

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Law Enforcement  
Assistance Administration

National Criminal Justice  
Information and Statistics Service

# Children in Custody:

Advance Report  
on the 1977 Census  
of Private Juvenile Facilities  
No. SD-JD-5B

Privately operated juvenile custody facilities housed 7 percent more residents on December 31, 1977 than 2½ years earlier, an increase that contrasted sharply with a 7-percent decrease in the number held in facilities operated directly by government agencies.<sup>1</sup> Although the balance between the two sectors yielded an overall 2-percent decline in population that was consistent with the general downward trend underway since early in the 1970's, the growth within the private sector was indicative of a greater reliance by juvenile authorities on the small, "open" type of residential environment prescribed in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, particularly for youths held for "status" offenses.<sup>2</sup> Paralleling the rise in the total number of residents in custody within the private sector—from approximately 27,500 to 29,400—the number of facilities in use increased by about one-fourth to a total of 1,600, all but 8 percent of them long-term, or post-placement, residences. Nearly 9 of every 10 such facilities, accommodating 78 percent of all children in private long-term custody, were characterized as *open* rather than *institutional*; by contrast, fewer than two-thirds of the long-term residences in the public sector, housing 35 percent of the juveniles, were of the open type.<sup>3</sup>

Status offenders comprised 26 percent of the nearly 29,100 juveniles in private facilities as of December 31, 1977, and an additional 42 percent were non-offenders, such as neglected or abused children, emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded youngsters, and those admitted voluntarily. Only a minority (about one-third) were implicated in delinquent acts—crimes when perpetrated by adults. In sharp contrast, 86 percent of all youths in long-term public facilities were held as delinquents and only 11 percent as status offenders and 3 percent as non-offenders.

Boys greatly outnumbered girls in the juvenile facility system as a whole, but the proportion of girls was notably higher in the private than the public sector—30 versus 16 percent. Data on racial composition, gathered for the first time in the 1977 censuses, revealed that black youths comprised a markedly smaller proportion of the private

than of the public total, one-fifth as compared with one-third; in both sectors, blacks exceeded their 14-percent representation in the 10–19 age group of the general population. First-time figures on ethnic makeup put the proportion of Hispanic residents in private facilities at 7 percent, as compared with 6 percent in the corresponding segment of the population at large. The average age of youths in the private sector—14.9 years for boys and 15.0 years for girls—was, for each of the sexes, almost half a year lower than at the time of the 1975 census, suggesting an influx of young status offenders who earlier would have been placed in more restrictive public facilities.

The total volume of admissions to and discharges from private juvenile facilities—nearly 129,000 during 1977—was only about one-tenth that experienced by public-sector establishments. This difference reflected both the relatively large volume of individuals held for brief periods in the public sector's short-term facilities and a slower turnover rate in the private sector's long-term residences. The average length of stay in private long-term facilities was 58 percent greater than in their public counterparts—291 days to 184 days. In contrast to the high degree of overcrowding in many adult correctional institutions, only 2 percent of facilities enumerated in the 1977 Census of Private Juvenile Facilities reported occupancy in excess of design capacity.

The nationwide increase in private juvenile facilities and in the residents they held was attended by a 12-percent expansion in the employees and a 40-percent rise in expenditures between mid-1975 and the end of 1977. At the latter point in time, the ratio of juveniles per full-time staff member was 1.3 to 1, more favorable than the 1.5 to 1 ratio prevailing in 1974, when the *Children in Custody* census first included private facilities. Between the latest juvenile facility censuses, total annual expenditures rose from \$274 million to \$384 million and the per capita operating costs from \$9,516 to \$12,270, although inflation accounted for a sizable portion of the increase. As in 1974 and 1975, the 1977 financial outlay per child was less than in the Nation's public facility system.

<sup>1</sup>According to the 1977 census of juvenile facilities, approximately 45,900 individuals were housed within State and local government facilities on December 31, 1977. Preliminary data on public facilities appear in *Children in Custody: Advance Report on the 1977 Census of Public Juvenile Facilities*, No. SD-JD-5A (September 1979).

