



# Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report

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# Chapter 3

## Juvenile offenders

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

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

Abuse's Monitoring the Future Study, the National Youth Gang Center's National Youth Gang Survey, and the University of Pittsburgh's Pathways to Desistance Study. Official data on juvenile offending are presented from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Supplementary Homicide Reports and its National Incident-Based Reporting System.

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

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

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

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

There is an ongoing debate about the relative ability of self-report studies and official statistics to describe juvenile crime and victimization. Self-report studies can capture information on behavior that never comes to the attention of juvenile justice agencies. Compared with official studies, self-report studies find a much higher proportion of the juvenile population involved in delinquent behavior.

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

## Official statistics describe cases handled by the justice system

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

## Official statistics are open to multiple interpretations

Juvenile arrest rates for drug abuse violations have declined since their late 1990s peak. One interpretation of these official statistics could be that juveniles today are simply less likely to violate drug laws than were youth in the 1990s. National self-report studies (e.g., *Monitoring the Future*), however, find that illicit drug use has increased in recent years, approaching the relatively high levels reported in the late 1990s. If drug use is actually on the rise, the declining juvenile arrest rate for drug crimes may represent societal tolerance of such behavior and/or an unwillingness to bring these youth into the justice system for treatment or punishment.

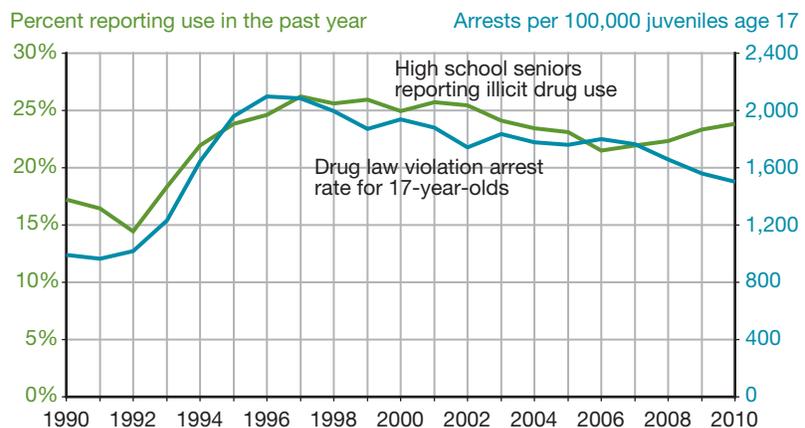
Although official records may be inadequate measures of the level of juvenile

offending, they do monitor justice system activity. Analysis of variations in official statistics across time and jurisdictions provides an understanding of justice system caseloads.

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

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

## Trends in self-report drug use and official records of drug arrest rates are marked by periods of convergence and disagreement



- Existing data sources send a mixed message regarding youth drug use. According to self-reports (e.g., *Monitoring the Future*), the proportion of high school seniors reporting drug use of any illicit drug in the past year has increased since 2006, rising from about 21% to 25% in 2010. Conversely, the arrest rate for drug law violations involving 17-year-olds has declined since 2006 (from 1,799 per 100,000 juveniles age 17 to 1,499 in 2010).

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston et al.'s *Monitoring the Future National Survey on Drug Use, 1975–2010. Volume I: Secondary School Students*; and authors' analysis of Snyder and Mulakowantota's *Arrest Data Analysis Tool* [online analysis].

# In 2011, school crime was common—1 in 8 students were in fights, 1 in 4 had property stolen or damaged

## National survey monitors youth health risk behaviors

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) monitors health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, injury, and social problems among youth in the U.S. Every 2 years, YRBS provides data representative of 9th–12th graders in public and private schools nationwide. The 2011 survey included responses from 15,425 students from 43 states and 21 large cities.

## More than 3 in 10 high school students were in a physical fight—1 in 25 were injured

According to the 2011 survey, 33% of high school students said they had been in one or more physical fights during the past 12 months. This is consistent with data from the 2003 survey. Regardless of grade level or race/ethnicity, males were more likely than females to engage in fighting. Fighting was more common among black and Hispanic students than white students.

