educational needs, up from 78% in 2000. An additional 4% of facilities in 2018 evaluated some youth and only 8% did not evaluate any youth for educational needs.

Of the 73 facilities in 2018 that screened some but not all youth, 71% evaluated youth whom staff identified as needing an assessment, 34% evaluated youth with known educational problems, 50% evaluated youth for whom no educational record was available, and 11% evaluated youth who came directly from home rather than another facility. In addition, 28% reported evaluating youth based on some “other” reason.

In 2018, those facilities that screened all youth held 89% of youth charged with or adjudicated for an offense. An additional 3% of such youth in 2018 were in facilities that screened some youth.

Procedures for evaluating youth changed little between 2000 and 2018. In 2018, the vast majority of facilities (93%) that screened some or all youth for grade level and educational needs used previous academic records. Some facilities also administered written tests (60%), or conducted an education-related interview with an education specialist (60%), intake counselor (37%), or guidance counselor (27%).

Local facilities were more likely than state or privately operated facilities to report that all youth attended school

Facility characteristic	Total	Percent of facilities		
		All youth	Some youth	No youth
Facility operation				
State	100%	76%	21%	3%
Local	100	80	17	3
Private	100	73	18	9
Facility type				
Detention center	100	82	15	3
Shelter	100	77	22	2
Reception/diagnostic center	100	59	32	8
Group home	100	63	29	8
Ranch/wilderness camp	100	67	22	11
Training school	100	77	23	1
Residential treatment center	100	76	16	8
Facility size				
Small (20 or fewer residents)	100	75	19	6
Medium (21–100 residents)	100	79	16	4
Large (>100 residents)	100	66	28	6

- Reception/diagnostic centers were the least likely to report that all youth attended school (59%), while ranch/wilderness camps were the most likely to report that no youth attended school.
- Medium facilities with 21 to 100 residents were more likely to report that all youth attended school (79%), while large facilities with more than 100 residents were least likely (66%) to have all youth attend school.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census 2018* [data file].

Most facilities reported that youth in their facility attended school

Ninety-five percent (95%) of facilities reported that at least some youth in their facility attended school either inside or outside the facility. Facilities reporting that all youth attended school (76% of facilities) accounted for 76% of the youth population in residential placement. Reception/diagnostic centers were the least likely to report that all youth attended school (59%), while ranch/wilderness camps were the most likely to report that no youth attended school (11%).

Facilities offered a variety of educational services

Ninety-four percent (94%) of all facilities provided high school-level education, and 89% provided middle school-level education. Most facilities also reported offering special education services (83%) and GED preparation (71%). A much smaller percentage of facilities provided vocational or technical education (41%) and post-high school education (38%).

Substance abuse screening and drug testing were common procedures at juvenile residential facilities

Facilities that screened all youth held 76% of youth in placement

In 2018, 75% of facilities that reported information about substance abuse evaluation said that they evaluated all youth (up from 59% in 2000), 12% said that they evaluated some youth, and 13% did not evaluate any youth.

Of the 174 facilities that evaluated some but not all youth in 2018, 86% evaluated youth that the court or a probation officer identified as potentially having substance abuse problems, 66% evaluated youth that facility staff identified as potentially have a substance abuse problem, and 60% evaluated youth charged with or adjudicated for a drug- or alcohol-related offense. Those facilities that screened all youth held 76% of youth in placement, up from 64% in 2000. An additional 12% of youth were in facilities that screened some youth.

The most common form of substance abuse evaluation was staff-administered questions

Methods for evaluating youth for substance abuse needs changed very little since 2000. In 2018, the majority of facilities (78%) that evaluated some or all youth for substance abuse problems had staff administer a series of questions about substance use and abuse, 66% visually observed youth to evaluate them, 55% used a self-report checklist inventory that asks about substance use and abuse to evaluate youth, and 41% used a standardized self-report instrument, such as the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory.

Drug testing practices have changed somewhat since 2000

While drug testing was a routine practice in both 2000 and 2018, the proportion of facilities that reported that they required youth to provide a urine sample to test for drug use was slightly

Drug testing was a routine procedure in most facilities		
Circumstances of testing	Percent of facilities	
	2000	2018
All youth		
After initial arrival	18%	31%
At each reentry	15	26
Randomly	31	29
When drug use is suspected	51	51
At the request of the court or probation officer	51	68
Youth suspected of recent drug/alcohol use		
After initial arrival	28	37
At each reentry	21	24
Randomly	40	31
When drug use is suspected or drug is present	65	55
At the request of the court or probation officer	70	69
Youth with substance abuse problems		
After initial arrival	22	27
At each reentry	19	23
Randomly	42	31
When drug use is suspected or drug is present	59	50
At the request of the court or probation officer	67	66

■ In both 2000 and 2018, of facilities that reported testing all or some youth, the most common reason for testing was a request from the court or the probation officer.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 2000 and 2018 [data files].

lower in 2018 than in 2000 (72% and 69%, respectively). However it was more common for facilities to require a urine sample when youth entered and re-entered the facility in 2018 than in 2000. The practice of randomly screening youth for drug use decreased between the two years.

In 2018, substance abuse education was the most common service provided at facilities

Of the facilities holding more than 100 residents that reported providing substance abuse services, all of them provided substance abuse education and were more likely than smaller facilities to have special living units in which all young persons have substance abuse offenses and/or problems.

The majority of facilities that provided counseling or therapy were more likely to provide those services on an individual basis. In 2018, detention centers, shelters and group homes were most likely to provide individual counseling and all training schools provided individual therapy.

