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Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A Focus on Violence

Statistics Summary

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ACQUISITIONS

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Introduction

Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A National Report

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 the 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, policy-makers, and the public must have access to useful and accurate information about the system and the youth serviced by the system. Much of the information needed is currently unavailable. When the information does exist, it is often too scattered or inaccessible to be useful.

To bridge the gap between existing information and the juvenile justice community, OJJDP requested that the National Center for Juvenile Justice prepare a report that pulls together the most requested information on juveniles and the juvenile justice system in the United States. Before writing the report, the authors reviewed existing national statistics to determine what information was available and what information was credible.

The result of this effort is *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A National Report*. This report presents important, and at times complex, information using clear, nontechnical writing and easy-to-understand graphics and tables. The report is designed as a series of briefing papers on specific topics—short sections designed to be read in isolation from other parts of the report. The full report covers a wide range of topics:

Chapter 1, *Juvenile Population Characteristics*, describes the juvenile population in the U.S. along dimensions and trends of interest including poverty, education, living arrangements, unwed teen mothers, and population growth. State- and county-level data are presented whenever possible.

Chapter 2, *Juvenile Victims*, summarizes what is known about the nature of and trends in juvenile victimizations including juvenile homicides, other violent victimizations, offenders, use of weapons, level of injury, nature of crimes against young children, time of day when victimizations occur, child abuse and neglect, the link between abuse and subsequent delinquent behavior, missing children, and juvenile suicides.

Chapter 3, *Juvenile Offenders*, describes the nature of and trends in juvenile offending including the proportion of crime in the U.S. caused by juveniles, juvenile law-violating careers, possession and use of weapons, gangs, homicides by juveniles, use of drugs, and the link between substance abuse and delinquency.

Chapter 4, *Juvenile Justice System Structure and Process*, describes the characteristics of and legislation that controls juvenile justice systems. Characteristics of the juvenile and criminal justice systems are compared, and brief descriptions of significant Supreme Court cases are presented. State variations in the expressed purpose of the juvenile justice system, the definition of a juvenile, the administration of juvenile services, and the criteria for transfer to the criminal system are also described.

Chapter 5, *Law Enforcement and Juvenile Crime*, summarizes trends in the flow of juveniles into the justice system through law enforcement agencies. This chapter presents national statistics on long-term juvenile arrest trends and trends in the proportion of crimes cleared by juvenile arrest. These trends are detailed by offense and juvenile demographic characteristics. Juvenile arrest trends are compared with adult trends, resulting in a clearer understanding of the juvenile responsibility for the growth in violent crime in recent years. Projections of juvenile arrests in the year 2010 are also presented. In addition to national statistics, this chapter also contains State- and county-level maps displaying juvenile violent and property crime arrest rates.

Chapter 6, *Juvenile Courts and Juvenile Crime*, describes the flow of cases in U.S. juvenile courts and court responses to offenders. The chapter shows the volume and trends in cases referred to juvenile courts by offense category and juvenile demographics, as well as the likelihood of detention, adjudication, probation, and placement. The chapter describes court use of detention, including admission trends, variations in State detention rates, and the conditions of confinement within detention centers. This chapter also summarizes the nature of juvenile court careers and what is known about the effect of transferring a juvenile to criminal court.

Chapter 7, *Juveniles in Correctional Facilities*, describes annual admissions to long-term juvenile facilities, admissions by offense, demographics of these juveniles, and admission rates by State.

The conditions of juvenile confinement are also documented in terms of institutional crowding, security procedures, access to health care, and staff and inmate injury rates.

The material presented in the *National Report* represents the most current and reliable information available near the end of 1994 on juvenile offending and victimization and the juvenile justice system. Although some newer data are now available, the patterns displayed in the *National Report* remain accurate. For example, the *National Report* shows substantial annual growth in juvenile arrests for violent crimes between 1988 and 1992. This growth continued, as shown by the FBI's newly released 1993 arrest statistics.

A Focus on Violence

The information contained in the *National Report* can be juxtaposed and reordered to provide a detailed summary of a particular topic. This *OJJDP Statistics Summary* has sections from the full report that focus on violence by and against juveniles.

As this *Summary* and the *National Report* show, the proportion of violent crimes committed by juveniles is disproportionately high compared with their share of the U.S. population, and the number of these crimes is growing. Between 1988 and 1992 juvenile arrests for violent crime increased nearly 50%.

Even with these large increases, however, juveniles are not responsible

for most of the increase in recent years. If juvenile violence had not increased between 1988 and 1992, the U.S. violent crime rate would have increased 16% instead of 23%.

Additionally, as the accompanying figure from the *National Report* shows, a very small percentage of juveniles are arrested for violent crime. However, these violent juveniles and the system's response to them are driving very broad changes in juvenile justice policy and legislation in States and at the Federal level.

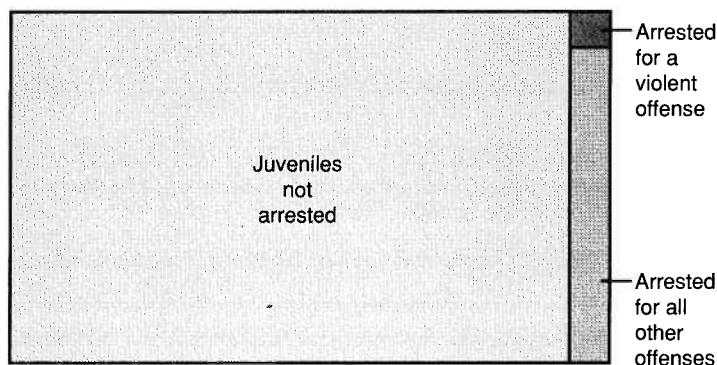
While juveniles may not be responsible for most violent crime, the growing level of violence by juveniles does not bode well for the future. If violent juvenile crime increases in the future as it has for the past 10 years, the authors of the *National Report* estimate that by the year 2010 the number of juvenile arrests for a violent crime will more than double and the number of juvenile arrests for murder will increase nearly 150%.

It is my hope that this *Summary* provides context for the debate over the direction we take in addressing juvenile violence. The full report, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A National Report*, will be released in the summer of 1995. If initial responses are any indication, this report will become a primary source of information on the juvenile justice system and will be the objective, empirical foundation for many discussions, deliberations, and debates.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator

Less than one-half of 1 percent of juveniles in the U.S. were arrested for a violent offense in 1992

All juveniles 10-17 in the United States



■ 5% of juveniles were arrested in 1992 — of those, about 9% were arrested for a violent crime.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Crime in the United States 1992*.

How much of the crime in the U.S. is caused by juveniles?

Victims attributed about 1 in 4 personal crimes to juvenile offenders in 1991

One of two continuous sources of information on the proportion of crime committed by juveniles is the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). NCVS captures information on crimes committed against persons age 12 or older. Crimes committed against children below age 12 are not counted. As a result, significant numbers of crimes committed by juveniles and adults are not reported.

In 1991 NCVS found that victims age 12 and older reported that the offender was a juvenile (under age 18) in approximately 28% of personal crimes (i.e., rape, personal robbery, aggravated and simple assault, and theft from a person). These victims also reported that 88% of juvenile crimes were committed by male offenders and 10% by female offenders, with the remainder committed by both males and females. Adult offenders in 1991 had a similar sex profile.

Victims reported that half of all juvenile offenders were white

In 1991 victims of personal crimes reported essentially the same racial distribution for juvenile and adult offenders:

Race of offender	Offender age	
	Juvenile	Adult
White	51%	51%
Black	41	39
Other race	8	10
Total	100%	100%

Source: BJS. (1992). *National crime victimization survey, 1991* [machine-readable data file].

Juveniles were responsible for about 1 in 5 violent crimes

In 1991 juveniles were responsible for 19% of all violent crimes (i.e., rape, personal robbery, and aggravated and simple assault) reported to NCVS in which there was a single offender.

Age of victim	Proportion of crimes committed by juveniles		
	Crimes of violence	Robbery	Assault
All ages	19%	14%	21%
12-19	49%	48%	52%
20-34	5	7	5
35-49	11	4	12
50-64	5	<1	5
Over 64	<1	<1	<1

Source: BJS. (1992). *Criminal victimization in the United States 1991*.

Persons most likely to be victimized by juveniles were individuals between ages 12 and 19 (remembering that crimes against children below age 12 are not a part of NCVS). The offender was a juvenile in nearly half of these violent crimes. In contrast, juveniles were seldom the offender in crimes against older victims. For example, 7% of robberies of persons ages 20-34 were committed by juveniles, and victims above age 50 rarely reported that they were robbed by juveniles.

One in 7 serious violent crimes involved juveniles in groups

Seventeen percent of all serious violent crimes in 1991 were committed by juveniles only, either alone (11%) or in juvenile groups (6%). Another 8% of serious violent crimes were committed by a group of offenders that included at least one juvenile and one adult. In all, 25% of all serious violent crime involved a juvenile offender; and of these crimes, more than one-half involved a group of offenders.

Adults were less likely to commit crimes in groups; about one-third of serious violent crimes committed by adults involved a group of offenders.

Number and type of offenders	Percent of serious violent crime
1 juvenile	11%
2 or more juveniles	6
1 or more juvenile with adult(s)	8
2 or more adults	22
1 adult	53
Total	100%

Juvenile victims were more likely than adult victims to be victimized by a group of juvenile offenders. That is, 14% of all juveniles who were victims of a serious violent crime reported that they were victimized by two or more juvenile offenders, compared with 3% of adult victims.

Racial profiles of violent crime victims varied with the race of the juvenile offender

In 1991, when a white juvenile committed a violent crime, the victim was nearly always white (95%).

Race of victim	Juvenile offender's race		
	White	Black	Other
White	95%	57%	80%
Black	3	37	7
Other	2	6	13
Total	100%	100%	100%

Note: Hispanics can be of any race, but most are classified as white.

Source: BJS. (1992). *National crime victimization survey, 1991* [machine-readable data file].

In contrast to white offenders, the victim profile of black juvenile offenders was more racially mixed. Fifty-seven percent of the violent crime victims of black juvenile offenders were white and 37% black.

Law enforcement agencies made nearly 2.3 million arrests of persons under age 18 in 1992

Nearly 6% of all juvenile arrests in 1992 were for a violent crime — half of these arrests involved juveniles below age 16, half involved whites, and 1 in 8 involved females

Offense charged	Estimated number of juvenile arrests	Percent of total juvenile arrests					
		Female	Ages 16 and 17	White	Black	Native American	Asian
Total	2,296,000	23%	46%	70%	27%	1%	2%
Crime Index Total	839,400	21	40	68	29	1	2
Violent Crime Index	129,600	13	50	49	49	1	1
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	3,300	6	73	41	57	<1	1
Forcible rape	6,300	2	44	52	46	1	1
Robbery	45,700	9	51	38	60	<1	2
Aggravated assault	74,400	16	50	56	42	1	1
Property Crime Index	709,800	23	38	71	26	1	2
Burglary	144,500	9	40	75	22	1	2
Larceny-theft	468,200	29	36	73	24	1	2
Motor vehicle theft	87,500	12	46	58	39	1	2
Arson	9,700	11	21	83	15	1	1
Nonindex offenses	1,456,500	24	49	71	26	1	2
Other assaults	169,400	24	40	62	35	1	2
Forgery and counterfeiting	8,400	35	67	78	19	1	1
Fraud	18,400	26	46	53	44	<1	2
Embezzlement	800	45	78	69	29	1	1
Stolen property; buying, receiving, possessing	42,900	11	50	59	39	1	1
Vandalism	145,300	9	33	82	16	1	1
Weapons; carrying, possessing, etc.	54,200	7	51	62	36	1	1
Prostitution and commercialized vice	1,200	52	72	69	29	1	1
Sex offenses (except forcible rape and prostitution)	19,700	7	32	73	25	1	1
Drug abuse violations	85,700	11	68	52	47	<1	1
Gambling	1,200	7	66	24	74	1	1
Offenses against the family and children	5,100	35	45	76	21	1	3
Driving under the influence	14,700	14	92	92	5	2	1
Liquor law violations	119,200	29	76	92	5	2	1
Drunkenness	18,900	16	72	88	10	2	1
Disorderly conduct	136,500	22	47	67	32	1	1
Vagrancy	4,100	15	42	67	32	<1	1
All other offenses (except traffic)	338,500	21	54	68	29	1	2
Curfew and loitering law violations	91,100	27	47	76	21	1	2
Runaways	181,300	57	30	78	17	1	3

■ 57% of juvenile arrests for murder and 60% of juvenile arrests for robbery involved blacks.

■ 92% of juvenile arrests for driving under the influence and for liquor law violations involved whites.

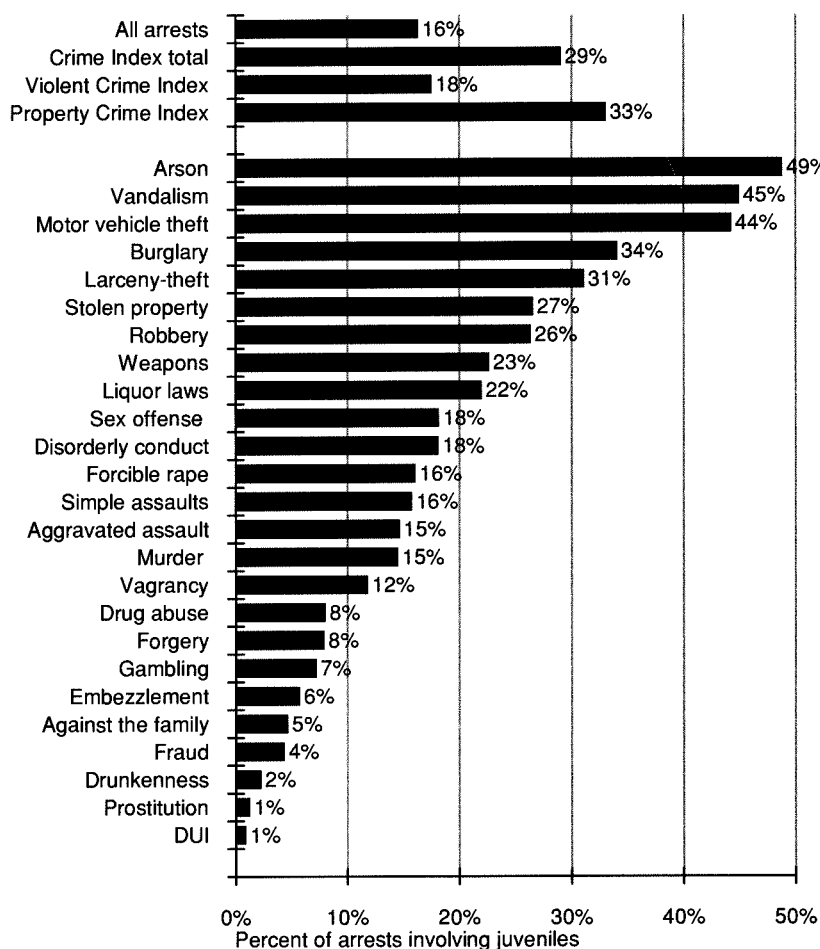
■ The majority of juvenile arrests for running away from home (57%) and for prostitution (52%) involved females.

Note: UCR data do not distinguish the ethnic group Hispanic; Hispanics may be of any race. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Sources: FBI. (1993). *Crime in the United States 1992*. Arrest estimates developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice.