<sup>2</sup>Status offenses are acts such as running away from home, truancy, possession of alcoholic beverages, incorrigibility, and others that are illegal for juveniles but not adults.

<sup>3</sup>Facilities enumerated in the 1977 census were classified as either open or institutional, based on responses to questions on degree of access to the community and the extent of in-house physical and staff controls. The great majority of facilities identified in earlier censuses as detention centers, diagnostic centers, or training schools, and a significant proportion of ranches, fall into the *institutional* category, whereas most of those identified as shelters or group homes, as well as some ranches, can be classified as *open*. Additional details on the new classification scheme will appear in a follow-up report.

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Approximately 3 of every 5 States experienced an *increase* in the number of juveniles held in private facilities between mid-1975 and the end of 1977, while the same proportion of States registered a *decrease* in the public sector. The largest increases in the private sector occurred in Ohio (446), Kansas (233), and Minnesota (221). At the time of the latest census, the highest ratios of juveniles per 100,000 population prevailed in Alaska and South Dakota (each with 42), followed by Arizona (32) and Nebraska (31); the lowest were noted in West Virginia (1), New Jersey (3), and Alabama and South Carolina (4 each). As for facilities, the number rose in 30 States, remained unchanged in

8, and declined in 13. The number of personnel increased in almost nine-tenths of the jurisdictions and expenditures in at least three-fourths.

The 1977 Census of Private Juvenile Facilities was conducted early in 1978 by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Detailed results of that enumeration, together with a methodology and questionnaire facsimile, will be contained in a future report. Data in this report are preliminary and subject to revision.

Table 1. Selected characteristics of private juvenile custody residents and facilities, 1974, 1975, and 1977

Characteristic	1974	1975	1977
Number of residents	31,749	27,450	29,377
Juvenile	31,749	27,290	29,070
Male	22,104	19,152	20,387
Female	9,645	8,138	8,683
Adult	0	160	307
Average age (years) <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	14.9
Male	NA	15.3	14.9
Female	NA	15.4	15.0
Number of admissions <sup>2</sup>	53,661	56,708	67,045
Number of departures <sup>2</sup>	47,471	50,986	61,571
Average daily number of residents <sup>2</sup>	31,384	26,740	29,611
Number of facilities	1,337	1,277	1,600
Short term	76	66	126
Long term	1,261	1,211	1,474
Facility occupancy rate (percent) <sup>2</sup>	100	100	100
Occupied less than 70 percent	21	21	20
Occupied 70-100 percent	72	79	78
Occupied more than 100 percent	7		2
Number of personnel	28,612	27,651	30,918
Full time	20,600	NA	22,211
Part time	8,012	NA	6,051
Community volunteers	<sup>3</sup> NA	3,917	2,656
Juveniles per full-time staff member	1.5	NA	1.3
Expenditures (thousands of dollars)	294,036	273,644	384,327
Capital	25,905	19,173	21,008
Operating	268,131	254,471	363,319
Per capita operating cost (dollars) <sup>4</sup>	8,544	9,516	12,269

NOTE: Data for 1974-75 are as of June 30 and for 1977 as of December 31, except for figures on admissions and departures, average daily number of residents, facility occupancy rate, expenditures, and operating costs, which are for an annual period, either calendar or fiscal year.

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>Based on juvenile residents only.

<sup>2</sup>Based on all residents (juvenile and adult).

<sup>3</sup>Community volunteers included in the total and subtotals.

<sup>4</sup>Based on average daily number of residents.