Ranch/wilderness camps were the most likely to provide group counseling and 95% of training schools reported providing group therapy. Across facility types, family counseling or therapy was the least likely substance abuse service provided; half of all facilities provided family therapy and less than half provided family counseling.

Most facilities evaluated all youth for mental health needs and provided therapy

Facilities that screened all youth for mental health needs held 64% of youth

Among facilities that responded to mental health evaluation questions in 2018, 70% reported they evaluated all youth for mental health needs using an in-house mental health professional; up from 58% in 2000. These facilities held 64% of youth charged with or adjudicated for an offense on the census date, up from 43% in 2000. Facilities that reported using an in-house mental professional to evaluate some youth (30%) held 25% of youth.

In 2018, a greater proportion of privately operated than publicly operated facilities said that in-house mental health professionals evaluated all youth (88% vs. 59% of facilities reporting mental health evaluation information). However, in a greater proportion of public facilities than private facilities (41% vs. 12%), in-house mental health professionals evaluated some youth.

Profile of in-house mental health evaluation by health professional, 2019:

Youth evaluated	Public	Private
Total reporting facilities	774	428
All reporting facilities	100%	100%
All youth screened	59	88
Some youth screened	41	12

Facilities also indicated whether treatment was provided onsite. Facilities that said they provided mental health treatment inside the facility were likely to have had all youth evaluated by an in-house mental health professional. Facilities that did not provide onsite mental health treatment were more likely to have had some youth evaluated by an in-house health professional.

Profile of onsite mental health treatment availability, 2019:

Youth evaluated	Yes	No
Total reporting facilities	1,077	125
All reporting facilities	100%	100%
All youth screened	74	30
Some youth screened	26	70

Individual therapy was the most common therapy provided at all reporting facilities

Facility type	Total facilities	Facilities reporting therapy	Percent of facilities		
			Individual	Group	Family
Total	1,510	1,120	98%	75%	66%
Detention center	625	468	97	57	43
Shelter	116	72	100	79	72
Reception/diagnostic center	37	30	100	90	90
Group home	240	114	97	81	75
Ranch/wilderness camp	27	18	100	72	67
Training school	164	159	96	89	72
Residential treatment center	553	466	100	89	89

- Facilities were more likely to provide individual therapy than group or family therapy in 2018.
- Of all reporting facilities, 100% of shelters, reception/diagnostic centers, ranch/wilderness camps, and residential treatment centers provided individual therapy.
- Reception diagnostic centers and residential treatment centers were more likely than other facilities to provide group and family therapy.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census 2018* [data file].

Individual therapy was a common practice regardless of facility size

Facility size	Total facilities	Facilities reporting therapy	Percent of facilities		
			Individual	Group	Family
Total	1,510	1,122	98%	75%	66%
Small (20 or fewer residents)	857	561	98	70	64
Medium (21–100 residents)	585	500	98	78	67
Large (>100 residents)	68	61	98	92	79

- Large facilities (those holding more than 100 residents) were more likely than smaller facilities to provide group and family therapy in 2018.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census 2018* [data file].

Most youth were held in facilities that evaluate all youth for suicide risk on their first day

Facilities that screened all youth for suicide risk held 94% of the youth in custody

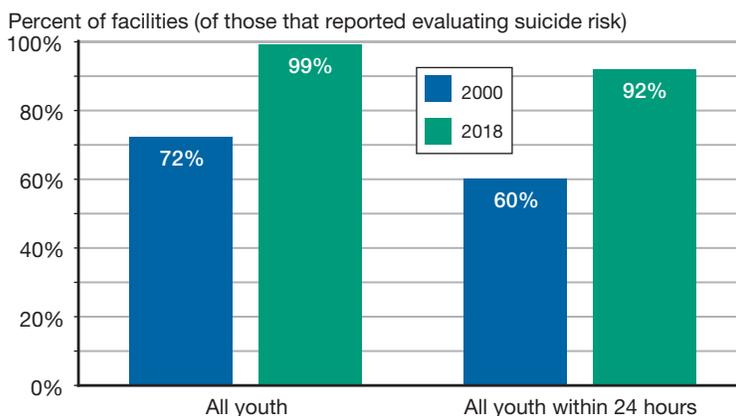
In 2018, 95% of facilities that reported information on suicide screening said that they evaluated all youth for suicide risk, up from 61% in 2000. An additional 1% said that they evaluated some youth. Some facilities (4%) said that they did not evaluate any youth for suicide risk. In 2018, the overwhelming majority of youth (94%) were in facilities that screened all youth for suicide risk.

Some facilities used trained counselors or professional mental health staff to conduct suicide screening

More than half (55%) of facilities that screened some or all youth for suicide risk reported that mental health professionals with at least a master's degree in psychology or social work conducted the screenings. More than one-third (37%) used neither mental health professionals nor counselors whom a mental health professional had trained to conduct suicide screenings.

Facilities reported on the screening methods used to determine suicide risk. Facilities could choose more than one method. Of facilities that conducted suicide risk screening, a majority (77%) reported that they incorporated one or more questions about suicide in the medical history or intake process to screen youth, 39% used a form their facility designed, and 25% used a form or questions that a county or state juvenile justice system designed to assess suicide risk. Half of facilities (51%) reported using the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI)—41% reported using the MAYSI full form, and 9% used the MAYSI suicide/depression module. Very few facilities (less than 1%) used the Voice Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children.