In 1992 juveniles accounted for 13% of all violent crimes reported to law enforcement agencies and 18% of all violent crime arrests

Juveniles accounted for a much larger proportion of all property crime arrests (33%) than violent crime (18%) or drug arrests (8%) in 1992



- More than one-fourth of all persons arrested in 1992 for robbery were below age 18, well above the juvenile proportion of arrests for murder (15%), aggravated assault (15%), and forcible rape (16%).
- Juveniles were involved in 1% of all arrests for driving under the influence and prostitution, but more than 40% of all arrests for arson, vandalism, and motor vehicle theft.

Note: Running away and curfew violations are not presented in this figure because, by definition, only juveniles can be arrested for these offenses.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Crime in the United States 1992*.

How much of the crime problem is caused by juveniles?

Arrest proportions accurately characterize the ages of individuals entering the justice system. The fact that juveniles were 15% of all persons arrested for murder in 1992 implies that 15% of all persons entering the justice system on a murder charge were juveniles, not that the juveniles committed 15% of all murders.

Because juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crime in groups, arrest percentages are likely to exaggerate the juvenile contribution to the crime problem. The FBI clearance data provide a better assessment of the juvenile contribution to crime.

Juveniles were responsible for 13% of all violent crimes in 1992 and 23% of all property crimes

The juvenile contribution to the crime problem in the U.S. in 1992 varied considerably with the nature of the offense. Based on 1992 clearance data, juveniles were responsible for:

- 9% of murders.
- 12% of aggravated assaults.
- 14% of forcible rapes.
- 16% of robberies.
- 20% of burglaries.
- 23% of larceny-thefts.
- 24% of motor vehicle thefts.
- 42% of arsons.

Crimes with greater discrepancies between the arrest and clearance proportions may be those in which group behavior is more common. For example, while the discrepancy is small for forcible rape, it is relatively large for motor vehicle theft, burglary, murder, and robbery.

In 1992 the States of New York, Florida, New Jersey, Maryland, and California had the highest juvenile violent crime arrest rates

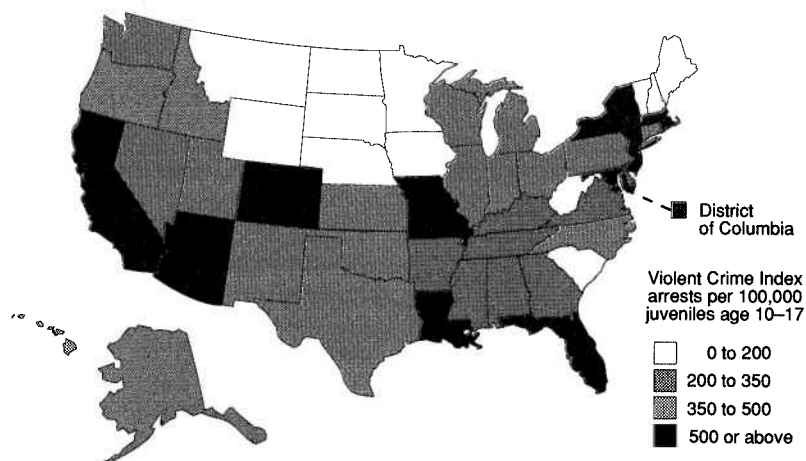
States with high juvenile arrest rates for some violent crimes do not necessarily have high juvenile arrest rates for all violent crimes

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17							Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17						
State	% Reporting	Violent Crime Index	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Agg. Assault	State	% Reporting	Violent Crime Index	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Agg. Assault
Total U.S.	83%	458	12	22	161	263	Missouri	43%	571	18	23	154	376
Alabama	93	220	11	9	61	139	Montana	90	94	1	16	19	58
Alaska	94	205	1	23	38	143	Nebraska	73	104	1	13	32	59
Arizona	94	519	11	16	114	378	Nevada	79	394	25	39	145	185
Arkansas	100	265	14	22	60	168	New Hamp.	81	101	0	15	25	61
California	99	633	20	17	246	350	New Jersey	97	691	7	30	253	402
Colorado	92	506	6	21	85	394	New Mexico	56	382	4	15	55	308
Connecticut	82	499	7	24	125	343	New York	85	996	15	17	642	322
Delaware	54	340	3	54	62	220	N. Carolina	97	396	14	13	72	298
Dist. of Columbia	100	1,318	65	52	416	785	N. Dakota	77	58	0	15	13	30
Florida	92	739	12	29	247	450	Ohio	66	372	7	41	155	168
Georgia	72	251	6	14	62	169	Oklahoma	97	353	8	24	90	231
Hawaii	100	276	2	26	149	99	Oregon	95	338	5	27	130	177
Idaho	88	313	2	9	16	287	Pennsylvania	84	463	9	26	185	243
Illinois	42	463	5	52	101	305	Rhode Island	100	613	4	33	82	494
Indiana	51	487	4	11	60	411	S. Carolina	96	200	6	20	28	147
Iowa	64	159	0	9	17	133	S. Dakota	71	120	2	23	8	87
Kansas	77	377	4	11	77	285	Tennessee	49	296	12	23	100	161
Kentucky	96	331	5	12	64	250	Texas	100	380	17	17	131	214
Louisiana	60	569	23	26	129	391	Utah	73	391	2	26	56	307
Maine	82	128	2	19	28	80	Vermont	53	36	3	9	3	21
Maryland	100	645	21	35	200	390	Virginia	100	228	11	20	92	105
Mass.	66	545	5	19	137	384	Washington	80	385	5	48	106	226
Michigan	90	388	20	44	101	223	West Virginia	100	77	3	9	24	41
Minnesota	99	179	3	12	29	136	Wisconsin	98	376	16	21	149	190
Mississippi	35	223	15	31	73	105	Wyoming	95	82	2	10	5	65

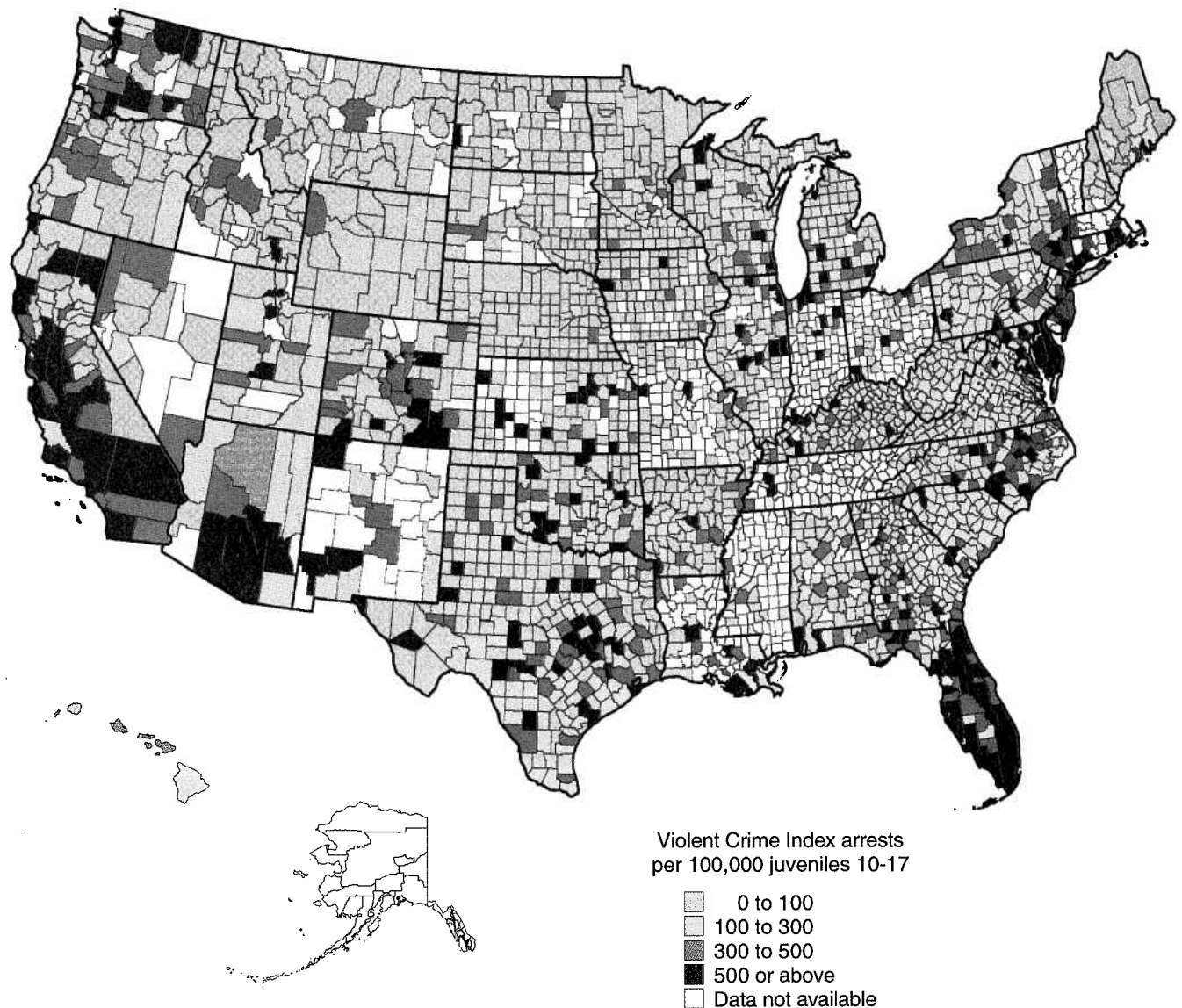
Note: Reported rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be accurate. Readers are encouraged to review the technical note at the end of this summary.

Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: State rates were developed from data reported in *Crime in the United States 1992*.



Counties within a State exhibited diverse juvenile violent crime arrest rates in 1992



Note: Rates were classified as "Data not available" when agencies with jurisdiction over more than 50% of the population did not report.

Source: County rates were developed using *Uniform Crime Reporting Program data [United States]: County-level detailed arrest and offense data, 1992* [machine-readable data file] prepared by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses monitor violence levels in the juvenile population

The Violent Crime Index combines four offenses (murder/nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault). The Index is

dominated by arrests for two of the four offenses — robbery and aggravated assault. In 1992, 93% of juvenile Violent Crime Index arrests were for robbery and aggravated assault. Thus, a jurisdiction with a high juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate does not necessarily have a high juvenile

arrest rate in each component of the Index. For example, while New Jersey had one of the highest juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rates in 1992, its juvenile murder arrest rate was below the national average.

After more than a decade of relative stability, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate soared between 1988 and 1992

The increase in the juvenile arrest rate for violent crimes began in the late 1980's

During the period from 1973 through 1988 the number of juvenile arrests for a Violent Crime Index offense (murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) varied with the changing size of the juvenile population. However, in 1989, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate broke out of this historic range.

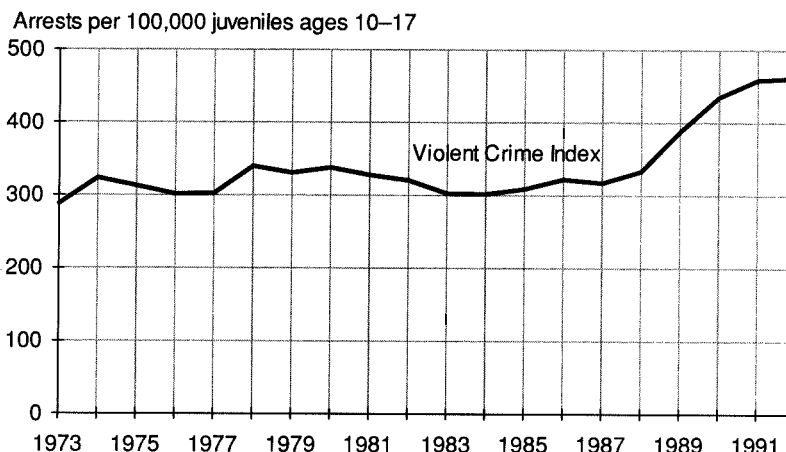
The years between 1988 and 1991 saw a 38% increase in the rate of juvenile arrests for violent crimes. The rate of increase then diminished, with the juvenile arrest rate increasing little between 1991 and 1992. This rapid growth over a relatively short period moved the juvenile arrest rate for violent crime in 1992 far above any year since the mid-1960's, the earliest time period for which comparable statistics are available.

The juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased substantially in all racial groups in recent years

In 1983 the violent crime arrest rate for black youth was nearly 7 times the white rate. Between 1983 and 1992 the white arrest rate increased more than the rate for blacks (82% versus 43%). As a result, the white and black rates have moved closer together, but there is still a wide gap. In 1992 the rate of violent crime arrests for black youth was about 5 times the white rate.

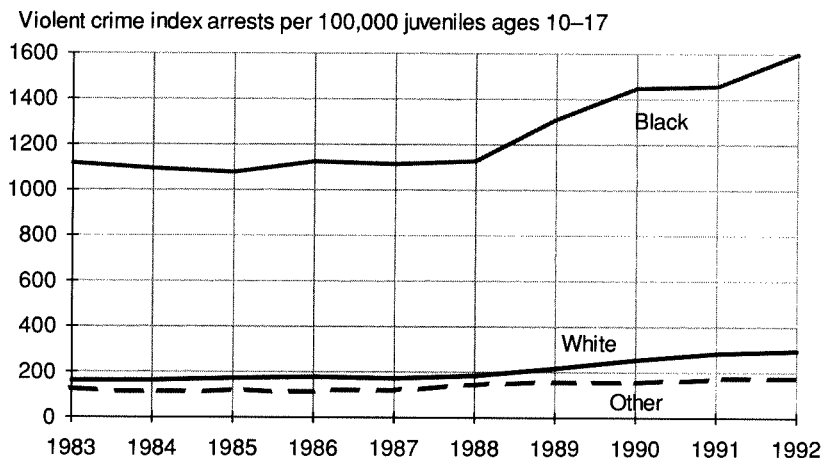
Over the 10-year period from 1983 through 1992, the violent crime arrest rate for youth of other races increased 42%, nearly equal to the increase in the black rate.

From 1973 through 1988 the juvenile arrest rates for violent crimes remained relatively constant, but these rates have climbed rapidly in recent years



Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*.

The rapid growth in violent crime arrest rates between 1988 and 1992 is found in all racial groups



■ In absolute terms, the black rate grew much more than the white rate. That is, a typical 100,000 white juveniles experienced 110 more arrests in 1992 than in 1983, while a comparable group of black juveniles experienced 470 more arrests for a violent crime.

Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*.

If trends continue as they have over the past 10 years, juvenile arrests for violent crime will double by the year 2010

Age-specific arrest rates provide a clearer picture of arrest trends

The media and the public often use arrest trends to assess the relative changes in juvenile and adult criminal behavior. Arrest trends are simple to report — *juvenile violent crime arrests up 47% in past 5 years* — but they are notoriously difficult to interpret. First, interpretations are complicated by population changes, which can be considerable, even over a short time period, for the few high-crime-generating age groups. For example, how differently would the increase in juvenile arrests from 1983 to 1992 be viewed if it were known that the number of 16- and 17-year-olds in the U.S. population declined by 10% over this period?

Also, juvenile and adult arrest trends lump everyone into one of two groups. This ignores important variations within the groups that may provide important information to understand these trends.

A better method for comparing arrest patterns is to compare annual, age-specific arrest rates — for example, the number of arrests of a typical group of 100,000 17-year-olds in 1983 and in 1992. Arrest rates control for the impact of population growth or decline on arrests. They also break down the juvenile and adult groups into smaller pieces so that changes in younger and older juveniles and adults can be studied independently. Age-specific arrests rates can also be used to project the number of future arrests if certain assumptions are made and projections of population growth are available.

How many juvenile violent crime arrests will there be in the year 2010?