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

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	32.8%	40.7%	24.4%
9th grade	37.7	46.0	28.8
10th grade	35.3	44.2	25.5
11th grade	29.7	36.3	22.7
12th grade	26.9	34.1	19.4
White	29.4	37.7	20.4
Black	39.1	45.8	32.3
Hispanic	36.8	44.4	28.7

Although physical fighting was fairly common among high school students, the proportion of students treated by a doctor or nurse was relatively small (4%). Males were more likely than females to have been injured in a fight. Black and Hispanic students were

more likely than white students to suffer fight injuries.

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

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	3.9%	5.1%	2.6%
9th grade	4.4	5.9	2.7
10th grade	4.1	5.1	3.0
11th grade	3.6	4.8	2.2
12th grade	3.3	4.3	2.1
White	2.8	3.5	1.9
Black	5.7	8.1	3.2
Hispanic	5.5	7.0	3.7

Nationwide, 12% of high school students had been in a physical fight on school property one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey, down from 16% in 1993. Male students were substantially more likely to fight at school than female students at all grade levels and across racial/ethnic groups. Black and Hispanic students were more likely to fight at school. Fighting at school decreased as grade level increased.

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

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	12.0%	16.0%	7.8%
9th grade	16.2	21.7	10.4
10th grade	12.8	17.0	8.0
11th grade	9.2	12.3	6.0
12th grade	8.8	11.4	6.1
White	9.9	13.8	5.6
Black	16.4	19.6	13.1
Hispanic	14.4	19.4	9.0

## Fewer than 3 in 10 high school students had property stolen or vandalized at school

High school students were less likely to experience property crime than fights at school. Nationally, 26% said they had property such as a car, clothing, or books stolen or deliberately damaged on school property one or more times during the past 12 months. A greater

proportion of male than female students experienced such property crimes at school, regardless of grade level or race/ethnicity.

Percent of students who had property stolen or deliberately damaged at school in the past year:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	26.1%	28.8%	23.4%
9th grade	26.6	27.7	25.5
10th grade	30.6	33.4	27.4
11th grade	23.5	26.7	20.1
12th grade	23.3	26.9	19.5
White	24.0	26.8	21.0
Black	27.3	28.7	25.9
Hispanic	30.7	33.3	27.8

## Fear of school-related crime kept 6 in 100 high schoolers home at least once in the past month

Nationwide in 2011, 6% of high school students missed at least 1 day of school in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or when traveling to or from school, up from 4% in 1993. Hispanic and black students were more likely than white students to have missed school because they felt unsafe. Sophomores were more likely than other high school students to miss school because of safety concerns.

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

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	5.9%	5.8%	6.0%
9th grade	5.8	5.4	6.3
10th grade	6.8	6.4	7.1
11th grade	5.2	5.3	5.1
12th grade	5.5	5.9	5.1
White	4.4	4.0	4.7
Black	6.7	8.0	5.3
Hispanic	9.1	8.5	9.6

The proportion of high school students who said they avoided school because of safety concerns ranged from 3% to 9% across state surveys.

# The proportion of high school students who carried a weapon to school dropped to 5% in 2011

## One-third of students who carried a weapon took it to school

The 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 5% of high school students said they had carried a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club) on school property in the past 30 days—down from 6% in 2003. Males were more likely than females to say they carried a weapon at school. The proportion of students who carried a weapon to school was nearly one-third of those who said they had carried a weapon anywhere in the past month (17%). In addition, the overall proportion of students reporting carrying a gun (anywhere) in the past month did not change significantly between 1999 (4.9%) and 2011 (5.1%).