Compared with 2000, facilities in 2018 were more likely to report screening all youth for suicide risk on the youth's first day at the facility



- Nearly all facilities (99%) that reported screening for suicide risk in 2018 said they screened all youth, up from 72% in 2000.
- In 2018, a large portion (92%) said they screened all youth on their first day at the facility, up from 60% in 2000. These facilities accounted for 93% of youth charged with or adjudicated for an offense held in facilities that conducted suicide screenings in 2018, up from 74% in 2000.
- An additional 6% of facilities in 2018 said they screened all youth by the end of the first week of the youth's stay at the facility.

Source: Authors' analysis of the OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 2000 and 2018 [data files].

Of facilities that reported screening youth for suicide risk, 90% reassessed youth at some point during their stay. Most facilities (88%) reported rescreening on a case-by-case basis or as necessary. An additional 40% of facilities also reported that rescreening occurred systematically and was based on a variety of factors (e.g., length of stay, facility events, or negative life events). Less than 1% of facilities did not reassess youth to determine suicide risk.

All facilities used some type of preventive measure once they determined a youth was at risk for suicide

Facilities that reported suicide screening information were asked a series of questions related to preventive mea-

asures taken for youth determined to be at risk for suicide. Of these facilities 63% reported placing at-risk youth in sleeping or observation rooms that are locked or under staff security. Aside from using sleeping or observation rooms, 85% of facilities reported using line-of-sight supervision, 88% reported removing personal items that could be used to attempt suicide, and 75% reported using one-on-one or arm's length supervision. Half of facilities (50%) reported using special clothing to prevent suicide attempts, and 29% reported removing the youth from the general population. Twenty percent (20%) of facilities used special clothing to identify youth at risk for suicide, and 19% of facilities used restraints to prevent suicide attempts.



Facility reported eight deaths of youth in placement over 12 months—six were suicides

Youth in residential placement rarely died in custody

Juvenile residential facilities reported that eight youth died while in the legal custody of the facility between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018.

Routine collection of national data on deaths of youth in residential placement began with the 1988-1989 Children in Custody (CIC) Census of Public and Private Juvenile Detention, Correctional and Shelter Facilities. Accidents or suicides have usually been the leading cause of death. Over the years 1988-1994 (CIC data reporting years), an average of 46 deaths were reported nationally per year, including an annual average of 18 suicides. Over the years 2000-2018 (JRFC data reporting years), those averages dropped to 16 deaths overall and 6 suicides.

Residential treatment centers reported three of the eight deaths in 2018—one accidental death, one suicide, and one resulting from an illness/natural cause. Detention centers and training schools accounted for two deaths each as the result of suicides. Shelters accounted for one of the eight deaths—a suicide.

There is no pattern in the timing of deaths in 2018

In 2018, the timing of death varied between 6 and 204 days after admission. Two suicides occurred about 1 week (6 days and 8 days) after admission; another occurred within 23 days. The remaining suicides occurred 4, 6, and 7 months after admission. One death as a result of an illness occurred 1 month after admission. The remaining death, an accident, occurred approximately 4 months (122 days) after admission.

During the 12 months prior to the 2018 census, suicides were the most commonly reported cause of death in residential placement

Cause of death	Total deaths	Deaths inside the facility			Deaths outside the facility		
		All	Public	Private	All	Public	Private
Total	8	5	2	3	3	2	1
Suicide	6	4	2	2	2	2	0
Illness/natural	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Accident	1	0	0	0	1	0	1

■ In 2018, an equal number of deaths occurred at private facilities and public facilities—four each.

Notes: Deaths are reported deaths of youth in custody from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018. None of the deaths from illness were AIDS related.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census 2018* [data file].

In 2018, the death rate was higher for private facilities than for public facilities

Characteristic	Deaths per 100,000 youth held on the census date, October 24, 2018		
	Total	Public facility	Private facility
Cause of death			
Total	2.1	1.5	4.0
Suicide	1.6	1.5	2.0
Illness/natural	0.3	0.0	1.0
Accident	0.3	0.0	1.0
Type of facility			
Detention center	1.1	1.2	0.0
Shelter	9.7	0.0	15.8
Training school	2.0	2.4	0.0
Residential training center	2.1	0.0	3.9

■ The death rate in 2018 (2.1) was lower than that in 2000 (2.8). Of the 30 reported deaths of youth in residential placement in 2000, accidents were the most commonly reported cause. In 2018, suicides were most common.

Notes: Deaths are reported deaths of youth in custody from October 1, 2017, through September 30, 2018. None of the deaths from illness were AIDS related. One death was reported in a privately operated shelter, but the relatively small size of the population of youth held in such facilities in 2018 (approximately 630 youth) results in a high death rate.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census 2018* [data file].

Youth in residential placement are at less risk of death than youth in general

There is concern about the risk of death to youth in residential placement and whether that risk is greater than the risk faced by youth in the general population. Death rates for the general population (detailed by age, sex, race, ethnicity, and cause of death) can be applied to the population of youth in residential placement facilities to calculate the number of deaths that would be expected if the residential placement population had the same rate of death as the general youth population.

The number of deaths reported at juvenile residential facilities has decreased from 30 in 2000 to 8 in 2018. Historically, the actual number of deaths reported to JRFC were lower than the expected number of deaths, however this varied by cause of death.

For all years between 2000 and 2018, the number of homicides and unintentional deaths reported at facilities was lower than the number of expected deaths. For suicides however, the number of actual deaths reported at facilities outnumbered the number of expected deaths in several years, most

notably in 2004 where the actual number of suicides was nearly three times the expected number of suicides. As the occurrence of suicide in facilities has decreased since the early 2000s, the gap between the number of actual and expected deaths has narrowed.