Estimates of future juvenile arrests for violent crime vary widely. The accuracy of these estimates relies on the appropriateness of each estimate's underlying assumptions and the accuracy of existing data. For this report, two sets of estimates were developed using different assumptions. Both sets are based on age-specific arrest rates and projected population growth (controlling for racial differences).

The first set of estimates assumes that the rates of juvenile violent crime arrests in 2010 will be equal to the rates in 1992. Under this assumption, the number of violent juvenile crime arrests is projected to increase 22% between 1992 and 2010. This increase corresponds to the projected growth in the juvenile population ages of 10 to

17. Projected increases would be nearly equal in all offense categories.

In contrast to the "constant rate" assumption underlying the first set of projections, the second set of estimates assumes that juvenile violent crime arrest rates will increase annually between 1992 and 2010 in each offense category as they have in recent history (i.e., from 1983 to 1992).

Assuming both population growth and continuing increases in arrest rates, the number of juvenile violent crime arrests is expected to double by 2010. The projected growth varies across crime categories. If current trends continue, by the year 2010 the number of juvenile arrests for murder is expected to increase 145% over the 1992 level. Projected increases are less than half as great for forcible rape (66%) and robbery (58%).

Juvenile arrest projections vary with the nature of underlying assumptions

Offense	Juvenile arrests in 1992	Projections assuming no change in arrest rates from 1992 to 2010		Projections assuming annual changes in arrest rates equal to the average increases from 1983 to 1992	
		Juvenile arrests in 2010	Increase over 1992	Juvenile arrests in 2010	Increase over 1992
Violent Crime Index	129,600	158,600	22%	261,000	101%
Murder	3,300	4,100	23	8,100	145
Forcible rape	6,300	7,700	22	10,400	66
Robbery	45,700	56,600	24	72,200	58
Aggravated assault	74,400	90,200	21	170,300	129

- If juvenile arrest rates remain constant through the year 2010, the number of juvenile arrests for violent crime will increase by one-fifth; if rates increase as they have in recent history, juvenile violent crime arrests will double.

Note: Both series of estimates control for racial variations in population growth.

The increase in violent crime arrest rates is disproportionate for juveniles and young adults

Violent crime arrest rates have increased in all age groups

Over the 10-year period from 1983 to 1992, arrest rates for Violent Crime Index offenses increased substantially for juveniles as well as adults. Juveniles had the largest increases (averaging nearly 60%), but even the rates for persons ages 35 to 39 increased 47%.

The Violent Crime Index treats each of its four offenses equally — an arrest for aggravated assault is counted the same as an arrest for murder. While this may be reasonable statistically, these four crimes raise different concerns and should be understood separately.

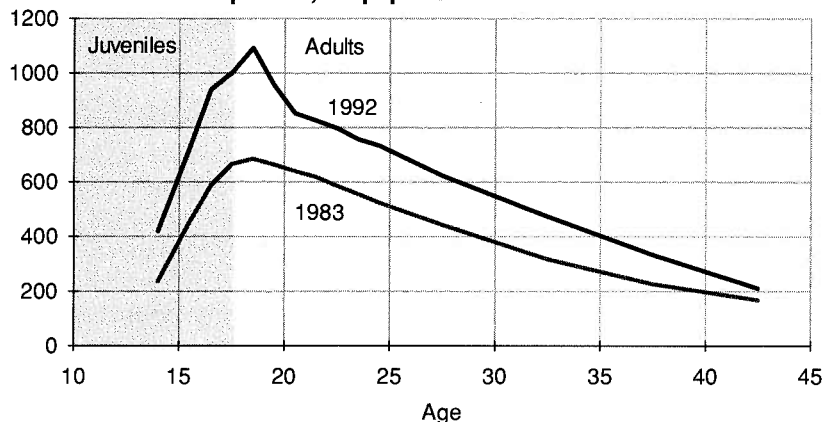
Aggravated assault arrest rates increased most for juveniles and young adults

In 1992 arrests for aggravated assault were 68% of all Violent Crime Index arrests. Thus, changes in violent crime arrest rates primarily reflected changes in aggravated assaults. As with violent crime overall, aggravated assault arrest rates increased substantially between 1983 and 1992 in all age groups, with juvenile rates up about 100% and the rates for persons in their twenties up about 60%.

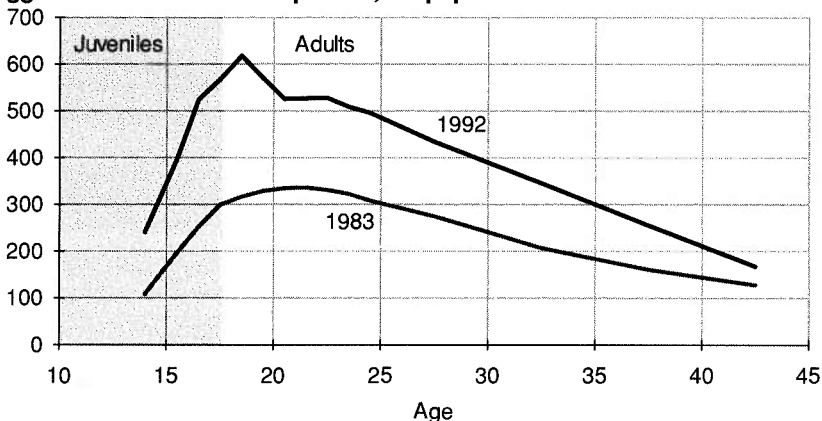
Forcible rape arrest rates increased far less than other violent crimes

In contrast to the overall violent crime and aggravated assault patterns, forcible rape arrest rates for juveniles grew between 1983 and 1992 by a relatively small 20%, while actually declining for persons in their twenties.

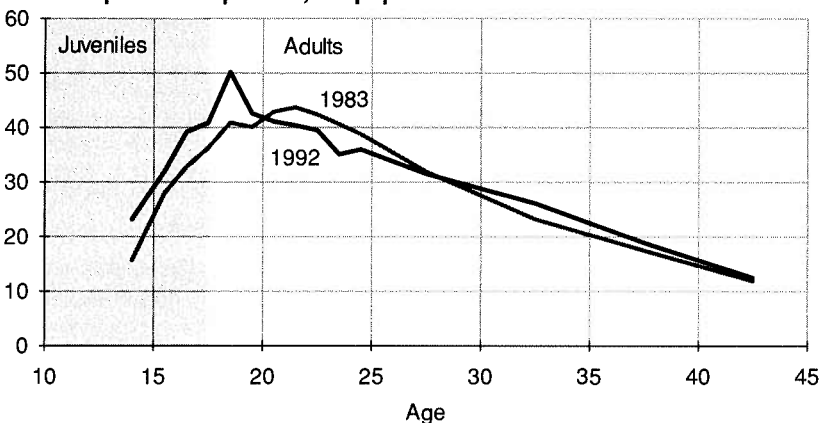
Violent crime arrests per 100,000 population



Aggravated assault arrests per 100,000 population

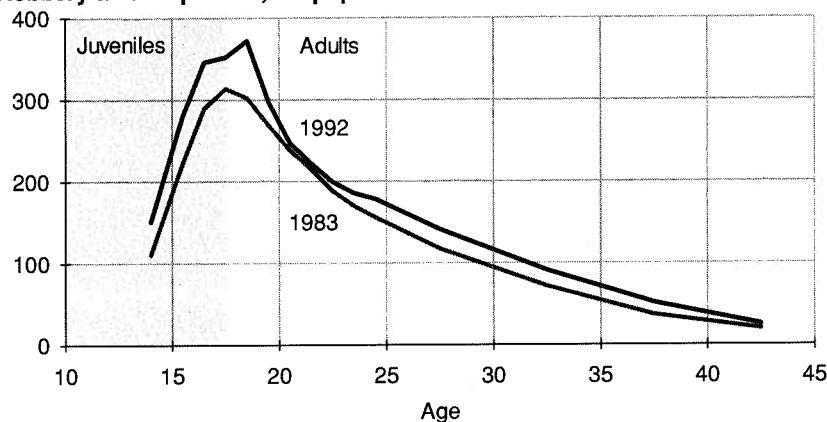


Forcible rape arrests per 100,000 population



Source: FBI. (1994). Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992.

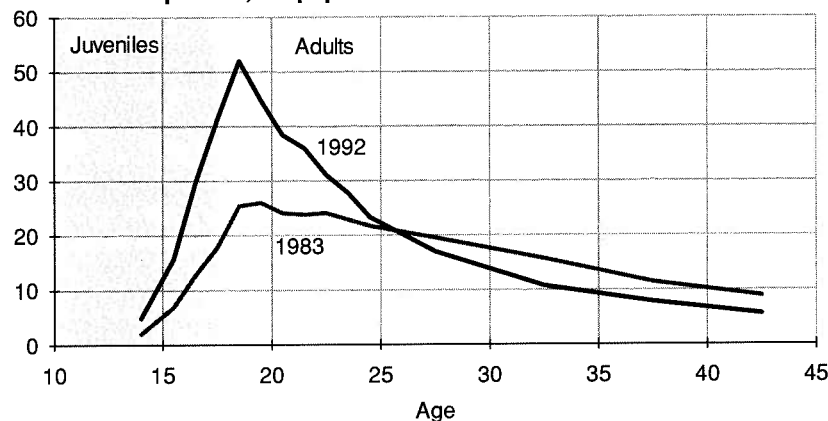
Robbery arrests per 100,000 population



Robbery arrest rates increased much less than aggravated assault rates

Robbery arrest rates increased in all age groups from 1983 to 1992. However, the growth was less than half of violent crime overall. The age groups with the smallest increases were those in their early twenties, with the juvenile increases similar to those of persons above age 25.

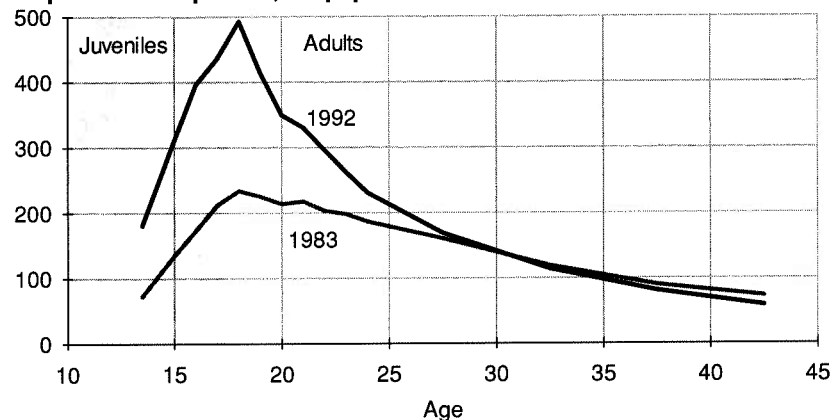
Murder arrests per 100,000 population



Murder rates declined in most age groups from 1983 to 1992

In 1992 persons above age 25 were arrested for murder at substantially lower rates than they were in 1983. For example, the murder arrest rate for persons ages 35-45 declined nearly 25% over the 10-year period. In stark contrast, murder arrest rates for juveniles and young adults soared, with increases far greater than in any other violent crime category. The average increase for juveniles was double the average increase for young adults.

Weapons arrests per 100,000 population



The fact that murder arrests for all adults increased just 9% between 1983 and 1992 masks two very different trends within the adult age group. The substantial declines in murder arrest rates for adults above their midtwenties almost offset the very large increases in murder arrests of young adults.

As in all violent crimes, 18-year-olds had the highest arrest rate for murder in 1992. However, the pattern of age-related growth in murder arrest rates was not mirrored in any other violent offense, but was paralleled in weapons arrests.

Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*.

With some notable exceptions, percentage increases in juvenile and adult arrests have been roughly similar over the past 10 years

Between 1983 and 1992 the percentage growth in juvenile arrests for murder, weapons law violations, and motor vehicle theft far surpassed the growth in adult arrests

	Percent change in arrests					
	1991-1992		1988-1992		1983-1992	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Total	3%	-1%	11%	6%	17%	21%
Crime Index Total	1	-2	12	5	16	25
Violent Crime Index	5	2	47	19	57	50
Murder	0	-6	51	9	128	9
Forcible rape	2	-2	17	3	25	14
Robbery	1	-2	50	13	22	21
Aggravated assault	8	4	49	23	95	69
Property Crime Index	0	-4	8	1	11	16
Burglary	-1	-3	1	-3	-20	-3
Larceny-theft	0	-4	8	2	13	21
Motor vehicle theft	-4	-4	12	-5	120	45
Arson	8	-3	25	-7	26	-18
Nonindex offenses	4	0	11	6	18	20
Other assaults	9	5	49	26	106	113
Forgery	-3	4	5	8	9	25
Fraud	10	0	-2	17	-41	31
Embezzlement	3	1	-38	-13	35	53
Stolen property	-4	-2	6	-2	39	21
Vandalism	5	-3	28	7	34	32
Weapons	16	5	66	13	117	21
Prostitution	-8	-4	-27	-1	-54	-17
Sex offense	10	4	28	6	41	22
Drug abuse	14	7	-10	0	7	64
Gambling	15	3	52	-17	25	-58
Against the family	27	7	53	56	212	79
Driving under influence	-19	-8	-37	-6	-52	-18
Liquor law violations	-12	-13	-24	-14	-12	12
Drunkenness	-14	-6	-26	-4	-47	-31
Disorderly conduct	6	-1	24	1	35	6
Vagrancy	57	-14	38	-8	36	-11
All other offenses (except traffic)	6	4	11	16	3	55
Curfew	1	*	5	*	9	*
Runaways	4	*	13	*	31	*

■ Because the absolute number of juvenile arrests is far below the adult level, a larger percentage increase in juvenile arrests does not necessarily imply a larger increase in the actual number of arrests. For example, while the **percentage** increase in juvenile arrests for a weapons law violation was much greater than the adult increase between 1983 and 1992, the increase in the **number** of arrests was 9% greater for adults.

* Not applicable to adults.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Crime in the United States 1992*.

Persons arrested in 1992 were, on average, older than those arrested in 1972

Offense	Average age of arrestees	
	1972	1992
Violent Crime Index	26.2	27.6
Murder	29.7	27.2
Forcible rape	24.8	28.6
Robbery	22.0	24.1
Aggravated assault	29.0	28.8
Property Crime Index	21.1	25.1
Burglary	19.9	23.5
Larceny-theft	21.8	26.2
Motor vehicle theft	20.1	21.8
Arson	20.5	22.8
Weapons	29.1	26.0
Drug abuse	22.3	28.5

Source: FBI. (1993). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*.

Between 1972 and 1992 the average age of the U.S. population increased by nearly 3 years. Generally following this increase in the general population, the average age of persons arrested in 1992 for larceny-theft, forcible rape, and burglary was nearly 4 years older than those arrested in 1972.

The increase in the average age of those arrested for a drug abuse violation was greater than the increase in the general population; those arrested for a drug abuse violation were nearly 6 years older.

Even with the aging of the U.S. population, the larger percentage increases in juvenile arrests for murder and weapons law violations resulted in a decline in the average age of arrestees in these crime categories. On average, 1992 arrestees were nearly 3 years younger than those arrested for these crimes in 1972.