Percent of students who carried a weapon on school property in the past 30 days:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	5.4%	8.2%	2.3%
9th grade	4.8	7.4	2.1
10th grade	6.1	9.4	2.5
11th grade	4.7	7.5	1.8
12th grade	5.6	8.2	2.8
White	5.1	7.8	2.3
Black	4.6	6.7	2.5
Hispanic	5.8	8.8	2.6

## In 2011, 7% of high school students were threatened or injured with a weapon at school

The overall proportion of students reporting weapon-related threats or injuries at school during the year decreased from 2003 (9%) to 2011 (7%).

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

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	7.4%	9.5%	5.2%
9th grade	8.3	10.3	6.2
10th grade	7.7	9.7	5.3
11th grade	7.3	9.2	5.3
12th grade	5.9	8.3	3.4
White	6.1	8.0	4.2
Black	8.9	11.2	6.6
Hispanic	9.2	12.1	6.0

## Across reporting states, the proportion of high school students carrying weapons to school in 2011 ranged from 3% to 11%

Reporting states	Percent reporting they carried a weapon on school property in past 30 days			Percent reporting they were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in the past year		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
U.S. Total	5.4%	8.2%	2.3%	7.4%	9.5%	5.2%
Alabama	8.2	11.6	4.5	7.6	9.6	5.2
Alaska	5.7	8.0	3.3	5.6	7.6	3.2
Arizona	5.7	8.3	3.0	10.4	13.1	7.2
Arkansas	6.5	10.6	2.3	6.3	7.3	4.5
Colorado	5.5	7.6	3.3	6.7	9.3	4.0
Connecticut	6.6	9.8	3.4	6.8	8.8	4.6
Delaware	5.2	7.1	3.3	6.4	8.5	4.4
Florida	—	—	—	7.2	8.4	5.8
Georgia	8.6	11.4	5.4	11.7	13.5	9.2
Hawaii	4.2	6.2	2.3	6.3	7.9	4.7
Idaho	6.3	10.2	2.2	7.3	9.6	4.9
Illinois	3.9	5.2	2.6	7.6	8.9	6.2
Indiana	3.7	5.8	1.6	6.8	7.8	5.7
Iowa	4.5	6.6	1.8	6.3	8.2	3.9
Kansas	5.2	7.4	2.6	5.5	7.4	3.5
Kentucky	7.4	11.6	3.1	7.4	8.7	5.1
Louisiana	4.2	6.1	1.9	8.7	10.0	6.9
Maine	8.0	11.9	3.7	6.8	8.4	4.7
Maryland	5.3	7.2	2.8	8.4	1.6	5.3
Massachusetts	3.7	5.3	1.9	6.8	9.0	4.2
Michigan	3.5	5.2	1.7	6.8	8.3	5.1
Mississippi	4.2	6.7	1.6	7.5	9.3	5.3
Montana	9.3	14.7	3.5	7.5	9.7	5.0
Nebraska	3.8	6.1	1.2	6.4	8.3	4.2
New Hampshire	—	—	—	—	—	—
New Jersey	—	—	—	5.7	7.0	4.2
New Mexico	6.5	9.0	3.9	—	—	—
New York	4.2	5.8	2.4	7.3	9.3	5.2
North Carolina	6.1	9.5	2.6	9.1	11.1	6.7
North Dakota	5.7	8.3	2.9	—	—	—
Ohio	—	—	—	—	—	—
Oklahoma	6.1	10.0	2.0	5.7	6.9	4.3
Rhode Island	4.0	5.7	2.1	—	—	—
South Carolina	6.3	9.7	2.3	9.2	11.0	6.4
South Dakota	5.7	8.9	2.2	6.0	8.2	3.7
Tennessee	5.2	8.4	1.8	5.8	6.6	4.9
Texas	4.9	7.0	2.6	6.8	8.0	5.1
Utah	5.9	9.3	2.0	7.0	9.0	4.5
Vermont	9.1	14.1	3.7	5.5	6.6	4.4
Virginia	5.7	8.3	2.8	7.0	8.0	5.5
West Virginia	5.5	9.5	1.4	6.5	8.3	4.7
Wisconsin	3.1	4.5	1.6	5.1	7.1	2.9
Wyoming	10.5	16.8	3.9	7.3	9.0	5.3
Median	5.7	8.3	2.6	6.8	8.4	4.9

— Data not available.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2011.