For each year between 2000 and 2018, youth at residential facilities were less likely to die as a result of a homicide than from an unintended/accidental death or suicide. For most years during the same period, unintended/accidental deaths were the leading cause of death among youth in facilities.

Overall, the number of expected deaths exceeded the actual number of deaths reported by juvenile residential placement facilities each year since 2000

Year	All deaths		Suicide		Homicide		Accident	
	Expected	Actual	Expected	Actual	Expected	Actual	Expected	Actual
2000	56	30	8	7	19	4	29	19
2002	50	26	6	10	16	2	28	14
2004	45	27	6	16	14	2	24	9
2006	46	15	5	4	18	0	22	11
2008	37	14	5	6	14	1	16	7
2010	29	11	4	5	11	0	12	6
2012	22	14	4	5	9	2	9	7
2014	19	8	3	5	7	1	8	2
2016	20	6	3	1	8	0	8	5
2018	15	8	3	6	6	0	6	2

■ Deaths by suicide were a notable exception to the overall pattern. The actual number of suicide deaths reported by facilities exceeded the expected number in all but 3 years (2000, 2006, and 2016).

Notes: Deaths are reported deaths of youth in custody from October 1 of the year before the census through September 30 of the year of the JRFC reference date.

Source: Authors' analysis of OJJDP's *Juvenile Residential Facility Census* for 2000 through 2018 [data files].



The Juvenile Residential Facility Census includes data submitted by tribal facilities

Tribal facilities responding to the JRFC tend to be small detention centers owned and operated by tribes

OJJDP works with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to ensure a greater representation of tribal facilities in the CJRP and JRFC data collections. As a result, the 2018 JRFC collected data from 16 tribal facilities. The tribal facilities were in Arizona, Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and South Dakota and held 116 youth charged with or adjudicated for an offense (up from 113 in 2016, when 14 facilities reported).

Tribal facilities were asked what agency owned and/or operated their facilities. The tribes owned and operated 11 of the 16 facilities. The remaining five facilities were either owned by the tribe and operated by the federal government or owned by the federal government and operated by the tribe.

Compared with the nation's reporting about juvenile residential facilities, tribal facilities are small, most holding 20 or fewer residents. The majority (79%) of youth charged with or adjudicated for an offense were held at facilities that held between 1 and 20 residents. Each tribal facility identified itself as a detention center, and one also identified itself as a training school.

Most tribal facilities were operating under capacity

On the census day, almost all facilities (14) were operating at less than their standard bed capacity, and the remaining 2 facilities were operating at capacity. Standard bed capacities ranged from 6 to 196; only 2 facilities had more than 100 standard beds. This pattern was similar for all census years prior to 2018.

The use of mechanical restraints or locking youth in isolation rooms is uncommon in tribal facilities

In all census years, most, if not all, reporting tribal facilities said they lock youth in their rooms. Fifteen of the 16 tribal facilities reported locking youth in their sleeping rooms in 2018.

Among tribal facilities that locked youth in their rooms, 14 did so when the youth were out of control. Thirteen facilities locked youth in their rooms at night, 10 facilities locked youth in rooms during shift changes, and 8 locked youth in their rooms whenever the youth were in their rooms. Eight facilities locked youth in their rooms when youth were suicidal, and three facilities locked youth in their rooms for part of each day. One facility stated there was no set schedule for locking youth in rooms.

In each JRFC collection, only a few tribal facilities reported using either mechanical restraints or isolation. In 2018, mechanical restraints was reported by 5 of 16 tribal facilities, and 4 facilities reported locking youth alone for more than 4 hours to regain control of unruly behavior.

Tribal facilities provide a range of services

Fifteen of the 16 tribal facilities said that mental health evaluations (other than suicide risk assessments) were provided to youth in their facilities. Two tribal facilities reported evaluating all youth and 13 facilities evaluated some youth. Five facilities said that evaluations were conducted only at an outside location. Thirteen facilities reported providing ongoing therapy either onsite or at another location.

Of the 16 tribal facilities, all reported assessing youth for suicide risk. Each

facility reported screening all youth within the first 24 hours of their arrival to the facility. Most (14) facilities said they reassessed youth for suicide risk at some point during the youth's stay at the facility; 9 reassessed youth as necessary on a case-by-case basis, and 8 reassessed systematically based on the youth's length of stay or after certain facility events or negative life events (such as after each court appearance, every time the young person re-enters the facility, or after a death in the family).

Most (13) of the 16 facilities screening for suicide risk used untrained staff for those screenings, but trained screeners were also used; 9 facilities said mental health professionals conducted suicide screenings, and 3 said screenings were done by staff that were trained by a mental health professional. All 16 facilities said they took preventative measures to reduce suicide risk.

Most (10) tribal facilities said they evaluated youth for substance abuse; 5 of those 10 said they evaluated all youth. Five facilities said they require youth to provide urine samples for drug analysis. Eight of the facilities that evaluated for substance abuse provided substance abuse services either inside or outside the facility.

Of 13 facilities reporting education information, 11 said that all youth were evaluated for educational needs and 2 facilities reported that some youth were evaluated. Twelve facilities conducted evaluations within one week of the youth's arrival at the facility. All 13 reporting tribal facilities reported that youth attended school either inside or outside the facility; in 11 facilities, all youth attended school.

In 2018, 1 in 14 adjudicated youth in state-owned or state-operated facilities reported sexual victimization

BJS surveys provide estimates of sexual victimization in state juvenile facilities and in private or local facilities under state contract

The Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (PREA) requires the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) to report the incidence and prevalence of sexual violence in adult and juvenile correctional facilities. In response, BJS developed the National Survey of Youth in Custody (NSYC). To date, three waves of the NSYC have been administered: 2008–2009 (NSYC-1), 2012 (NSYC-2), and 2018 (NSYC-3).