Although adults were responsible for most of the recent violent crime increases, juveniles contributed more than their fair share

Users of reported crime and arrest statistics face difficult interpretation problems

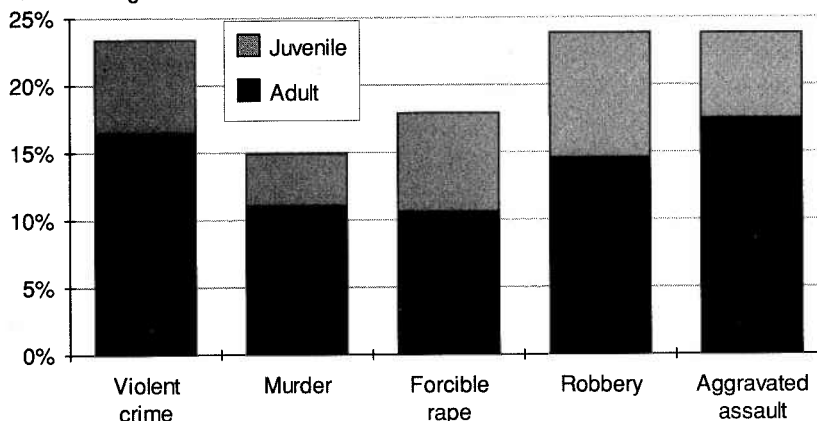
Violent crime is increasing and, based on their representation in the general population, juveniles are responsible for a disproportionate share of this increase. But is it accurate to say that juveniles are driving the violent crime trends?

The number of violent crimes reported to law enforcement agencies increased 23% between 1988 and 1992. Knowing that over this same period, juvenile arrests for violent crime grew 47%, while adult arrests for violent crimes increased 19%, it is easy to conclude that juveniles were responsible for most of the increase in violent crime. However, even though the percentage increase in juvenile arrests was more than double the adult increase, the growth in violent crime cannot be attributed primarily to juveniles.

An example shows how this apparent contradiction can occur. Of the 100 violent crimes committed in 1988 in a small town, assume that juveniles were responsible for 10, and adults for 90. If the number of juvenile crimes increased 50%, juveniles would be committing 15 (or 5 more) violent crimes in 1992. A 20% increase in adult violent crimes would mean that adults were committing 108 (or 18 more) violent crimes in 1992. If each crime resulted in an arrest, the percentage increase in juvenile arrests would be more than double the adult increase (50% versus 20%). However, nearly 80% of the increase in violent crime (18 of the 23 additional violent crimes) would have been committed by adults.

If juveniles had committed no more violent crimes in 1992 than in 1988, violent crime in the U.S. would have increased 16% instead of 23%

Percent change in violent crime 1988–1992



■ Juveniles were responsible for one-quarter of the 15% increase in murders between 1988 and 1992. If murders by juveniles had remained constant over this period, murders in the U.S. would have increased 11%.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Crime in the United States 1992*.

Large percentage increases can yield relatively small overall changes. Juvenile arrests represent a relatively small fraction of the total; consequently, a large percentage increase in juvenile arrests does not necessarily translate into a large contribution to overall crime growth.

Adults responsible for 70% of recent increase in violent crimes

In 1988 the FBI reported juveniles were arrested in 9% of the violent crimes for which someone was arrested; this juvenile clearance percentage was 13% in 1992. If it is assumed that juveniles were responsible for similar percentages of the *unsolved* violent crimes in these years, then it is possible to estimate the number of crimes committed by juveniles and by adults in 1988 and 1992.

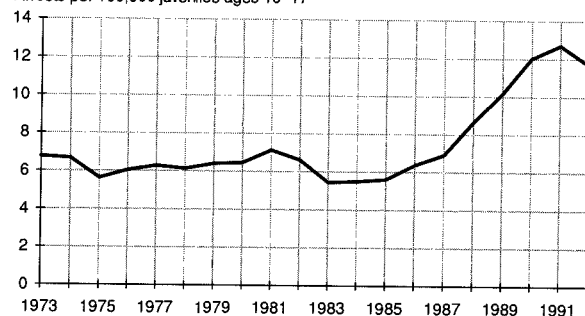
From FBI reported crime and clearance statistics, it was estimated that juveniles committed 108,000 more Violent Crime Index offenses in 1992 than in 1988, while adults committed an additional 258,000. Therefore, juveniles were responsible for 30% of the growth in violent crime between 1988 and 1992. Between 1988 and 1992 juveniles were responsible for 26% of the increase in murders, 41% of the increase in forcible rapes, 39% of the increase in robberies, and 27% of the increase in aggravated assaults. Juveniles contributed less to the increase in murder than to the increases in other violent crimes.

Trends in juvenile arrests for specific violent crimes show different patterns

Murder/Nonnegligent Manslaughter

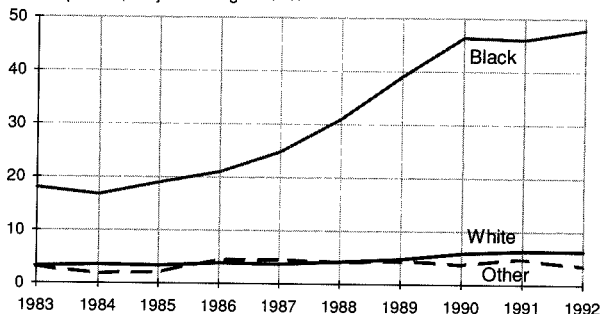
The juvenile arrest rate varied little from 1973 to 1987, but increased 84% from 1987 to 1991, before it dropped in 1992 for the first time in 8 years.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



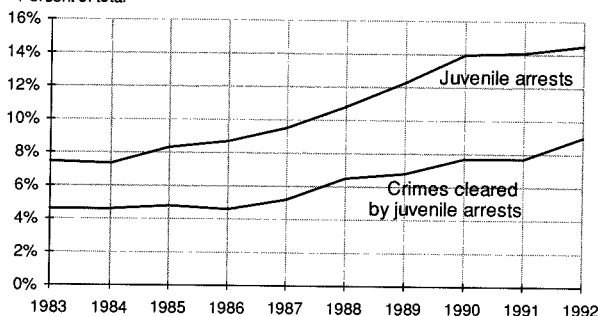
The disparity between white and black arrest rates increased between 1983 and 1992, with the black rate increasing more than the white rate (166% vs. 94%).

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



Paralleling the growth in juvenile arrest rates, the juvenile proportion of murders cleared grew from 5% in 1983 to 9% in 1992.

Percent of total

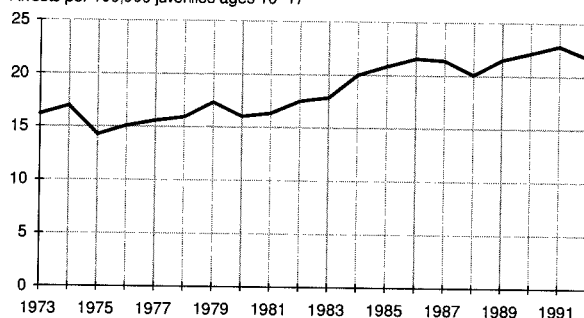


Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*. FBI. (1984-1993). *Crime in the United States series*.

Forcible Rape

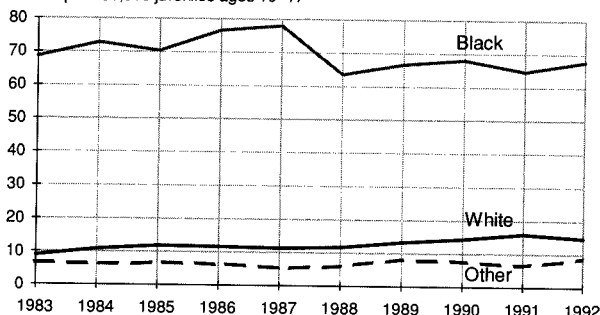
Unlike the Violent Crime Index trend, the juvenile arrest rate for forcible rape has increased gradually since the mid 1970's.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



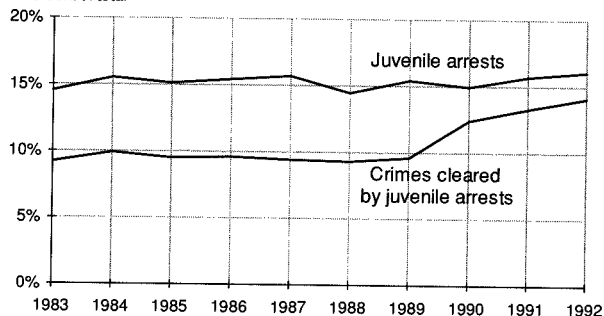
Between 1983 and 1992, the arrest rate of black youth for forcible rape showed no consistent trends, while the comparatively low white rate increased 66%.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



While juveniles were involved in about 15% of forcible rape arrests between 1983 and 1992, the percentage of forcible rapes cleared by juvenile arrests grew.

Percent of total

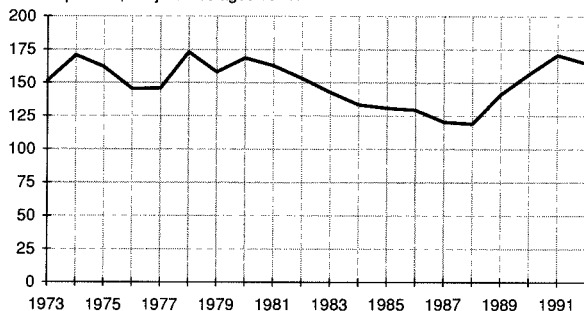


Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*. FBI. (1984-1993). *Crime in the United States series*.

Robbery

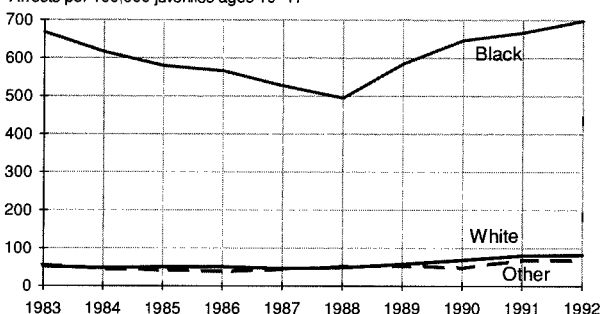
Unlike the trends for other violent crimes, juvenile robbery arrest rates declined during most of the 1980's before reversing in 1989 and returning to 1980 levels.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



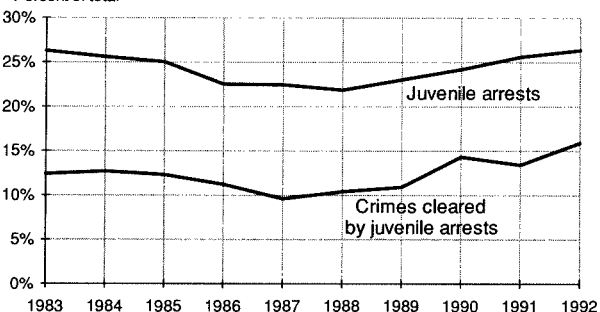
The disparity between black and white arrest rates was greater for robbery than for any of the other three Violent Crime Index offenses.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



Between 1983 and 1992 the juvenile proportion of robbery arrests declined and then, in the late 1980's, increased to earlier levels.

Percent of total

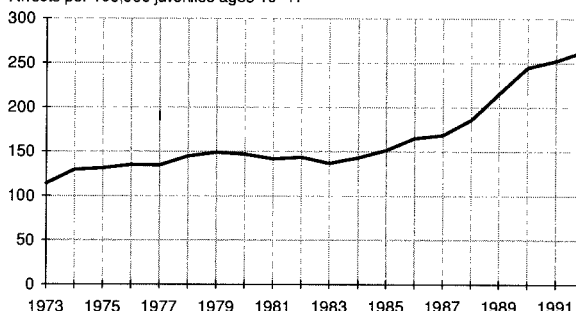


Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*. FBI. (1984-1993). *Crime in the United States series*.

Aggravated Assault

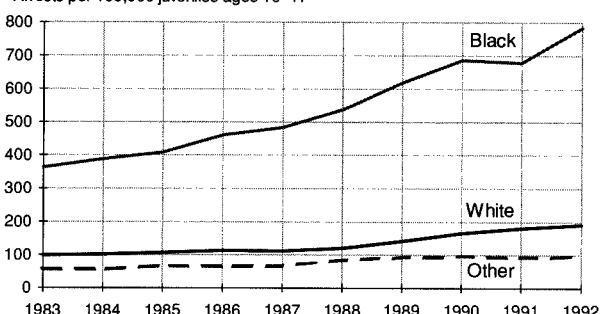
Juvenile arrest rates for aggravated assault remained relatively constant from the mid 1970's through the mid 1980's before increasing sharply through 1992.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



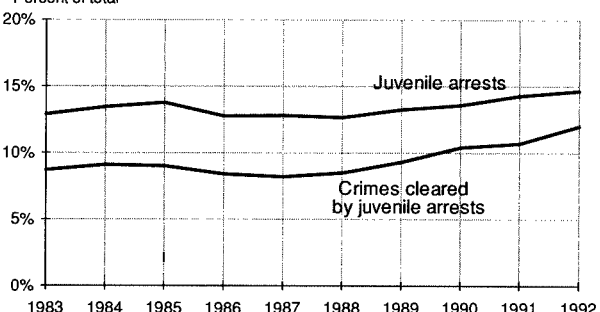
Juvenile arrest rates for aggravated assault increased substantially across all racial groups — 94% for whites, 116% for blacks, and 66% for other races.

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



With large increases in both juvenile and adult rates between 1983 and 1992, the juvenile proportion of aggravated assault arrests increased only slightly.

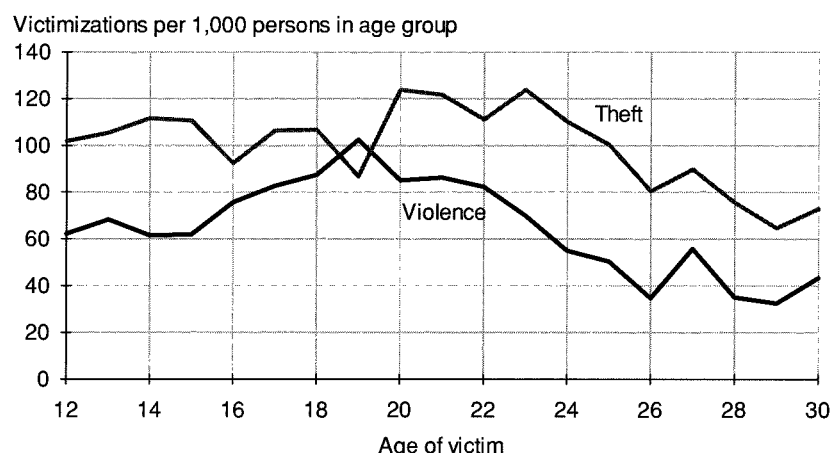
Percent of total



Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*. FBI. (1984-1993). *Crime in the United States series*.

Any juvenile between ages 12 and 17 is more likely to be the victim of violent crime than are persons past their midtwenties

The risk of violent victimization in 1991 was greater for a 12-year-old than for anyone age 24 or older



- The risk of violent victimization for a 29-year-old in 1991 was less than one-half of that faced by a 17-year-old.
- The risk of violent crime varies substantially within the juvenile age groups. The risk of violent crime for a 17-year-old was 33% greater than the risk for a 12-year-old.
- The risk of being a victim of personal theft (i.e., larceny with and without contact) in 1991 was greater for a 12-year-old than for anyone age 26 or older.

Source: BJS. (1993). *National crime victimization survey, 1991* [machine-readable data file].

Juveniles and young adults have the greatest risk of victimization

Victimization rates vary substantially across age groups. Senior citizens have much lower victimization rates than persons ages 18–24. In fact, these young adults have the highest rates within the adult population. The victimization rate for juveniles is roughly the same as that of young adults and substantially above the rates for persons over age 24. This is true for both crimes of violence and crimes of theft.