# In 2010, nearly half of high school seniors reported they had used an illicit drug at least once—more had used alcohol

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

Each year, the Monitoring the Future (MTF) Study asks a nationally representative sample of nearly 50,000 secondary school students in approximately 400 public and private schools to describe their drug use patterns through self-administered questionnaires. Surveying seniors since 1975, the study expanded in 1991 to include 8th and 10th graders. By design, MTF excludes dropouts and institutionalized, homeless, and runaway youth.

## Half of seniors in 2010 said they had used illicit drugs

In 2010, nearly half (48%) of all seniors said they had at least tried illicit drugs. The figure was 37% for 10th graders and 21% for 8th graders. Marijuana is by far the most commonly used illicit drug. In 2010, 44% of high school seniors said they had tried marijuana. About half of those in each grade who said they had used marijuana said they had not used any other illicit drug.

Put another way, about half of the 8th, 10th, and 12th graders who have ever used an illicit drug have used something in addition to, or other than, marijuana. About 1 in 4 seniors (25%) (or half of seniors who used any illicit drugs) used an illicit drug other than marijuana. Almost half of high school seniors had used marijuana at least once, 35% used it in the past year, and 21% used it in the previous month. MTF also asked students if they had used marijuana on 20 or more occasions in the previous 30 days. In 2010, 6% of high school seniors said they had used marijuana that frequently.

In 2010, 13% of high school seniors reported using a narcotic such as Vicodin, Percocet, or OxyContin at least once, making narcotics other than

heroin the second most prevalent illicit drug after marijuana. Almost 4% of seniors reported using narcotics in the past month. Amphetamines were the next most prevalent drugs after narcotics other than heroin: 11% of seniors reported using amphetamines at least once. Specifically, 2% had used methamphetamine at least once and 2% had used ice (crystal methamphetamine). About 3% of high school seniors reported using amphetamines in the past month.

In 2010, 6% of seniors said they had used cocaine at least once in their life. More than half of this group (3% of all seniors) said they used it in the previous year, and less than one-quarter of

users (1% of seniors) had used it in the preceding 30 days. About 2% of seniors reported previous use of crack cocaine: 1% in the previous year, and less than 1% in the previous month. Heroin was the least commonly used illicit drug, with less than 2% of seniors reporting they had used it at least once. More than half of seniors who reported heroin use said they used it only without a needle.

## Alcohol and tobacco use is widespread at all grade levels

In 2010, 7 in 10 high school seniors said they had tried alcohol at least once; 2 in 5 said they used it in the previous month. Even among 10th

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

Substance	Proportion of seniors in 2010 who used			
	in lifetime	in last year	in last month	daily*
Alcohol	71.0%	65.2%	41.2%	2.7%
Been drunk	54.1	44.0	26.8	1.6
Cigarettes	42.2	–	19.2	10.7
Marijuana/hashish	43.8	34.8	21.4	6.1
Amphetamines	11.1	7.4	3.3	0.3
Narcotics, not heroin	13.0	8.7	3.6	0.2
Inhalants	9.0	3.6	1.4	0.1
Tranquilizers	8.5	5.6	2.5	0.1
Sedatives	7.5	4.8	2.2	0.1
MDMA (ecstasy)	7.3	4.5	1.4	0.1
Cocaine, not crack	5.5	2.9	1.3	0.2
Methamphetamine	2.3	1.0	0.5	0.1
LSD	4.0	2.6	0.8	0.1
Crystal methamphetamine	1.8	0.9	0.6	0.1
Crack cocaine	2.4	1.4	0.7	0.2
Steroids	2.0	1.5	1.1	0.4
PCP	1.8	1.0	0.8	0.2
Heroin	1.6	0.9	0.4	0.1

■ More than 1 in 4 seniors said they were drunk at least once in the past month.