The NSYC is based on interviews of adjudicated youth in state-owned or state-operated juvenile facilities and locally or privately operated facilities that hold adjudicated youth under state contract. The surveys included only facilities that hold adjudicated youth for at least 90 days, with more than 25% of residents adjudicated, and with at least 10 adjudicated youth. Youth interviews are conducted via audio computer-assisted self-interview methodology. The reference period for the NSYC is the past 12 months, or since the date of admission for youth who had been in the facility less than 12 months.

The 2018 NSYC administered the sexual victimization survey to a national sample of 6,049 youth in 327 eligible facilities, representing 12,750 adjudicated youth held nationwide. Comparatively, the 2012 NSYC sexual victimization survey was administered to 8,707 youth in 326 eligible facilities, representing 18,140 adjudicated youth nationwide.*

* The 30% drop in the NSYC estimated adjudicated youth population in state facilities between 2012 and 2018 is consistent with the 36% drop in the committed population seen between 2011 and 2017 in OJJDP's Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement data collection.

Sexual victimization declined significantly between 2012 and 2018

The overall rate of sexual victimization reported by adjudicated youth in juvenile facilities decreased from 9.5% in 2012 to 7.1% in 2018, as did the rate of youth-on-youth victimization (from 2.5% to 1.9%) and staff sexual misconduct (from 7.7% to 5.8%). Between the 2012 and 2018 NSYC collections, the estimated number of youth reporting sexual victimization fell 48%, from 1,720 to 900 victims.

In both 2012 and 2018, more than 80% of sexually victimized youth reported events that NSYC defines as staff sexual misconduct (5.8% of 7.1% in 2018 and 7.7% of 9.5% in 2012). More than 60% of these youth victims of staff sexual misconduct described events that did not involve any reported force or coercion. It is worth noting that, among youth victims of staff sexual misconduct, the proportion of victims reporting force or coercion fell from 45% in 2012 to 36% in 2018. The majority of sexually victimized youth described explicit sexual acts involving the genitalia or anus in both 2012 and 2018.

Among youth reporting youth-on-youth victimization, 33% of youth victims indicated they were threatened with physical harm, 22% reported being held down or restrained, and 22% indicated they were threatened with a weapon. Comparatively, among youth reporting staff sexual misconduct involving pressure or coercion, 13% reported being threatened with physical harm, 10% reported being held down or restrained, and 13% reported being threatened with a weapon. Nearly one-fourth (24%) of youth-on-youth victims indicated the event took place in their rooms, while 36% reported that the incident took place in other common areas on facility grounds, such as the yard/recreation area, classroom, library, or workshop.

How BJS measures sexual victimization in NSYC

As defined in the NSYC, sexual victimization involves any forced or coerced sexual activity with another youth and any sexual activity with facility staff, regardless of whether the act was completed. NSYC further classifies sexual victimization into two categories of youth-on-youth sexual acts and four categories involving sexual acts between staff and youth, distinguishing these categories by use of force and by the nature of the sexual acts involved.

Force. NSYC defines force broadly, including physical force, threat of force, other force or pressure, and other forms of coercion, such as receiving money, favors, protection, or special treatment.

Explicit sexual acts involving genitalia or anus. Includes all contact involving the penis, vagina, or anus, regardless of penetration.

Other sexual contacts only. Includes kissing, touching (excluding any touching involving the penis, vagina, or anus), looking at private parts, displaying sexual material, such as pictures or a movie, and engaging in some other sexual contact that did not include touching.

Youth-on-youth sexual victimization. All youth-on-youth sexual victimization must involve some form of force. NSYC defines two categories: explicit sexual acts and other sexual contacts only.

Staff sexual misconduct. Staff-and-youth sexual activity is divided into acts that involved force and acts without force. Each of these categories is further divided into the nature of the sexual activity involved: explicit sexual acts and other sexual contacts only.

For youth victims of staff sexual misconduct, nearly one-third (32%) reported the incident took place in their room, and 21.5% reported the incident took place in other common areas on facility grounds.

Sexual victimization rates differed by youth characteristics and experiences

While the overall sexual victimization rates in 2018 were similar for males and females (7.1% and 6.6%, respectively), males were much less likely to report youth-on-youth victimization than males (1.6% vs. 4.7%). In contrast, males were more likely to report staff sexual misconduct than their female counterparts (6.1% vs. 2.9%). For

both male and female victims, the majority of staff sexual misconduct reported by youth involved sexual acts, that is, sexual activity that involved touching or penetrating of sexual body parts.

Although the overall sexual victimization rate was greatest for 16-year-olds, differences between age groups were not significant. This pattern was replicated among victims of staff sexual misconduct and youth-on-youth victimization—the lone exception being that 17-year-olds were more likely than youth age 18 or older to report youth-on-youth victimization.

Overall, White youth were more likely to report youth-on-youth and staff sexual misconduct than Hispanic youth,

Changes to the sample between NSYC-2 and NSYC-3

The total number of state-owned and -operated juvenile residential facilities and the number of youth being held in them declined between administration of the 2012 NSYC-2 and the 2018 NSYC-3, while the number of locally or privately owned contract facilities increased. As a result of this change, the 2018 NSYC-3 sample included a larger number of locally or privately operated contract facilities than the 2012 NSYC-2.