Juvenile victims are likely to know their offender

Most offenders who victimize juveniles are family members, friends, or acquaintances. In 1991 only 22% of personal crimes against juveniles were committed by strangers. Adults were much more likely to be victimized by strangers (42%). The juvenile and adult proportions of stranger crimes in

In 1991 juveniles ages 12–17 were as likely to be the victims of rape, robbery, and simple assault as were adults ages 18–24 ; aggravated assault was the only violent crime for which young adults had a statistically higher victimization rate

Crime type	Victimizations per 1,000 persons in age group							
	All Ages	Juveniles			Adults			
		Total	12–14	15–17	Total	18–24	25–34	35+
Personal crime	98	172	166	179	89	193	114	57
Crimes of violence	32	71	65	78	28	81	37	14
Rape	1	2	1	3	<1	2	1	<1
Robbery	6	10	11	10	5	12	8	3
Aggravated assault	8	15	14	17	7	24	9	3
Simple assault	18	44	40	48	15	42	19	7
Crimes of theft	65	101	102	101	61	112	77	43
Personal larceny with contact	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	2
Personal larceny without contact	62	98	100	97	58	109	74	41

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: BJS. (1993). *National crime victimization survey, 1991* [machine-readable data file].

1991 were more similar for rape and robbery than for aggravated assault and simple assault.

	Percent stranger crime	
	Juvenile	Adult
Personal crimes*	22%	42%
Rape	33	39
Robbery	44	51
Aggravated assault	20	38
Simple assault	15	38

* Includes crimes of theft.

A gun was used in 1 in 4 serious violent offenses against juveniles in 1991

The offender was armed in 67% of serious violent crimes (i.e., crimes of violence excluding simple assault) involving juvenile victims. In 19% of serious violent incidents the offender had a handgun, in 6% a gun other than a handgun, in 18% a knife, and in 25% a blunt object was used.

The level of weapon use against juveniles is only slightly less than against adults. Compared with adult victimizations, offenders in serious violent incidents against juveniles were less likely to be armed (67% compared with 72% for adults) and, when armed, less likely to use a handgun (19% compared with 24% for adults).

Juveniles suffer fewer and less serious injuries than adults

The proportion of serious violent incidents that resulted in injury was the same for juveniles (35%) as for adults (36%) in 1991. Adult victims of serious violent crime, however, were twice as likely as juvenile victims to be injured seriously (14% versus 7%). Injuries requiring hospital stays of at least 2 days were also more common for adult (3%) than for juvenile victims (fewer than 1%).

More than 1 in 5 violent crime victims in 1991 was a juvenile age 12-17

Crime type	Proportion of victims who were:			
	Juveniles			Adults
	Total	12–14	15–17	
Personal crime	18%	9%	9%	82%
Crimes of violence	22%	10%	12%	78%
Rape	18	3	15	82
Robbery	18	9	8	82
Aggravated assault	20	9	11	80
Simple assault	24	11	13	76
Crimes of theft	16	8	8	84
Personal larceny with contact	11	4	7	89
Personal larceny without contact	16	8	8	84

Source: BJS. (1993). *National crime victimization survey, 1991* [machine-readable data file].

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

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) conducts the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). With funds from BJS, the Bureau of the Census contacts a large nationally representative sample of households and asks their occupants to describe the personal crimes they have experienced. Personal crimes are broken into two general categories: crimes of violence and crimes of theft.

Personal crimes of violence include rape, personal robbery, and aggravated and simple assault. These crimes always involve contact between victim and offender. For this report, serious violent crime includes all crimes of violence except simple assault. Personal crimes of theft include larcenies (theft without force or threat of force) with and without victim-offender contact.

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

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

Compared with other juveniles, black youth are more likely to be the victim of a violent crime

Race/ethnicity of victim	Violent victimizations per 1,000 population	
	Ages 12–17	Ages 18–24
Total	71	82
White (not Hispanic)	69	84
White Hispanic	69	56
Black	84	99
Other	42	66

In 1991 black juveniles and young black adults had the highest violent victimization rates. Black juveniles had a violent victimization rate 20% higher than that of white juveniles. Among both blacks and non-Hispanic whites, young adults had a greater risk of violent victimization than did juveniles, while the reverse was true for white Hispanics.

Whites were more likely than Hispanics or blacks to be the victim of a personal theft in 1991

Race/ethnicity of victim	Personal theft victimizations per 1,000 population	
	Ages 12–17	Ages 18–24
Total	101	110
White (not Hispanic)	109	122
White Hispanic	74	84
Black	87	77
Other	76	93

White juveniles were 25% more likely to be the victim of a personal theft than were black juveniles in 1991. In contrast, while white and Hispanic young adults were about 10% more likely to be a victim of a personal theft than were same race juveniles, black

juveniles were at greater risk than young black adults.

When cash or property was taken from a juvenile victim in 1991, most lost less than \$25

In 1991, 56% of crimes involving personal theft from a juvenile resulted in losses of \$25 or less. Twenty-seven percent involved losses of more than \$50. The losses of adult victims were somewhat greater. Among adults, 36% of personal thefts involved the loss of \$25 or less and 50% involved losses of more than \$50.

Personal crimes with juvenile victims occurred most often in school or on school property

In 1991 approximately 56% of juvenile victimizations happened in school or on school property. There is no comparable place where crimes against adults were so concentrated. Much of this concentration for juveniles was due to personal theft. Seventy-two percent of personal thefts involving juvenile victims occurred in school.

Twenty-three percent of violent juvenile victimizations occurred in school or on school property in 1991. For juveniles, violent crimes were about as likely to occur at home (25%) as they were in school. A somewhat larger proportion of the violent crimes reported by juvenile victims occurred on the street (33%). A larger proportion (35%) of violent crimes involving adult victims happened in the home.

Few juvenile victimizations are reported to law enforcement

Only 20% of juvenile personal victimizations were brought to the attention of police in 1991. In contrast, 37% of adult personal victimizations were reported to police. When asked why the event was not reported to police, 35% of these juvenile victims said that they reported the incident to some other authority, primarily school officials. If the percentage of juvenile victimizations reported to police is combined with those not reported to police but reported to school officials, approximately 48% of juvenile personal victimizations were reported to an authority in 1991.

Juveniles reported that police responded to approximately 64% of the personal crimes brought to their attention. This is essentially the same rate at which police appeared for events reported to them by adult victims.

For personal crimes involving juvenile victims that resulted in a police response, the victim reported that the police arrived within 10 minutes of notification in 48% of the incidents. In 82% of the incidents, police arrived within an hour.

Response times were similar for adults. Police arrived within 10 minutes in 43% of the incidents and within an hour in 82% of the incidents.

A juvenile's risk of becoming a victim of a nonfatal violent crime increased between 1987 and 1991

NCVS monitors changes in nonfatal violent victimizations

The National Crime Victimization Survey asks respondents to report on crimes in which they were the victim, which obviously excludes fatal incidents. Nonfatal violent victimizations include rape, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault.

The risk of violent victimization has increased for juveniles and young adults in recent years

Between 1987 and 1991 the risk that a person between the ages of 12 and 17 would become a victim of a nonfatal violent crime increased 17%. Over this period the risk of violence increased from 61 to 71 violent victimizations per 1,000 juveniles. During the same period the risk of violence for those ages 18–24 increased 24% from 66 to 81 per 1,000. The risk of violent victimizations for age groups above age 24 declined with age, and the risks that they would become the victim of a nonfatal violent crime did not increase between 1987 and 1991.

During the same period the risk of personal theft for juveniles decreased from 114 to 101 per 1,000, although this decrease was not significant statistically.

Recent changes in juvenile victimization rates varied by race and ethnic group

Changes in a juvenile's risk of violent crime differed by race and ethnicity. The rate of violent victimization for non-Hispanic whites increased 21% between 1987 and 1991, from 57 to 69 per 1,000. During the same period, the violent victimization rate for blacks remained constant. Black juveniles had a violent victimization rate of 84 per 1,000 in 1991. The victimization rate for white-Hispanic juveniles increased more than 40% to a level equal to that of whites, but due to their small numbers in the NCVS sample, this difference was not statistically significant.

The increase in risk of violent victimization for young adults (ages 18 to 24) was greater for blacks than for whites from 1987 to 1991. Violent victimizations among non-Hispanic whites

increased 25% (from 67 to 84 per 1,000) and among blacks 48% (from 67 to 99 per 1,000).

The nature of nonfatal violence against juveniles did not change much between 1987 and 1991

In the case of serious violence (rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) no statistically significant changes occurred in the nature of juvenile victimizations. The proportion involving serious injury declined from 11% to 7% but this difference was not statistically significant. The percent of serious violent incidents resulting in injury remained essentially the same (37% in 1987 and 35% in 1991) as did the proportion resulting in hospital stays. The proportion of serious violent incidents in which weapons were used also remained essentially the same from 1987 (66%) to 1991 (67%).

Between 1987 and 1991 no statistically significant changes occurred in the places where serious violence occurred, in the reporting of these events to the police, or in the characteristics of juvenile victims.

The increased risk of violent victimization from 1987 to 1991 among juveniles ages 12–17 stems largely from an increase in simple assault rates

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Population ages 12–17 (in millions)	20,756	20,346	20,049	20,102	20,370
Total violent victimizations	1,258,000	1,245,000	1,294,000	1,328,000	1,448,000
Victimizations per 1,000 population:					
Crimes of Violence*	61	61	65	66	71
Robbery	8	9	10	11	10
Aggravated assault	15	16	14	16	15
Simple assault	36	36	39	37	44

* Includes data on rape not displayed as a separate category.

Source: Moone, J. (1994). Juvenile victimizations: 1987–1992. *OJJDP Fact Sheet*.

Recent large increases in the homicide rates of black and older juveniles are the result of increases in firearm homicides

Fatal injuries to youth have decreased, while homicides rise

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, injury was the leading cause of death for youth below age 20 in 1991. Homicide was second only to motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of fatal injuries. Two in five injury deaths of these youth in 1991 were the result of motor vehicle collisions. More than 1 in 5 injury deaths resulted from homicide. Between 1986 and 1991, while the number of youth dying in motor vehicle accidents declined 20%, homicide deaths rose substantially.

On a typical day in 1992, seven juveniles were murdered

An FBI Supplementary Homicide Report form is completed on all homicides known to police. Data are collected on victim and offender demographics, the victim-offender relationship, the weapon, and circumstances surrounding the homicide.

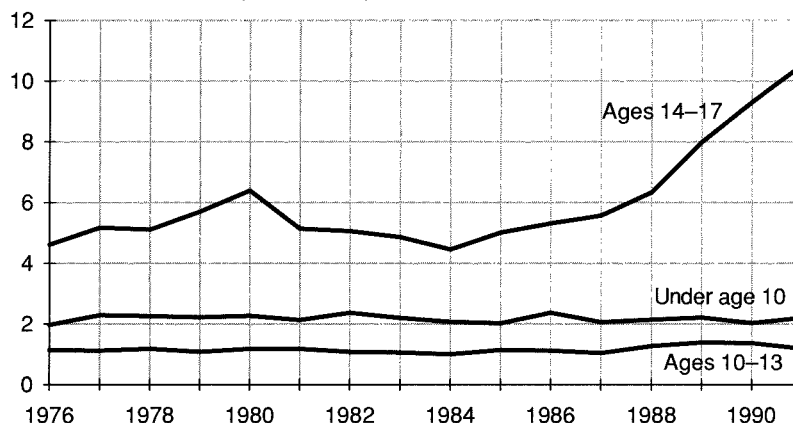
From 1985 through 1992 nearly 17,000 persons under age 18 were murdered in the U.S. In 1992, 2,595 juveniles were murdered, an average of 7 per day.

Year	Number of juvenile homicides
1985	1,605
1986	1,753
1987	1,738
1988	1,955
1989	2,184
1990	2,339
1991	2,610
1992	2,595

Source: FBI. (1986–1993). *Crime in the United States series*.

The homicide victimization rate for juveniles ages 14–17 has nearly doubled since the mid-1980's, while the rates for younger juveniles have remained relatively constant

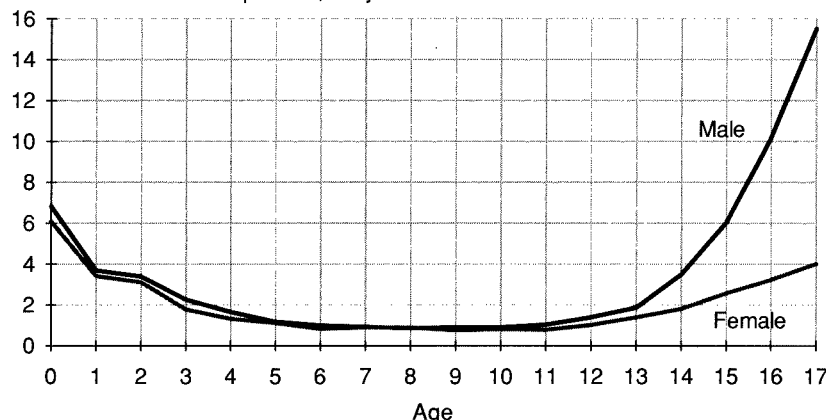
Homicide victimizations per 100,000 juveniles



Source: FBI. (1993). *Supplementary homicide reports 1976–1991* [machine-readable data files].

Until they become teens, boys and girls are equally likely to be murdered

Homicide victimizations per 100,000 juveniles



■ The rate of homicide victimization is higher for children age 5 and younger than for those between ages 6 and 11. After age 11 the homicide victimization rate increases throughout adolescence, especially for boys.

Note: Rates are based on the 1976–1991 combined average.

Source: FBI (1993). *Supplementary homicide reports 1976–1991* [machine-readable data files].

Juvenile homicides have increased most in large cities

The growth in juvenile homicide has been most pronounced in larger cities, those more than one-quarter million in population. Although the rate of juvenile homicides has increased in the U.S. in recent years, growth has been smallest in the South.

Homicide victimization rates have increased for males and females

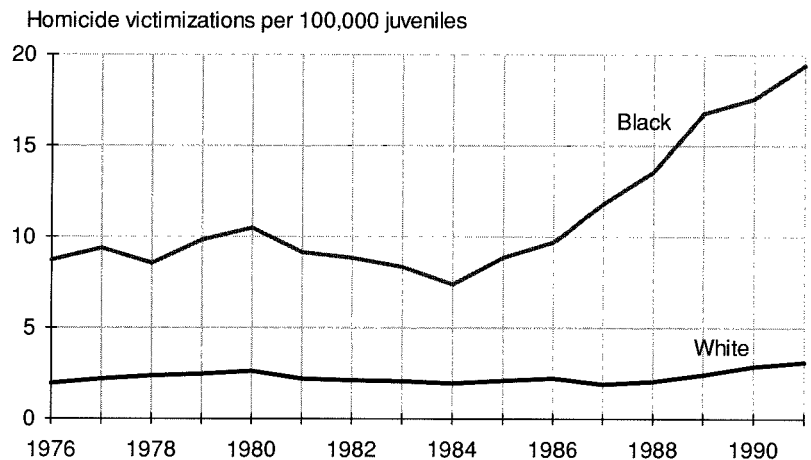
Sixty-five percent of juvenile homicide victims between 1976 and 1991 were male. The risk of being murdered has increased since the mid-1980's for both boys and girls. However, the increase has been greater for males. As a result, the male proportion of juvenile homicide victims has increased. In 1985, 64% of juvenile homicide victims were males; in 1991 this proportion had increased to 72%.

Black males ages 14–17 are more likely than other juveniles to be homicide victims

Slightly more than half of the juveniles killed between 1976 and 1991 were white. In terms of rate per 100,000 persons, however, black juveniles were 4 times more likely than white juveniles to be homicide victims. As a result, young black males have the highest homicide victimization rate of any race/sex group. The rate for black males was twice that of black females, 5 times that of white males, and 8 times that of white females.