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

– Not included in survey.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston et al.'s *Monitoring the Future National Survey on Drug Use, 1975–2010. Volume I: Secondary School Students.*

graders, the use of alcohol was common: more than half had tried alcohol, and almost one-third used it in the month prior to the survey.

Perhaps of greater concern are the juveniles who indicated heavy drinking (defined as five or more drinks in a row) in the preceding 2 weeks. Twenty-three percent (23%) of seniors, 16% of 10th graders, and 7% of 8th graders reported recent heavy drinking.

Tobacco use was less prevalent than alcohol use, but it was the most likely substance to be used on a daily basis. In 2010, 42% of 12th graders, 30% of 10th graders, and 18% of 8th graders had tried cigarettes, and 19% of seniors, 12% of 10th graders, and 6% of 8th graders smoked in the preceding month. In addition, 11% of seniors, 7% of 10th graders, and 3% of 8th graders

reported currently smoking cigarettes on a daily basis. Overall, based on various measures, tobacco use is down compared with use levels in the early to mid-1990s.

### Higher proportions of males than females were involved in drug and alcohol use, especially heavy use

In 2010, males were more likely than females to drink alcohol at all and to drink heavily. Among seniors, 44% of males and 38% of females reported alcohol use in the past 30 days, and 28% of males and 18% of females said they had five or more drinks in a row in the previous 2 weeks. Males were twice as likely as females to report daily alcohol use (4% vs. 2%).

Males were also more likely than females to have used marijuana in the

previous year (38% vs. 31%), in the previous month (25% vs. 17%), and daily during the previous month (9% vs. 3%). The proportions of male and female high school seniors reporting overall use of illicit drugs other than marijuana in the previous year were more similar (19% and 15%), but there are variations across drugs. Annual prevalence rates for 12th-grade males, compared with 12th-grade females, are 3 to 6 times greater for salvia, heroin with a needle, Provigil, methamphetamine, Rohypnol, GHB, and steroids, and more than twice as high for hallucinogens, LSD, hallucinogens other than LSD, cocaine, crack, cocaine powder, heroin, heroin without a needle, Ritalin, and ketamine. Male use rates for inhalants, OxyContin, and crystal methamphetamine (ice) are 1.5 to 2 times the rates among females. Furthermore, males account for an even

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

Substance	Proportion of seniors who used in previous year				
	Male	Female	White	Black	Hispanic
Alcohol*	44.2%	37.9%	45.4%	31.4%	40.1%
Been drunk*	31.2	21.8	31.6	14.7	20.5
Cigarettes*	21.9	15.7	22.9	10.1	15.0
Marijuana/hashish	38.3	30.7	34.8	30.8	31.6
Narcotics, not heroin	9.9	7.4	11.1	4.0	5.1
Amphetamines	8.3	6.4	8.6	2.8	4.4
Tranquilizers	5.9	5.2	7.3	2.2	3.9
Sedatives	4.8	4.6	5.8	2.7	3.8
Cocaine, not crack	4.0	1.9	3.4	0.9	3.5
Inhalants	4.7	2.5	3.8	2.0	3.6
MDMA (ecstasy)	5.3	3.6	4.5	2.6	4.6
Steroids	2.5	0.3	1.5	1.7	1.3
LSD	3.6	1.4	2.7	0.8	0.9
Crack cocaine	1.9	0.9	1.2	0.7	1.8
Heroin	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.6

\* Alcohol and cigarette proportions are for use in the last 30 days.

Note: Male and female proportions are for 2010. Race/ethnicity proportions include data for 2009 and 2010 to increase subgroup sample size and provide more stable estimates.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston et al.'s *Monitoring the Future National Survey on Drug Use, 1975–2010. Volume I: Secondary School Students*.