Table 2. Selected characteristics of private juvenile custody residents (juvenile only) and facilities, by type of facility, 1977

Characteristic	Type of facility		
	All facilities	Short term	Long term
Number of juveniles	29,070	843	28,227
Sex	29,070	843	28,227
Male	20,387	439	19,948
Female	8,683	404	8,279
Average age (years)	14.9	14.7	14.9
Race	29,070	843	28,227
White	21,917	616	21,301
Black	6,005	184	5,821
Other	1,148	43	1,105
Ethnic composition	29,070	843	28,227
Hispanic	2,096	59	2,037
Non-Hispanic	26,974	784	26,190
Adjudication status	29,070	843	28,227
Detained	894	725	169
Committed	23,089	74	23,015
Voluntary admission	5,087	44	5,043
Reason held	29,070	843	28,227
Delinquency	9,484	168	9,316
Status offense	7,438	402	7,036
Other <sup>1</sup>	12,148	273	11,875
Physical environment	29,070	843	28,227
Institutional facilities	6,445	184	6,261
Open facilities	22,625	659	21,966
Average length of stay (days)	270	20	291
Number of facilities	1,600	126	1,474
Institutional facilities	206	16	190
Open facilities	1,394	110	1,284
Frequency of community access	1,600	126	1,474
Daily or almost daily	1,260	NA	NA
Weekly or less frequently	312	NA	NA
Never	28	NA	NA
Security level	1,600	126	1,474
Strict	55	5	50
Medium	395	26	369
Minimal or none	1,150	95	1,055
Number of personnel	30,918	1,803	29,115
Payroll	26,030	1,162	24,868
Nonpayroll	2,232	263	1,969
Community volunteer	2,656	378	2,278

NOTE: All data are as of December 31, 1977, except average length of stay which are for the calendar year.

NA Not available.

<sup>1</sup>This category includes 5,296 nonoffenders held for dependency, neglect or abuse, and 1,739 for emotional disturbance or mental retardation; 5,087 juveniles who admitted themselves to a facility or were referred by a parent, court, or school, without being adjudged for an offense; and 26 who were not classifiable.



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Penalty for private use, \$300

Table 3. Selected characteristics of private juvenile custody facilities—States, December 31, 1977

State	Residents	Facilities	Staff	Expenditures <sup>1</sup> (thousands of dollars)
United States	29,377	1,600	30,918	384,327
Alabama	147	15	174	901
Alaska	163	15	204	3,901
Arizona	731	38	746	10,834
Arkansas	373	19	402	1,776
California	3,917	286	3,913	55,139
Colorado	665	32	667	7,163
Connecticut	395	27	410	4,673
Delaware	0	0	0	0
District of Columbia	82	3	47	575
Florida	724	36	592	7,168
Georgia	301	12	266	2,255
Hawaii	58	5	88	1,483
Idaho	106	7	159	1,471
Illinois	944	20	1,069	16,043
Indiana	822	29	573	7,463
Iowa	319	30	366	7,534
Kansas	626	55	615	7,838
Kentucky	283	11	393	1,834
Louisiana	331	16	268	2,895
Maine	327	17	172	2,658
Maryland	688	44	714	8,526
Massachusetts	688	40	953	9,655
Michigan	1,092	49	1,227	17,333
Minnesota	917	85	980	12,301
Mississippi	169	9	86	1,036
Missouri	587	26	663	7,975
Montana	152	10	187	1,757
Nebraska	489	11	520	4,857
Nevada	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)
New Hampshire	177	6	110	1,668
New Jersey	255	20	347	3,343
New Mexico	324	16	230	2,424
New York	3,459	111	4,564	65,798
North Carolina	403	31	379	4,201
North Dakota	115	7	111	1,636
Ohio	1,259	76	1,400	15,738
Oklahoma	572	39	626	6,436
Oregon	443	39	555	5,572
Pennsylvania	1,680	57	1,998	27,517
Rhode Island	76	6	72	683
South Carolina	121	9	108	904
South Dakota	287	19	227	2,636
Tennessee	209	9	224	1,813
Texas	1,564	47	1,051	11,754
Utah	163	16	157	1,213
Vermont	112	10	174	1,075
Virginia	310	9	209	3,179
Washington	941	74	860	10,502
West Virginia	20	6	46	271
Wisconsin	628	42	896	10,477
Wyoming	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)

D Data not shown to preserve confidentiality guarantees.

<sup>1</sup>Total capital and operating expenditures during either the 1977 fiscal or calendar year. Detail does not add to total because of rounding.

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