Race and sex differences in homicide victimization rates were even more pronounced among older juveniles.

The homicide victimization rate among black juveniles has increased substantially in recent years



Source: FBI. (1993). *Supplementary homicide reports 1976–1991* [machine-readable data files].

Among juveniles ages 14 to 17, blacks were 5 times more likely to be murdered than whites. Similarly, older boys were 3 times more likely to be killed than older girls.

These race and sex differences in homicide victimization rates have increased in recent years, especially among older juveniles. In 1984 among juveniles ages 14 to 17, the homicide victimization rate for black males was 3 times that of black females, 5 times that of white males, and 9 times that of white females. By 1991 among these older juveniles, the homicide victimization rate for black males was 7 times that of black females, 8 times that of white males, and 29 times that of white females.

Most juvenile victims know their attacker, usually well

In 22% of homicides involving a juvenile victim between 1976 and 1991, information about the offender is

unknown because the case is unsolved. For cases in which the offender was known, 24% percent of juvenile victims were murdered by other juveniles. Most juveniles (76%) were killed by adults; 52% were killed by persons ages 18 to 29.

Most juvenile homicides involved victims and offenders of the same race. Ninety-two percent of the black juvenile victims were killed by blacks, and 93% of the white juvenile victims were killed by whites.

Forty percent of juvenile homicide victims were killed by family members, most of them by parents. Of these parent-killing-child cases, slightly more than half of the boys (53%) were killed by their fathers, and slightly more than half of the girls (51%) were murdered by their mothers.

Forty-five percent of juvenile homicide victims were murdered by friends, neighbors, or acquaintances. These

incidents generally involved boys being killed by males (66%).

Fourteen percent of juvenile homicide victims were killed by strangers. In murders by strangers, one-third occurred during the commission of another felony, such as rape or robbery.

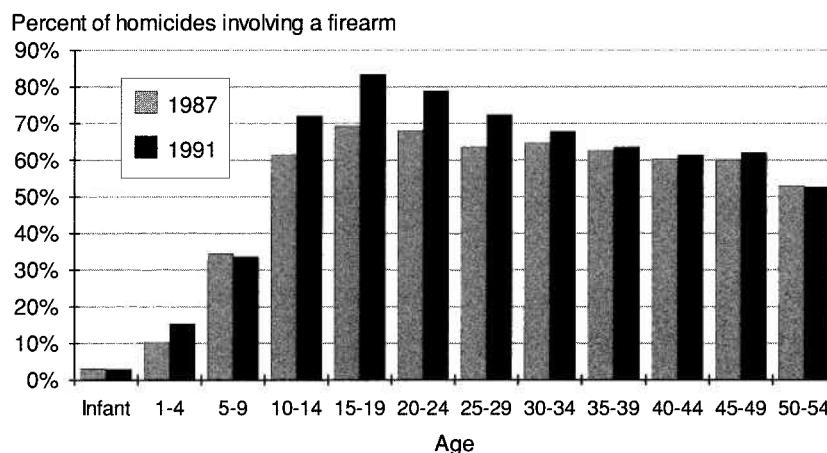
Young children are often killed by parents, older juveniles by their peers

Children were more likely than were older juveniles to be killed by their parents. Fifty-nine percent of homicide victims under age 10 were killed by parents (more often the father). Fists or feet were the most common weapons in such killings (45%). Eighteen percent of these younger children were killed with a firearm. These younger homicide victims were slightly more likely to be male (54%).

A Bureau of Justice Statistics study of murder cases disposed in 1988 found that 4 in 5 children under age 12 murdered by their parents had been previously abused by the parent who killed them.

Homicide victims ages 10 to 17 were more often killed by a friend or other acquaintance (61%) rather than by a family member (16%). More than 70% of these homicide victims were shot to death. The large majority of juvenile homicide victims in this age range were male (73%).

Homicides of youth ages 15–19 are most likely to involve a gun



Sources: FBI. (1988). *Crime in the United States 1987*. (1992). *Crime in the United States 1991*.

More than half of juvenile homicide victims are killed with a firearm

In 1991 approximately 57% of all juvenile homicide victims were killed with a firearm, 8% were killed with a cutting or stabbing instrument, and 17% were killed with personal weapons such as fists or feet. Overall, homicide victims under age 18 were less likely than were adult homicide victims to be killed with a firearm and more likely than were adult victims to be killed with personal weapons. Older teens (ages 15 to 19) were more likely than was any other age group to be killed with a gun, while the murderers of young children rarely used a gun.

The firearm homicide rate increased while the nonfirearm homicide rate declined

The firearm homicide death rate for teens ages 15 to 19 increased 61% between 1979 and 1989, from 6.9 to 11.1 deaths per 100,000. During the same period, the nonfirearm homicide rate decreased 29%, from 3.4 to 2.4. Thus, the observed increase in the homicide rate for older teenagers was driven solely by the increase in firearm homicides.

Homicides involving firearms have been the leading cause of death for black males ages 15 to 19 since 1969. In 1979 there were fewer than 40 such deaths per 100,000 black males that age in the population — by 1989 the figure had increased to more than 85. In 1989 the firearm homicide death rate among black males ages 15 to 19 in metropolitan counties was 6.5 times the rate in nonmetropolitan counties.

After a decade of gradual increase, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons violations increased 75% between 1987 and 1992

A weapons law violation was the most serious charge in 54,000 juvenile arrests in 1992

There were more juvenile arrests for weapons law violations in 1992 than for murder, forcible rape, and robbery combined. A weapons law violation was the most serious charge in 54,000 juvenile arrests. Many more juvenile arrests actually involved a weapons law violation but, following the FBI's reporting procedures, an arrest is classified under the most serious offense involved (e.g., aggravated assault, robbery, forcible rape, and murder).

Juveniles arrests for weapons law violations more than doubled between 1983 and 1992

Between 1983 and 1992 the adult arrests increased 21%, while juvenile arrests increased 117%. During this same time period, juvenile murder arrests rose 128% and aggravated assault arrests rose 95%, while arrests for other assaults increased 106%. These large increases in juvenile arrests reflect a growing involvement of juveniles in violent crime.

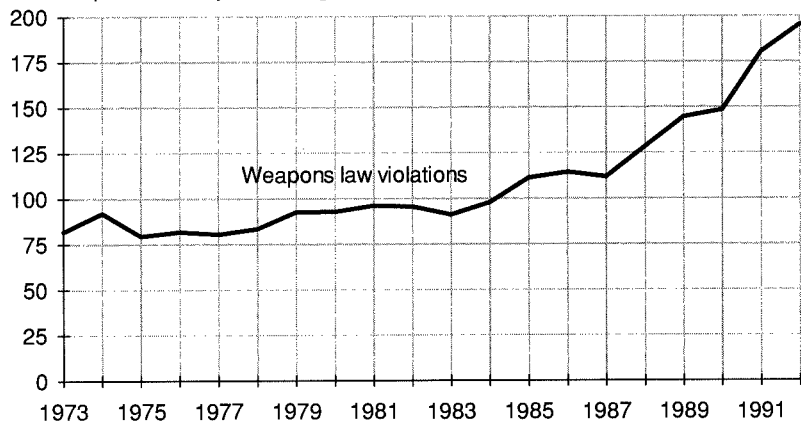
As juveniles age, the probability that their murderer will use a firearm increases substantially

The proportion of victims killed by firearms in 1992 varied with the age of the victim:

- 4% of victims under age 1.
- 15% of victims ages 1-4.
- 37% of victims ages 5-9.
- 72% of victims ages 10-14.
- 85% of victims ages 15-17.

The 20-year trend in the rate of juvenile arrests for weapons law violations closely parallels the juvenile arrest trend for murder

Arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17

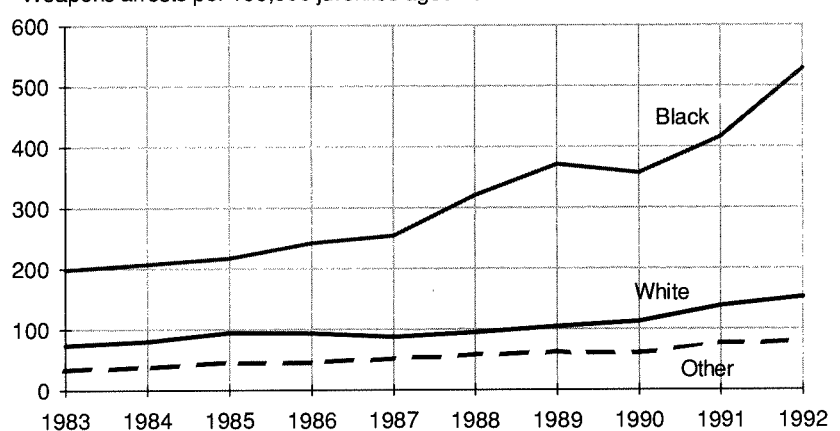


- It took 12 years (from 1975 to 1987) for the juvenile arrest rate for weapons offenses to increase 25%. In comparison, it took just 2 years (from 1987 to 1989) for the rate to increase another 25%, and then just 2 more years (from 1989 to 1991) for another 25% increase.

Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*.

Juvenile arrest rates for weapons law violations more than doubled between 1983 and 1992 in each racial group

Weapons arrests per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17



- The increase for black juveniles (167%) was greater than the increases for whites (106%) and for youth of other races (129%).

Source: FBI. (1994). *Age-specific arrest rates and race-specific arrest rates for selected offenses 1965-1992*.

Increase in homicides by juveniles is tied to the use of guns

The FBI is a primary source of information on homicide

The FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* provide data on offenders as well as victims. In 29% of homicides that occurred between 1976 and 1991, the identity of the perpetrator was unknown, at least at the time the reports were completed by law enforcement authorities. From the large majority of homicides in which the offender is known, however, a profile of juveniles who murder can be developed and trends in juvenile homicide can be examined.

The growth in homicides involving juvenile offenders has surpassed that among adults

From 1976 to 1991, nearly 23,000 persons under age 18 were known perpetrators of homicide in the U.S., an average of more than 1,400 per year. Moreover, the number of known juvenile homicide offenders has more than doubled in recent years, from 969 in 1984 to 2,202 in 1991, while the number of adult offenders increased 20% over the same period.

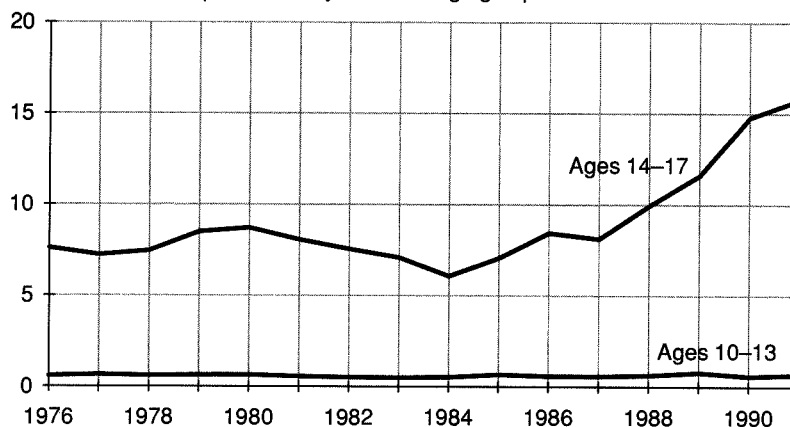
The trends in homicide for male and female juveniles are quite different. Controlling for population changes, homicides by male juveniles have more than doubled in number since the mid-1980's, whereas those by female juveniles have remained steady in recent years.

Between 1976 and 1991, 9 in 10 juvenile murderers were male, and about half were white

Most juvenile homicide offenders are male (91%). Boys are 10 times more likely to commit homicide than girls.

The homicide offending rate for 14–17-year-olds increased substantially in recent years, while the rate for younger juveniles remained constant

Homicide offenders per 100,000 juveniles in age group

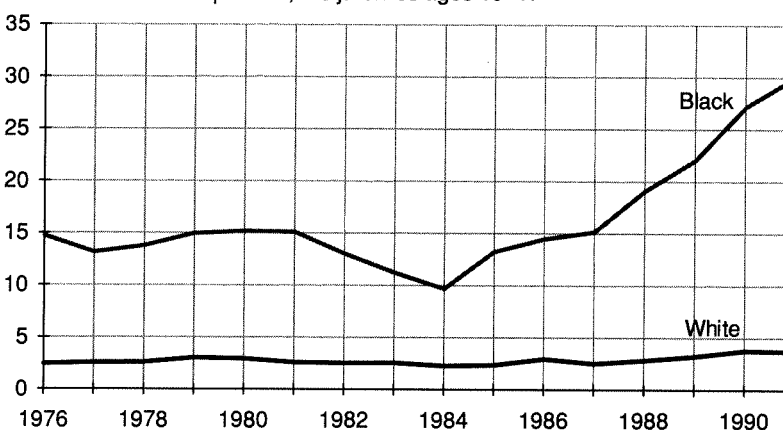


■ Between 1984 and 1991 the rate at which juveniles ages 14 to 17 committed murder increased 160%.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Supplementary homicide reports 1976-1991* [machine-readable data files].

The homicide offending rate for black juveniles is substantially higher than the rate for white juveniles and has risen sharply in recent years

Homicide offenders per 100,000 juveniles ages 10-17

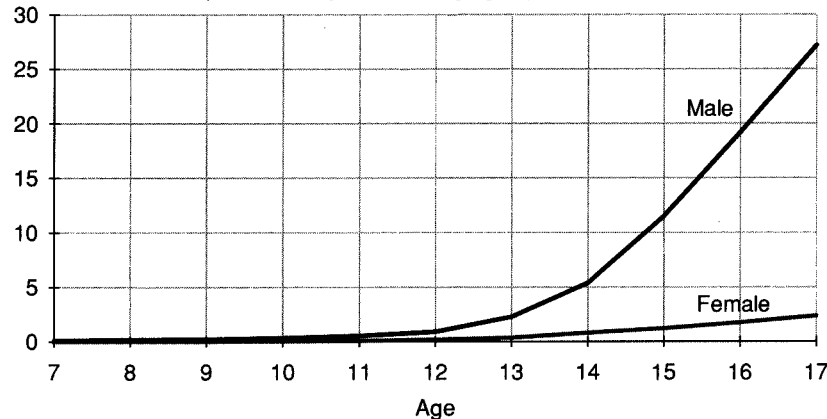


■ Between 1984 and 1991 the rate at which white juveniles committed murder increased by 64%, while the black juvenile murder rate increased 211%.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Supplementary homicide reports 1976-1991* [machine-readable data files].

The disparity between juvenile male and female homicide offending rates increases with age

Homicide offenders per 100,000 juveniles in age group



- At age 13 the male homicide rate is 6.3 times greater than the female rate; by age 17 the male rate is 11.5 times greater.

Note: Rates are based on the 1976–1991 combined average.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Supplementary homicide reports 1976–1991* [machine-readable data files].

The rate of homicide offending increases throughout adolescence. This is true for both boys and girls, but the growth during adolescence is particularly sharp for boys.

Nearly half (47%) of juvenile homicide offenders are white. However, when population differences are taken into account, black juveniles kill at a rate 6 times that of white juveniles.

In most homicides, the victim and offender are of the same race. Ninety-two percent of the victims of white juveniles are white; 76% of victims of black juveniles are black.