To assess the impact of the differences between the 2012 and 2018 samples, BJS analyzed data from states with contract facilities that were sampled in both data collections. Their analysis showed that the overall rate of sexual victimization reported by youth had declined from an estimated 9.5% in 2012 to 7.2% in 2018. Comparatively, the estimated rate of sexual victimization using the full 2018 sample (i.e., not limited to the same contract facilities included in 2012) was 7.1%, suggesting that the sample design had little impact on the overall estimate of sexual victimization of youth in juvenile confinement facilities. Similarly small differences were found between 2012 and 2018 estimates for youth-on-youth and staff sexual misconduct. As such, 2018 estimates are based on state-owned and -operated juvenile residential facilities, and the full complement of contract facilities included in the 2018 sample.

Between 2012 and 2018, the proportion of youth reporting sexual victimization declined

Type of incident	Percent of youth reporting sexual victimization*	
	2018	2012
Total sexual victimization	7.1%**	9.5%
Youth-on-youth sexual victimization	1.9**	2.5
Forced or coerced sexual acts	1.2	1.7
Other forced or coerced sexual activity	0.5	0.6
Unknown type of forced or coerced sexual activity	0.2	0.3
Staff sexual misconduct	5.8**	7.7
Forced or coerced reported	2.1**	3.5
Sexual acts	1.8**	3.1
Other sexual activity	0.2	0.2
Unknown type of sexual activity	0.1	0.2
No report of force or coercion	3.9	4.7
Sexual acts	3.6	4.3
Other sexual activity	0.3	0.4
Estimated number of adjudicated youth	12,750	18,140
Estimated number reporting sexual victimization	900	1,720

* Reporting period is in the past 12 months, or since admission to the facility if the youth had been in the facility less than 12 months.

** Difference with the 2012 group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Note: Details do not sum to the total because of rounding and because a small proportion of youth in both years reported more than one type of victimization.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Smith and Stoop's *Sexual Victimization Reported by Youth in Juvenile Facilities, 2018*.

and more likely than Black youth to report youth-on-youth victimization. In fact, rates for White youth were about twice the rates of Hispanic and Black youth for both types of sexual victimization.

Youth-on-youth victimization varied according to sexual orientation and gender identity

Overall, youth who described their sexual orientation as non-heterosexual were nearly twice as likely to report sexual victimization as youth who described themselves as heterosexual (12.0% vs. 6.5%); for youth-on-youth victimization, rate differences were more substantial (8.4% vs. 1.1%). Similarly, youth who described their gender identity as different from their gender recorded at birth were nearly 3 times more likely (19.1% vs. 6.8%) to report any sexual victimization and nearly 9 times more likely (14.3% vs. 1.6%) to report youth-on-youth victimization than their peers who identify as the same gender as recorded at birth.

The NSYC also found that youth who reported sexual victimization in the past were more likely to be victims in their current facility. For example among youth who had experienced prior sexual victimization in another facility, more than half (51.0%) reported sexual victimization in 2018, and among youth who had experienced no prior victimization, 5.9% reported sexual victimization in 2018. Sexual victimization was also related to a youth's time in the facility, with longer exposure times associated with higher victimization rates. This pattern was true both for youth-on-youth victimizations (3.1% for youth in the facility a year or more vs. 1.2% for youth in the facility less than 6 months) and for incidents of staff sexual misconduct (9.3% for youth in the facility a year or more vs. 4.1% for youth in the facility less than 6 months).

Sexual victimization rates were related to youth characteristics, particularly gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity

Victim demographic	Percent of youth reporting		
	Any sexual victimization	Youth-on-youth victimization	Staff sexual misconduct
Gender			
Male*	7.1%	1.6%	6.1%
Female	6.6	4.7**	2.9**
Age			
14 or younger	4.4	2.3	3.2
15	5.9	1.6	4.8
16	8.2	2.4	6.8
17	7.3	2.4**	5.7
18 or older*	7.1	1.3	6.1
Race/ethnicity			
White, non-Hispanic*	8.5	3.1	6.3
Black, non-Hispanic	7.3	1.2**	6.7
Hispanic	4.1**	1.0**	3.2**
Other, non-Hispanic	4.7	1.9	3.8
Two or more, non-Hispanic	6.8	2.4	4.0
Sexual orientation			
Heterosexual*	6.5	1.1	5.9
Lesbian/gay/bisexual/something else	12.0**	8.4**	5.5
Not sure	6.2	5.0**	4.7
Gender identity			
Same as gender recorded at birth*	6.8	1.6	5.7
Different from gender recorded at birth	19.1**	14.3**	8.1
Not sure	26.8**	19.3**	10.8
Time in current facility			
Less than 6 months	4.9**	1.2**	4.1**
6–11 months	8.3	2.4	6.6
12 months or more*	11.3	3.1	9.3
Sexual victimization in lifetime prior to entering current facility			
Prior sexual victimization in another facility	51.0**	33.2**	30.3**
Prior sexual victimization but not in another facility	8.7**	3.6**	5.5
No prior sexual victimization*	5.9	1.0	5.3

* Comparison groups.

** Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

Notes: Youth-on-youth victimization and staff sexual misconduct may not sum to any sexual victimization because some youth reported both types of victimization.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Field and Davis' *Sexual Victimization Reported by Youth in Juvenile Facilities, 2018 Statistical Tables*.