### Drinking and driving is a high-risk teen behavior

The National Center for Health Statistics reports that motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for high school students, accounting for 63% of all unintentional deaths in 2010 among teens ages 14–17.

According to the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey, nearly 1 in 4 students said that in the past month they rode in a vehicle with a driver who had been drinking. The proportion varied across states, ranging from 14% to 32%.

In addition, 1 in 13 high school students said that in the past month they drove a vehicle after drinking alcohol. The proportion was lower for freshmen (who typically are not yet of driving age) than for other high school students. Across states, the proportion ranged from 4% to 12%.

greater proportion of frequent or heavy users of many of these drugs.

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

In 2010, 10% of black seniors said they had smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days, compared with 23% of whites and 15% of Hispanics. About one-third (31%) of black seniors reported alcohol use in the past 30 days, compared with 45% of white seniors and 40% of Hispanic seniors. Whites were more than twice as likely as blacks to have been drunk in the past month (32% vs. 15%). The figure for Hispanics was 21%.

For nearly all drugs, black seniors report lifetime, annual, 30-day, and daily prevalence rates that are lower than those for their white and Hispanic counterparts. The proportion of seniors who reported using amphetamines in the past year was lower among blacks (3%) than whites (9%) and Hispanics (4%). White and Hispanic seniors were 3 times more likely than blacks to have used cocaine in the previous year.

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

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2010 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 5% of high school students said they had at least one drink of alcohol on school property in the past month. During the same time period, 6% said they had used marijuana on school property.

Overall, males are more likely than females to drink alcohol or use marijuana at school. This was true for most grades and racial/ethnic groups. Females showed more variations across grade levels than males, with a greater proportion of ninth graders drinking

alcohol at school than 12th graders. Hispanic students were more likely than white or black students to drink alcohol or use marijuana at school.

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

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
<b>Alcohol</b>			
Total	5.1%	5.4%	4.7%
9th grade	5.4	5.6	5.2
10th grade	4.4	4.2	4.5
11th grade	5.2	5.4	4.9
12th grade	5.1	6.4	3.8
White	4.0	4.2	3.8
Black	5.1	6.5	3.8
Hispanic	7.3	7.9	6.6
<b>Marijuana</b>			
Total	5.9%	7.5%	4.1%
9th grade	5.4	7.0	3.7
10th grade	6.2	8.0	4.2
11th grade	6.2	7.5	4.7
12th grade	5.4	7.2	3.5
White	4.5	5.6	3.4
Black	6.7	9.3	4.1
Hispanic	7.7	9.6	5.7

Nationally, 26% of high school students said they were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property at least once during the past 12 months. The proportion was higher for males than for females, especially among black students and among 11th grade students. Hispanic students were more likely than white or black students to report being offered, sold, or given illegal drugs at school. Among females, seniors were less likely than 9th, 10th, and 11th graders to say they were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property.

Percent who were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the past 12 months:

Demographic	Total	Male	Female
Total	25.6%	29.2%	21.7%
9th grade	23.7	25.9	21.3
10th grade	27.8	30.8	24.6
11th grade	27.0	32.5	21.3
12th grade	23.8	28.1	19.3
White	22.7	26.3	18.8
Black	22.8	28.7	17.0
Hispanic	33.2	35.8	30.5

### High school seniors were more than twice as likely to use alcohol than use marijuana before age 13

Demographic	Percent who had used before age 13					
	Alcohol			Marijuana		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	20.5%	23.3%	17.4%	8.1%	10.4%	5.7%
9th grade	26.6	28.9	24.1	9.7	12.7	6.6
10th grade	21.1	24.3	17.6	7.5	10.1	4.8
11th grade	17.6	20.9	14.2	7.6	9.6	5.6
12th grade	15.1	17.9	12.2	7.0	8.7	5.3
White	18.1	21.1	14.8	6.5	8.5	4.4
Black	21.8	24.1	19.4	10.5	14.2	6.9
Hispanic	25.2	27.2	23.0	9.4	11.6	7.1

- About 1 in 5 high school students said they had drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips) before they turned 13; fewer than 1 in 10 high school students reported trying marijuana before age 13.
- Females were less likely than males to have used alcohol or marijuana before age 13, and whites were less likely than blacks and Hispanics.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2011.