Boys and girls tend to kill different types of victims

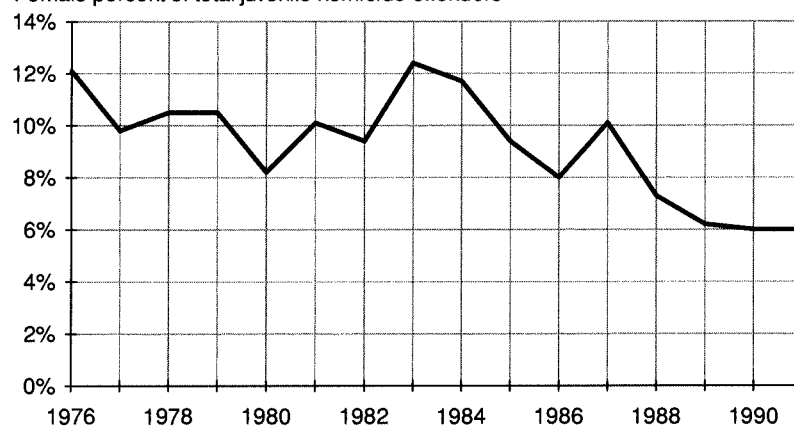
The typical male juvenile homicide offender kills a friend or acquaintance during an argument. Fifty-three percent killed friends or acquaintances, while 34% killed strangers. In 67% of homicides the boy used a gun, and a knife was used in another 18% of the cases.

The typical female juvenile homicide offender is nearly as likely to kill a family member (41%) as a friend or acquaintance (46%). Firearms are not used as often in female homicides as in homicides by males. While 42% of female juvenile homicide offenders used a firearm, 32% killed with a knife.

Both male and female juvenile homicide offenders tend to kill males. Eighty-five percent of boys and 70% of girls killed males (generally friends, fathers, or brothers).

The female proportion of juvenile homicide offenders declined between 1987 and 1991

Female percent of total juvenile homicide offenders



- While the female proportion of juvenile offenders declined between 1976 and 1991, the number of female juvenile homicide offenders remained relatively constant.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Supplementary homicide reports 1976–1991* [machine-readable data files].

Nearly one-third of juvenile murder victims are strangers

When juveniles commit homicide, most of their victims are friends or acquaintances (53%). Thirty-two percent of juvenile murder victims are strangers, and 15% are family members.

When juveniles kill strangers, generally the perpetrator is male (96%) and black (57%), uses a gun (64%), and kills during the commission of a felony (62%).

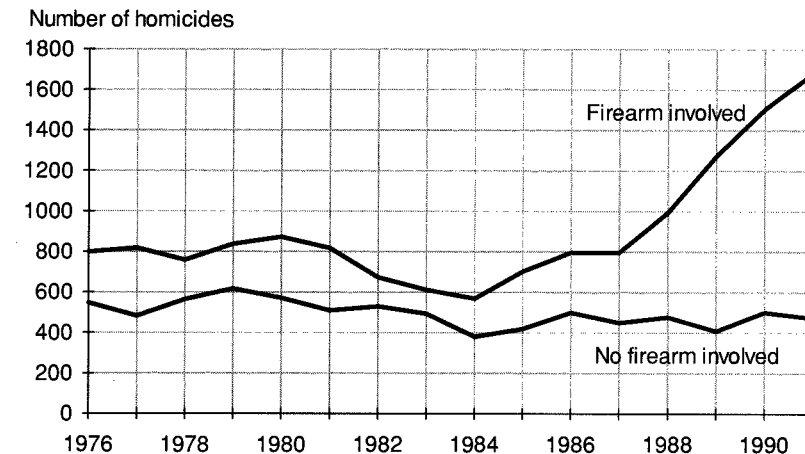
Similarly, when juveniles kill friends or acquaintances, the perpetrator is almost always male (92%), is equally likely to be white or black, kills with a firearm (62%), and is frequently motivated by an argument or brawl (45%).

In family-related incidents, the offender is usually male (75%), is more often white (64%), murders with a firearm (64%), and is motivated by an argument or brawl (51%). When juveniles commit homicide within the family, they typically kill fathers/stepfathers (30%) or brothers (17%).

Handguns accounted for the greatest proportion of homicides by juveniles from 1976 to 1991

Over the period 1976 to 1991, firearms were used by 65% of juvenile homicide offenders — 44% used handguns. The use of firearms by juvenile homicide offenders increased substantially over this period. In 1976, 59% of juvenile homicide offenders killed with a gun; by 1991 the figure was 78%.

Gun homicides by juveniles have nearly tripled since 1983, while homicides involving other weapons have actually declined



■ From 1983 through 1991, the proportion of homicides in which the juvenile uses a gun increased from 55% to 78%.

Source: FBI. (1993). *Supplementary homicide reports 1976–1991* [machine readable data files].

A growing number of juveniles kill in groups of two or more

Multiple-offender killings have more than doubled since the mid-1980's. While in a majority (77%) of homicide incidents involving juvenile offenders the offender acted alone, 14% involved 2 offenders, 6% involved 3 offenders, and 3% involved 4 or more offenders. Group killings typically involve guns (64%) or knives (17%), and often occur during the commission of other felonious acts (51%). When multiple offenders are involved they are disproportionately black (52%) and male (93%). Victims of multiple-offender homicides are as likely to be strangers as not and are more likely to be male (86%) and white (60%).

Group killings are more likely to cross racial lines than single-offender homicides. Whereas 11% of single-offender killings involve victims and offenders of different races, one-quarter of multiple-offender homicides involved victims and offenders of different races. These mixed-race group killings typically involve black offenders killing white victims (71% of all mixed-race combinations) who are strangers (76%), and often involve the element of robbery (60%).

How many juveniles carry guns and other weapons?

Many high school students say they carry weapons, but few carry guns

In 1990 the Centers for Disease Control asked a nationally representative sample of students in grades 9–12 how many times they had carried a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club, during the past 30 days. One in five reported carrying a weapon at least once in the previous month. About 1 in 20 said they had carried a firearm, usually a handgun.

Males were nearly 4 times as likely as females to report carrying a weapon (31% vs. 8%). Hispanic males (41%) and black males (39%) were more likely to say they carried a weapon than were white males (29%).

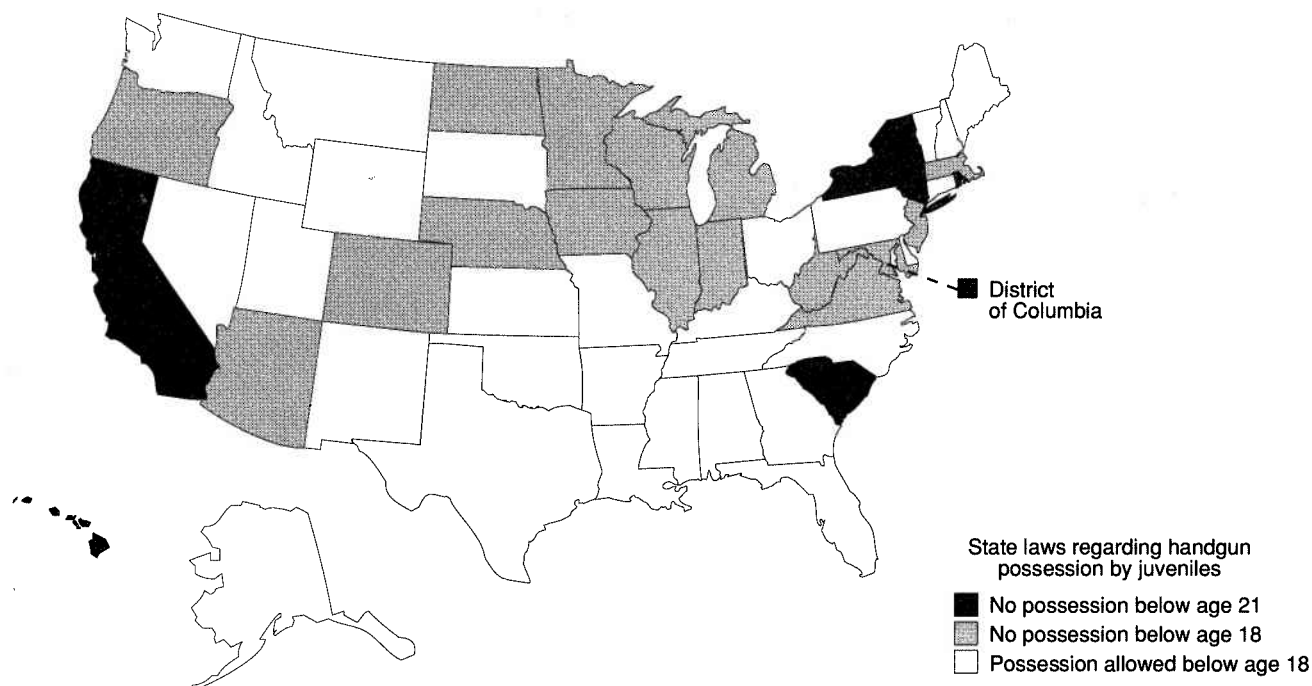
Of students who reported they had carried a weapon, 25% said they had carried a weapon only once in the 30-day period, while 43% reported carrying a weapon 4 or more times. Students who reported carrying weapons 4 or more times were 9% of all students and accounted for 71% of weapon-carrying incidents.

Among students who reported carrying a weapon, knives or razors were carried more often (55%) than clubs (24%) or firearms (21%). Most students who reported carrying firearms carried handguns. Black males were the only group for whom firearms were carried more often than other weapons — 54% of black males who carried weapons carried a firearm.

Study finds strong relationship among illegal gun ownership, delinquency, and drug abuse

A recent longitudinal study of high risk, urban youth in Rochester, New York, assessed the scope of legal and illegal gun ownership by 9th and 10th grade boys. [Legal guns are defined as shotguns or rifles owned for reasons other than protection.] By 10th grade more boys owned illegal guns (7%) than legal guns (3%). Of those who owned illegal guns, 57% carried them on a regular basis, and 24% had used a gun in a street crime. Compared with those with legal guns, boys with illegal guns were more likely to be involved in street crime (74% vs. 14%), to use drugs (41% vs. 13%), and to be a gang member (54% vs. 7%).

At the end of 1993, 16 states had laws prohibiting the possession of handguns by juveniles



Source: National Governors' Association. (1994). *Kids and violence*.

All States allow juveniles to be tried as adults in criminal court under certain circumstances

There is more than one path to criminal court

A juvenile's delinquency case can be transferred to criminal court for trial as an adult in one of three ways:

- Judicial waiver.
- Prosecutorial discretion.
- Statutory exclusion.

In a given State, one, two, or all three transfer mechanisms may be in place.

Transfers to criminal court have been allowed in some States for more than 70 years

Some States have permitted juvenile offenders to be transferred to criminal court since before the 1920's — Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Tennessee. Other States have permitted transfers since at least the 1940's — Delaware,

Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Utah.

Traditionally, the decision to transfer a youth to criminal court was made by a juvenile court judge and was based upon the individual circumstances in each case. Beginning in the 1970's and continuing through the 1990's, however, State legislatures increasingly moved young offenders into criminal court based on age and offense seriousness without the case-specific assessment offered by the juvenile court process. In half the States, laws have been enacted that exclude some offenses from juvenile court and a number of States have also expanded the range of excluded offenses. One-quarter of the States have given prosecutors the discretion to charge certain offenses either in juvenile or criminal court.

Judicial waiver is the most common transfer provision

In all States except Nebraska and New York, juvenile court judges may waive jurisdiction over a case and transfer it to criminal court. Such action is usually in response to a request by the prosecutor; however, in several States, juveniles or their parents may request judicial waiver. In most States, statutes limit waiver by age and offense.

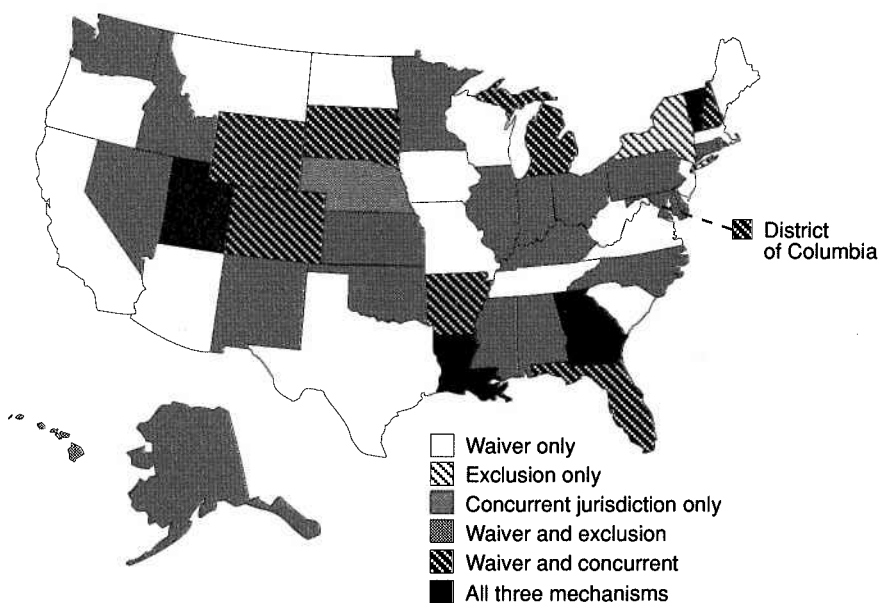
Statutes establish waiver criteria other than age and offense

Most State statutes also limit judicial waiver to juveniles who are "no longer amenable to treatment." The specific factors that determine lack of amenability vary, but typically include the juvenile's offense history and previous dispositional outcomes. Many statutes instruct juvenile courts to consider the availability of dispositional alternatives for treating the juvenile and the time available for sanctions, as well as public safety and the best interests of the child when making waiver decisions. The waiver process must adhere to certain constitutional principles of fairness (see Supreme Court decisions earlier in this chapter).

Criminal courts often may return transferred cases to juvenile court or order juvenile sanctions

Several States have provisions for transferring "excluded" or "direct filed" cases from criminal court to juvenile court under certain circumstances. This procedure is sometimes referred to as "reverse" waiver or transfer. In many States juveniles tried as adults in criminal court may receive dispositions involving either criminal or juvenile court sanctions.

Many States have a combination of transfer provisions



Note: Analysis conducted 10/94; some provisions effective 1/1/95.

The number of juveniles transferred to criminal court has grown substantially in recent years

In certain cases juveniles may be tried in criminal court

Juveniles charged with serious offenses, with lengthy records of prior offenses, or who are unreceptive to treatment in the juvenile justice system are sometimes transferred to criminal court. The methods used to move juveniles into the adult system vary. In recent years, many States modified their laws to transfer more young offenders into the criminal courts. Increasingly, young offenders are moved into the adult system by legislative or prosecutorial actions rather than by judicial waiver.

There has been a substantial increase in waived cases

Between 1988 and 1992, the number of cases judicially waived to criminal court increased 68%.

Most serious offense	Number of waived cases		Percent change
	1988	1992	
Delinquency	7,000	11,700	68%
Person	2,000	4,000	101
Property	3,700	5,200	42
Drugs	700	1,400	91
Public order	500	1,000	90

Note: Detail may not add to totals because of rounding. Percent change was calculated using unrounded numbers.

Source: Butts, J., et al. (1995). *Juvenile court statistics 1992*.

Fewer than half of the cases judicially waived to criminal court involve person offenses

Although several factors may result in young offenders being transferred to criminal court, the offenses involved in such cases often do not match the expectations of elected officials or the public. In 1982, for example, a national survey of criminal court transfers found that 32% of judicial waivers involved violent offenses against persons, while 62% involved either property charges or public order offenses. A similar pattern existed in 1992 when, according to *Juvenile Court Statistics*, person offense cases accounted for just over one-third of judicially waived cases. Two-thirds of the delinquency cases judicially waived in 1992 involved either property offenses, drug law violations, or public order offenses as the most serious charge.