In 2019, the number of youth younger than 18 held in adult jails reached its lowest level since the early 1990s

Youth younger than 18 accounted for about 1% of all jail inmates

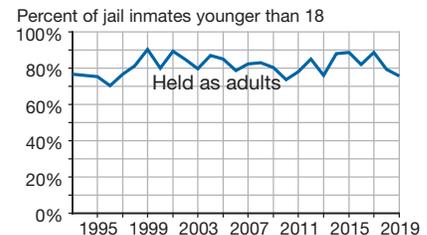
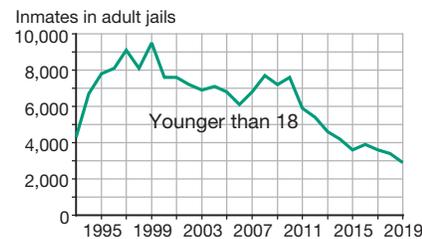
According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, an estimated 2,300 youth younger than 18 were held in adult jails on June 30, 1990. The 1-day count of jail inmates younger than 18 rose to a peak of 9,500 in 1999, declined through 2006, then rose again through 2010. Since 2010, the count fell 62%, reaching a level in 2019 (2,900) that was 69% below the 1999 peak. These youth accounted for about 0.5% of the total jail population in 2019, down from 1% in 2010. Since 1990, inmates younger than 18 have not exceeded 2% of the jail inmate population.

The vast majority of jail inmates younger than 18 continues to be those held as adults. Youth younger than 18 may be held as adults if they are convicted or awaiting trial in criminal court, either because they were transferred to criminal court or because

they are in a state that considers all 17-year-olds (or all 16- and 17-year-

olds) as adults for purposes of criminal prosecution.

On a typical day in 2019, about 2,900 persons younger than 18 were inmates in jails in the U.S.



- Following a 62% decline since 2010, the number of jail inmates younger than 18 in 2019 was at its lowest level since the early 1990s.
- Between 1993 and 2019, the proportion of jail inmates younger than 18 who were held as adults ranged between 70% and 91%; in 2019, 76% of inmates younger than 18 were held as adults.

Source: Authors' analyses of Gillard's *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1998*; Beck's *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 1999*; Beck, Karberg, and Harrison's *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2001*; Harrison and Karberg's *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2003*; Harrison and Beck's *Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2004*; Minton's *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2010* — *Statistical Tables*; Minton and Zeng's *Jail Inmates in 2015*; and Zeng and Minton's *Jail Inmates in 2019*.

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,” as well as youth charged with status offenses and those not accused of any offense “will not be detained or confined in any institution in which they have contact with adult inmates” This provision of the Act is commonly referred to as the “sight and sound separation requirement.” Subsequent regulations implementing the Act clarify this requirement and provide that brief and inadvertent contact in nonresidential areas is not a violation. 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 exempt youth who have been convicted in criminal court from the jail and lockup removal requirement. Revisions passed in 2018 require that, as of December

21, 2021, unless a court holds a hearing and finds that it is “in the interest of justice,” youth awaiting trial having been charged as adults for the purpose of prosecution in criminal court shall not have sight or sound contact with adult inmates and may not be held in an adult jail or lockup. The definition of “adult” in the new statute is tied to each state’s age of criminal responsibility and extended age of jurisdiction. There is an exception if a court holds a hearing and finds that holding the youth in an adult facility is “in the interest of justice.” If the court allows the youth held in jail, a review hearing must be held every 30 days with a 180-day maximum.

In institutions other than adult jails or lockups or in jails and lockups under temporary hold exceptions, confinement of youth charged with delinquency offenses is permitted if youth and

adult inmates cannot see each other and no conversation between them is possible. This reflects the sight and sound separation requirement.

Some temporary hold exceptions to jail and lockup removal include: a 6-hour grace period that allows adult jails and lockups to hold youth charged with delinquency offenses in secure custody until other arrangements can be made (including 6 hours before and after court appearances) and a 48-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 jails or lockups. A collocated juvenile facility must meet specific criteria to establish that it is a separate and distinct facility. The regulations allow time-phased use of program areas in collocated facilities.

Between 2000 and 2019, the number of youth younger than 18 in state prison decreased more than 80%

The number of youth under age 18 in state prisons reached a new low in 2019

Based on data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) program, 626 youth younger than age 18 were held in state prisons on December 31, 2019. The number of youth in state prisons in 2019 was well below (84%) the level in 2000, when nearly 4,000 youth were in state prison on the last day of the year. The number of youth in state prisons in 2019 accounted for 0.05% of the state prison population in that year—or 1 of every 2,000 persons in a state prison.

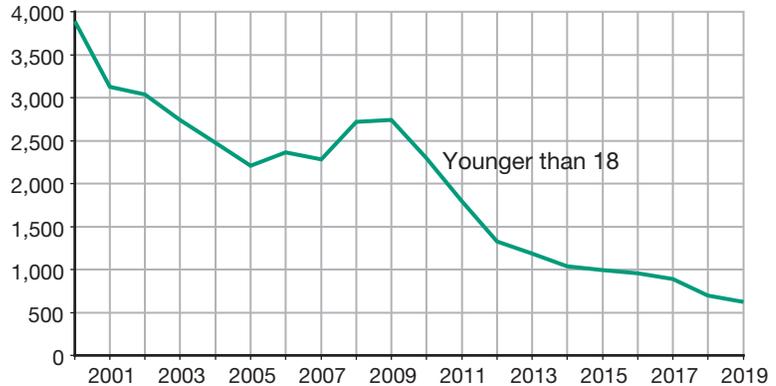
While the number of youth younger than 18 in adult prisons decreased by an average of 11% each year from 2000 to 2005, the total prison population remained relatively constant, increasing an average of 1% each year. After a period of increase through 2009, the number of youth in adult prisons decreased an average of 13% per year from 2009 to 2019.

