



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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Residential Placement of Adjudicated Youth, 1987–1996

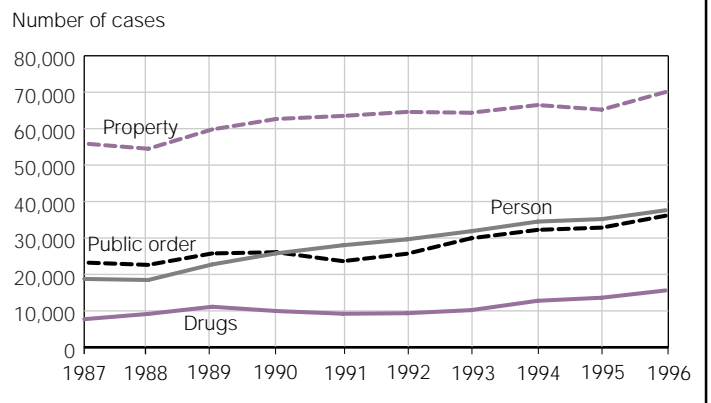
by Lynn Ryan MacKenzie

In 1996, more than one in four adjudicated delinquency cases resulted in out-of-home placement

Juvenile courts employ a variety of dispositions for youth adjudicated as delinquent offenders. In 1996, 28% of adjudicated delinquency cases resulted in a disposition ordering out-of-home placement. This included placements in residential treatment centers, juvenile corrections facilities, foster homes, and group homes. Of the remaining cases, 54% resulted in an order of probation, 4% resulted in a release at disposition, and 13% had some other disposition, such as restitution, fines, community service, referral to other treatment agencies, etc.

The Children in Custody Census reported that 65,300 juveniles were in out-of-home placement by court commitment for delinquency on February 15, 1995. Of these, 67% were in public facilities and 33% were in private facilities. The average length of stay for juveniles

Residential Placement by Type of Offense



committed to public facilities and released in 1994 was 147 days; for private facilities, the average length of stay was 109 days.

In 1996, placement was least likely in cases involving youth charged with drug offenses (24%). Placement was used more frequently in adjudicated public order offense cases (32%), person offense cases (31%), and property offense cases (26%). The percentage for public order offense cases was relatively high because these cases included escapes from institutions along with probation and parole violations.

Placement cases grew 51% between 1987 and 1996

The number of adjudicated cases that resulted in out-of-home placement rose from 105,600 in 1987 to 159,400 in 1996. The largest increase was in the number of drug offense cases resulting in placement, which grew 102% from 1987 to 1996, and the number of person offense cases resulting in placement, which grew 100%. Placement for public order offenses grew 55%, followed by placement for property offenses, which grew 25%. The general pattern of increase in the number of out-of-home placements followed the pattern of increase in the number of adjudicated delinquency cases between 1987 and 1996: drug offenses grew 161%, person offenses grew 112%, public order offenses grew 81%, and property offenses grew 33%.

Residential Placement in Adjudicated Delinquency Cases

	Percent of Adjudicated Cases Involving Placement		
	1987	1992	1996
Total Delinquency	31%	30%	28%
Offense			
Person	33%	33%	31%
Property	28	27	26
Drugs	32	34	24
Public order	37	35	32
Gender			
Male	31%	31%	29%
Female	26	24	22
Race			
White	29%	28%	26%
Black	34	34	32
Other	30	37	32
Age at Referral			
12 or younger	22%	21%	18%
13–15	31	31	29
16 or older	31	31	29
Use of Detention			
Detained	50%	48%	49%
Not detained	19	21	20

Use of detention decreased in adjudicated cases where out-of-home placement was later ordered

In 1987, 60% of adjudicated youth who were placed out of the home had been detained prior to case disposition; in 1996, this figure dropped to 47%. During that same 10-year period, however, detained cases resulting in out-of-home placement remained steady at 49% and nondetained cases resulting in out-of-home placement remained steady at 20%.

The number of placements between 1987 and 1996 increased across all racial groups

In 1996, the majority of adjudicated cases resulting in placement involved white juveniles (59%). However, between 1987 and 1996,

the number of adjudicated cases involving placement increased least for white youth (43%) compared with black youth (58%) and youth of other races (128%). An estimated total of 159,400 adjudicated cases resulted in out-of-home placement in 1996. Of these, 94,600 involved white youth, 57,200 involved black youth, and 7,600 involved youth of other races. In that same year, 26% of adjudicated cases involving white youth resulted in out-of-home placement compared with 32% of cases involving black and other minority youth. While these data cannot control for the severity of the offense or the court histories of the youth, the disproportionate representation of minorities in out-of-home placement is a national concern. Suggestions of court bias in assessing the home conditions of minority youth and the lack of available community resources to provide needed supports have been raised as possible factors contributing to disparities in placement practices.

For further information

This Fact Sheet is based on the Report *Juvenile Court Statistics 1996*. Copies are available from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, 800-638-8736. OJJDP also supports distribution of a PC-compatible software version of the data analyzed in *Juvenile Court Statistics*. For a free copy of the software, *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics*, call the National Juvenile Court Data Archive at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, Pittsburgh, PA, 412-227-6950. This software can also be downloaded from OJJDP's home page: www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org.

Lynn Ryan MacKenzie, Ph.D., is a Research Associate with the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, which is supported by an OJJDP grant.

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	Proportion of All Out-of-Home Placement Cases		
	1987	1992	1996
Offense			
Person	18%	23%	24%
Property	53	50	44
Drugs	7	7	10
Public order	22	20	23
Gender			
Male	88%	89%	87%
Female	12	11	13
Race			
White	63%	57%	59%
Black	34	38	36
Other	3	5	5
Age at Referral			
12 or younger	4%	5%	4%
13-15	49	53	52
16 or older	47	42	44
Use of Detention			
Detained	60%	52%	47%
Not detained	40	48	53

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

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