Most serious offense of judicially waived cases in 1992:

Person	34%
Property	45
Drugs	12
Public order	9
Total	100%

Source: Butts, J., et al. (1995). *Juvenile court statistics 1992*.

Fewer than 2% of all formally processed delinquency cases are judicially waived to criminal court

Offense	Percent of petitioned delinquency cases that were waived				
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Delinquency	1.2%	1.4%	1.3%	1.6%	1.6%
Person	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.4	2.4
Property	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.3
Drugs	1.5	2.8	2.7	4.4	3.1
Public order	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8

Source: Butts, J., et al. (1995). *Juvenile court statistics 1992*.

Judicially waived cases generally involve older males

	Percent of waived cases				
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Age at Referral					
15 or younger	7%	11%	10%	9%	12%
16 or older	93	89	90	91	88
Sex					
Male	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%
Female	4	5	4	4	4
Race					
White	54%	49%	45%	46%	47%
Black	43	49	52	52	50
Other	2	2	3	2	3

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

Source: Butts, J., et al. (1995). *Juvenile court statistics 1992*.

Given recent increases in juvenile violence, more research is needed on the impact of transferring juveniles to criminal court

Information on the criminal court's response to transferred juveniles is nearly 10 years old

Research capturing court practice in the mid 1980's found that, while transfer to criminal court was reserved for the most serious offenders, these youth were handled more leniently, probably because they were appearing in criminal court for the first time and at a relatively young age. In addition, juveniles tried as adults gain the right to bail, increasing their chances of release from pretrial custody when handled in the criminal system.

A 1978 national survey by Hamparian and others found that the majority of transferred cases sentenced in criminal court received probation, fines, or other alternatives to incarceration. This study found that 46% of cases waived by juvenile court judges and 39% of those filed directly by prosecutors resulted in a criminal court sentence that involved incarceration.

A study by Bortner examined the cases of 214 juveniles who were waived to adult court in 1980 and 1981 and found that the majority (63%) of these cases received probation as the primary disposition. Jail or prison terms were ordered in 32% of cases, fines in 1%, and dismissal in 4%.

Some studies have found adult courts more likely to incarcerate. A study by Fagan compared juvenile and criminal court handling of 15- and 16-year-old felony offenders during 1981-82 in four neighboring counties in two States—New York where such felons are excluded from juvenile court jurisdiction and New Jersey where they are not. The study found that sanctions imposed by juvenile courts in New

Jersey were half as likely to include incarceration as were sentences imposed on similar age youth by criminal courts in New York. For example, New Jersey juvenile courts incarcerated 18% of robbery cases, while criminal courts in New York incarcerated 46%. In a more recent sample of cases handled in the same counties during 1986-87, however, the Fagan study found that robbery cases were more likely to receive incarceration in juvenile court (57% vs. 27%).

If incarcerated, transferred juveniles do not always receive longer sentences

A 1986 study by Rudman and others analyzed case outcomes for a sample of 177 violent youth considered for transfer in four urban jurisdictions. In 71 cases, the transfer was denied and the youth was handled in juvenile court. The study found that criminal court sentences were longer than those imposed by juvenile courts. While 43% of the youth handled in juvenile courts received terms of incarceration exceeding 2 years, this was true for 88% of the transferred youth. However, as with other studies that have employed this research design, part of the difference in sentencing could have resulted from the juvenile courts being more likely to transfer more serious cases.

Other studies have compared the length of juvenile and criminal court sentences and found them to be more similar. Fagan examined the sentences imposed by juvenile and adult courts in cases of felony burglary or robbery and found no significant differences in the minimum and maximum terms ordered. In robbery cases, juvenile courts ordered terms of confinement with an

Large numbers of criminal court cases involving offenders under age 18 occur in States where all 16- or 17-year-olds are considered adults

In most jurisdictions, juvenile courts have original responsibility over all law violations committed by youth through age 17. In eight States, however, the upper age of original jurisdiction has been set at 16 (Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, South Carolina, and Texas). In three States (Connecticut, New York, and North Carolina), the age is 15, which means that youth 16 and older are subject to criminal prosecution for any offense.

In 1991, the National Center for Juvenile Justice estimated that up to 176,000 offenders below age 18 were handled in the Nation's criminal courts because State legislatures set the age of adult responsibility for crime at 16 or 17. In comparison, juvenile court judges waived just 9,700 cases to criminal courts in 1991. When the effects of statutory age limits are combined with offense-based exclusions from the juvenile court, it is likely that legislators "transfer" far more youth to criminal court than do either judges or prosecutors.

average minimum of 11 months and an average maximum of 34 months. Criminal court sentences had average minimum and maximum terms of 11 and 32 months, respectively.

Procedural differences between juvenile and criminal courts make comparisons difficult

Comparing case outcomes in juvenile and adult courts is problematic. A 1983 study by Greenwood and others examined court dispositions of juveniles and young adults (ages 16-21) charged

with armed robbery or residential burglary in three large California jurisdictions. The study found that adult court sentences were more severe on average, but the difference was partly due to the juvenile court's differentiated handling of youth charged with the same offense. When offenders had a prior record, the juvenile court's response was far more severe, while criminal court dispositions varied much less with the offender's prior record.

In Los Angeles, for example, robbery cases that involved two or more aggravating factors were nearly 3 times as likely to result in incarceration in juvenile court as those having no aggravating factors. Aggravating factors had less effect on the severity of criminal court dispositions.

Aggravating factors	Percent sentenced to incarceration	
	Young adults	Juveniles
None	41%	23%
One	43	38
Two or more	53	63

Source: Greenwood, P., et al. (1983). *Youth crime and juvenile justice in California: A report to the Legislature*.

Transferring young offenders to the criminal courts may not improve the deterrent effect of court sanctions

The Fagan study, for example, compared postrelease outcomes for 15- and 16-year-olds charged with felony robbery or burglary in criminal courts and juvenile courts. The probability of rearrest and reincarceration was no different for youth charged with burglary, regardless

of which court handled their case. Offenders charged with robbery, on the other hand, were significantly *less* likely to be rearrested and reincarcerated if they were handled as juveniles. Among the offenders who recidivated during the study's followup period, the length of time before rearrest was significantly *longer* for youth who received juvenile court sanctions.

Studies on the impact of criminal court transfer have not yielded definitive conclusions

The debate over the efficacy of criminal court transfer has been underway for at least 50 years. Yet, there are still no definitive answers to basic questions about the effects of the practice. In many ways, policy makers are operating in the dark on this issue.

Although there have been few reliable studies on the impact of transfer and the studies describe behavior that predates recent large increases in violent juvenile crime, the most common findings of these studies indicate that transferring serious juvenile offenders to the criminal justice system does not appreciably increase the certainty or severity of sanctions. While transfer may increase the length of confinement for a minority of the most serious offenders, the majority of transferred juveniles receive sentences that are comparable to sanctions already available in the juvenile justice system. More importantly, there is no evidence that young offenders handled in criminal court are less likely to recidivate than those remaining in juvenile court.

Florida's use of concurrent jurisdiction has increased dramatically since 1981

In a growing number of States, juvenile and adult courts have "concurrent jurisdiction" over certain offenders. Prosecutors decide in which court to file charges. National statistics are not available on the young offenders who end up in adult court in this manner. In States that allow such transfers, however, they are likely to outnumber judicial waivers by a large margin.

The State of Florida expanded its concurrent jurisdiction statute in 1981, giving State attorneys more discretion to try offenders under age 18 in adult court. By the early 1990's, cases transferred by prosecutors out-numbered judicial waivers by 6 to 1. In 1993 prosecutor transfers accounted for more than 80% of the offenders under age of 18 who were handled in criminal court. Overall, transfers to criminal court increased 216% between 1981 and 1993. A 1982 national survey of transfers estimated that 2,000 prosecutor transfers occurred nationwide. In 1993 Florida prosecutors alone filed criminal charges in 7,000 cases involving offenders under age 18.

Although Florida's use of prosecutor discretion increased relative to judicial waiver, the offense profile of transferred cases did not change substantially. In fiscal 1993, 29% of cases transferred to Florida's adult courts involved a violent felony as the most serious charge. The majority involved nonviolent felonies such as drug charges and property crimes (54%) or misdemeanors and other delinquency offenses (17%).

Imposition of the death penalty for juvenile crimes is very rare

Supreme Court decisions set the minimum age for receiving the death penalty at 16

The Supreme Court, in *Eddings v. Oklahoma* (1982), held that just as the background and mental and emotional development of a youthful defendant should be considered in sentencing, so should a defendant's young age 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.

In *Thompson v. Oklahoma* (1988), the issue before the Supreme Court was whether imposing the death penalty on a juvenile murderer, who was only 15 years old at the time of the offense, violated constitutional protection against cruel and unusual punishment. In an opinion by Justice Stevens, four justices concluded that the Eighth Amendment prohibited application of the death penalty to a person who was younger than 16 at the time of the crime. Justice O'Connor concurred with the opinion, but on the narrower grounds that no minimum age was specified in the State's capital punishment provisions. A year later the Court decided in *Stanford v. Kentucky* that the Eighth Amendment does not prohibit the death penalty for crimes committed at ages 16 or 17.

What is the minimum age authorized for the death penalty?

Younger than 18	Age 18	None specified
South Dakota (10) ^a	California	Arizona
Arkansas (14) ^b	Colorado	Delaware
Utah (14)	Connecticut ^c	Florida
Virginia (15)	Illinois	Idaho
Alabama (16)	Maryland	Montana
Indiana (16)	Nebraska	Pennsylvania
Kentucky (16)	New Jersey	South Carolina
Louisiana (16)	New Mexico	Washington
Mississippi (16) ^d	Ohio	
Missouri (16)	Oregon	
Nevada (16)	Tennessee	
Oklahoma (16)	Federal system	
Wyoming (16)		
Georgia (17)		
New Hampshire (17)		
North Carolina (17) ^e		
Texas (17)		

Note: Ages at the time of the capital offense were indicated by the offices of the State attorneys general.

a Only after a transfer hearing to try a juvenile as an adult.

b See Arkansas Code Ann. 9-27-318(b)(1) (Repl. 1991).

c See Conn. Gen. Stat. 53a-46a(g)(1).

d Minimum age defined by statute is 13, but effective age is 16 based on an interpretation of U.S. Supreme Court decisions by the State attorney general's office.

e Age required is 17 unless the murderer was incarcerated for murder when a subsequent murder occurred; the age then may be 14.

Source: Greenfeld, L., and Stephan, J. (1993). Capital punishment 1992. *BJS Bulletin*.

Youth under age 18 account for a small proportion of those receiving the death penalty

Between 1973 and 1993, 121 death sentences were handed down to youth who were under age 18 at the time of their crime, accounting for about 2% of the total number of death sentences imposed since 1973. In the years prior to 1987, as many as 7% of death sentences involved youth younger than 18 at the time of their crime. The proportion dropped from 1987 through 1989 presumably because of cases pending before the Supreme Court.

Most juvenile death sentences are eventually reversed

As with most death sentences, a large proportion of the death sentences imposed for crimes committed at age 17 or younger are reversed. Since 1973, 66% of these "juvenile" death sentences have been reversed, 7% have resulted in executions, and 27% are still in force.

Recent executions involved 17-year-old "adults" in States where the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction is 16

Executions of under-18 offenders: January 1, 1973 – December 31, 1993

Name	State	Age at crime	Race	Age at execution
Charles Rumbaugh	TX	17	white	28
J. Terry Roach	SC	17	white	25
Jay Pinkerton	TX	17	white	24
Dalton Prejean	LA	17	black	30
Johnny Garrett	TX	17	white	28
Curtis Harris	TX	17	black	31
Frederick Lashley	MO	17	black	29
Ruben Cantu	TX	17	Hispanic	26
Chris Burger	GA	17	white	33

Source: Streib, V. (1994). Present death row inmates under juvenile death sentences and death sentences and executions for juvenile crimes, January 1, 1973 to December 31, 1993. *The juvenile death penalty today*.

Most inmates on death row for "juvenile" crimes were 17 when they committed their offense

Of the 33 inmates on death row at the end of 1993 for offenses committed at age 17 or younger:

- 26 were 17 at the time of their offense.
- 6 were 16.
- 1 was 15.

About a third of the 33 inmates (17 of 33) were not "juveniles" at the time of their offense — they were older than their State's upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction. The majority of these were 17-year-olds from Texas where the upper age is 16 (10 of 17).

The youngest of those on death row for "juvenile" crimes was 18 years old; the oldest was 35. The average age of those on death row for "juvenile" crimes was 24. As of the end of 1993, an average of nearly 6 years had passed since their initial "juvenile" death sentence.

Nearly all victims were adults and a majority were white

Most of the victims of the 34 inmates on death row for "juvenile" crimes were adults (39 of 44). Most of the victims were white (32 of 44). A white offender killing a white victim(s) was the most common offender-victim scenario.

Offender	Victim	
	Minority	Nonminority
Minority	13	12
Nonminority	2	15

Note: Minority includes blacks and Hispanics. Nonminority includes whites not of Hispanic ethnicity.

Source: Streib, V. (1994). Present death row inmates under juvenile death sentences and death sentences and executions for juvenile crimes, January 1, 1973 to December 31, 1993. *The juvenile death penalty today*.

What types of murder are commonly cited in State death penalty statutes?

Type of murder for which death penalty is authorized Number of States

Murder during another crime

Sexual offenses (rape)	28
Kidnapping	30
Robbery	24
Burglary	21
Arson	20

Murder by a person with a criminal justice status or criminal history

Defendant was in custody	27
Defendant was previously convicted of murder	29

Murder of a certain type of victim

Law enforcement officer	34
Corrections employee	23
Firefighter	18

Murder carried out in a particular way

Murder was especially heinous, atrocious, cruel, vile, etc.	23
Defendant created a grave risk of death to others	23

Murder carried out for a particular purpose

For pecuniary gain (contract murder)	34
To effect an escape	21
To avoid or prevent arrest	21

Other

Multiple murders	15
Hiring another to kill	24

Source: Szymanski, L. (1992). *Death penalty statutes—statutes analysis*.

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Technical Note

While juvenile arrest rates reflect juvenile behavior, many other factors can affect the size 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 a jurisdiction whose resident youth behave in an identical manner.

Jurisdictions, especially small jurisdictions, which are vacation destinations or which are centers for economic activity in a region may have arrest rates that reflect more than the behavior of their resident youth.

Other factors that influence the magnitude of arrest rates in a given area include the attitudes of its citizens toward crime, the policies of the jurisdiction's law enforcement agencies, and the policies of other components of the justice system. Consequently, the comparison of juvenile arrest rates across jurisdictions, while informative, should be done with caution.

In most areas not all law enforcement agencies report their arrest data to the FBI. Rates for these areas are then necessarily based on partial information. If the reporting law enforcement agencies in these jurisdictions are not representative of the complete jurisdiction, then the rates will be biased. For example, if the only agencies that report in a county are urban agencies, the county's reported

rate will only reflect activity in the urban section of the county. Reported rates for jurisdictions with less than complete reporting may not be accurate.

In the cited reports, the FBI calculates juvenile arrest rates by dividing the number of arrests of persons under age 18 by the population ages 0 through 17. While this is consistent, the majority of the population in this age range is below 10, while few arrestees are below age 10. For this report, the FBI's reported arrest rates were modified to make them more sensitive to changes in that part of the juvenile population that is likely to generate the arrest figures. Specifically, the reported arrest rates were recalculated using a population base of persons ages 10 through 17.

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