Prisons differ from jails

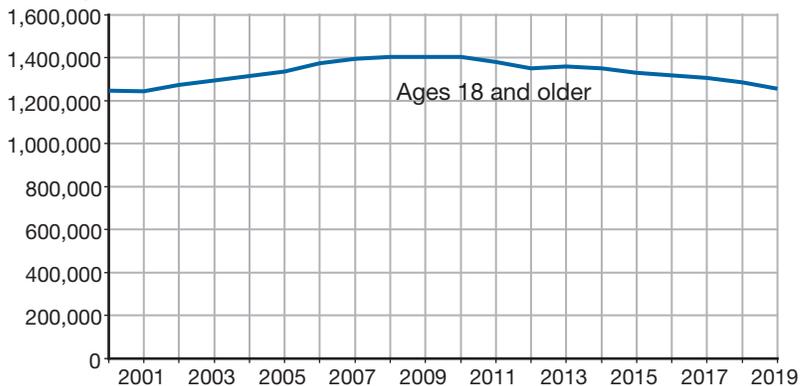
Jails are generally local correctional facilities used to incarcerate both persons detained pending adjudication and adjudicated/convicted offenders. Convicted inmates are usually misdemeanants sentenced to a year or less. Under certain circumstances, jails may hold juveniles awaiting juvenile court hearings. Prisons are state or federal facilities used to incarcerate offenders convicted in criminal court; these convicted inmates are usually felons sentenced to more than a year.

The 1-day count of youth younger than 18 in state prisons at yearend 2019 was 84% below the level in 2000, while the count for adults ages 18 or older in 2019 was about the same as in 2000

One-day count of persons held in state prisons



One-day count of persons held in state prisons



- The number of youth in state prisons decreased 43% between 2000 and 2005, then increased 24% through 2009. Since 2009, however, the number of youth in state prison decreased considerably, falling 77% through 2019
- The number of adults ages 18 and older in state prisons increased 13% between 2000 and 2009, the fell 11% through 2019. The net result was that number of adults in state prisons at the end of 2019 was 1% above the number in 2000.

Source: Authors' analysis of the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool* [online data analysis tool].

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Online resources

OJJDP's Online Statistical Briefing Book

ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb

The fastest path to the latest statistical information on:

Offending by youth

Victimization of youth

Youth in the juvenile justice system



The Statistical Briefing Book makes it easy for policymakers, juvenile justice practitioners, the media, and the general public to access information on topics that mirror the major sections of *Youth and the Justice System: 2022 National Report*.

- Find timely, reliable answers to frequently asked questions.
- With “Easy Access” tools and downloadable spreadsheets, create your own national, state, and county tables on juvenile populations, arrests, court cases, and custody populations.
- Link to more than 25 web-based resources.
- Search OJJDP's online library of hundreds of statistical publications.

Make the Statistical Briefing Book your first stop for statistical information on juvenile justice.

National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges



ncjfcj.org

The NCJFCJ is one of the largest and oldest judicial membership organizations in the nation, serving an estimated 30,000 juvenile and family justice system professionals, including judges, referees, commissioners, court masters and administrators, social and mental health workers, police, and probation officers.

For those involved with juvenile, family, and domestic violence cases, the NCJFCJ provides the resources, knowledge, and training to improve the lives of families and children seeking justice. NCJFCJ resources include:

- Cutting-edge training
- Wide-ranging technical assistance
- Research to assist family courts
- Advanced degree programs for judges and other court professionals, offered in conjunction with the University of Nevada, Reno, and the National Judicial College.



National Center for Juvenile Justice
ncjj.org

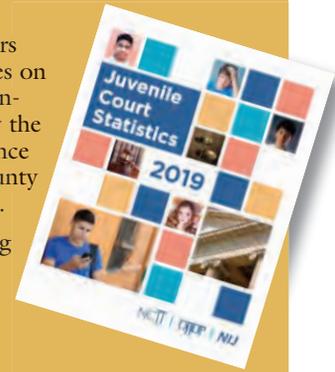
NCJJ's website describes its research activities, services, and publications, featuring links to project-supported sites and data resources, including OJJDP's Statistical Briefing Book, the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, and the Juvenile Justice Geography, Policy, Practice & Statistics website.

National Juvenile Court Data Archive

ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/njcda

The National Juvenile Court Data Archive (Archive) houses the automated records of cases handled by courts with juvenile jurisdiction and provides juvenile justice professionals, policymakers, researchers, and the public with the most detailed information available on the activities of the nation's juvenile courts.

- The Archive website informs researchers about the available data sets and the procedures for use and access, and provides variable lists and user guides for the data sets.
- Easy Access tools give users access to national estimates on more than 48 million delinquency cases processed by the nation's juvenile courts since 1985 and to state and county juvenile court case counts.
- Links to publications using Archive data, including the annual *Juvenile Court Statistics* reports.



JUVENILE JUSTICE
GEOGRAPHY, POLICY, PRACTICE & STATISTICS

JJGPS.ORG

Juvenile Justice GPS (Geography, Policy, Practice, & Statistics) is an online repository providing state policymakers and system stakeholders with a clear understanding of the juvenile justice landscape in the states.

The site layers the most relevant national and state level statistics with information on state laws and practice and charts juvenile justice system change. In a landscape that is highly decentralized and ever-shifting, JJGPS provides an invaluable resource for those wanting to improve the juvenile justice system. The content of the website is assembled from one of four sources:

- Legal research based upon state policies as they are contained in statutes, court rules, and case laws
- Practice scans based on interviews and surveys of juvenile justice stakeholders
- National scans based on web searches for descriptive data published by state agencies that help illuminate JJGPS reform topics
- Strategic overlays of data that are standardized at the national level in ongoing data collections.