Across reporting states, the proportion of high school students who were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property during the past year ranged from 12% to 35%

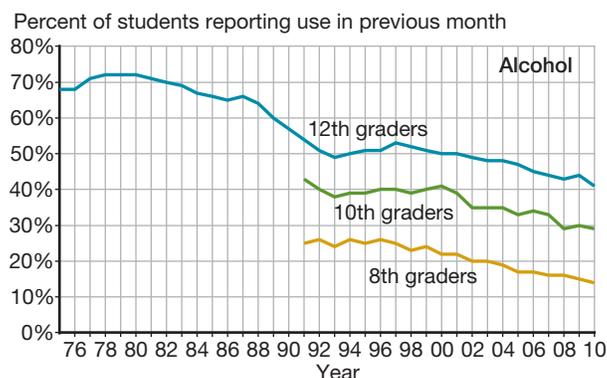
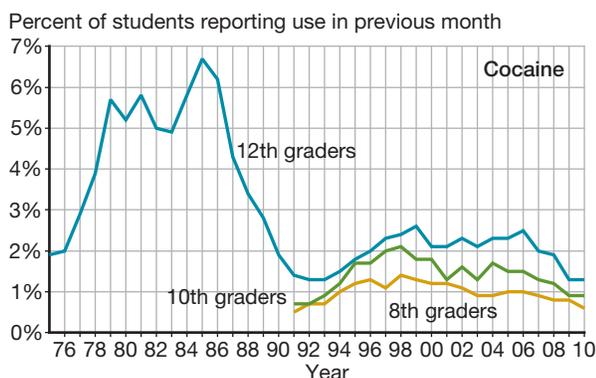
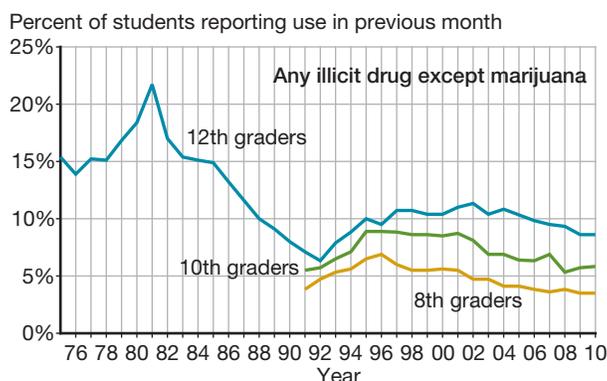
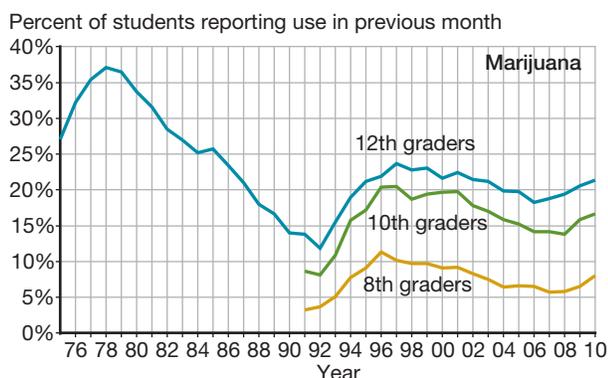
Reporting states	Percent who used alcohol on school property in past 30 days			Percent who used marijuana on school property in past 30 days			Percent who were offered, sold, or given illegal drug on school property in the past year		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
U.S. Total	5.1%	5.4%	4.7%	5.9%	7.5%	4.1%	25.6%	29.2%	21.7%
Alabama	5.7	6.9	4.5	4.0	4.9	3.1	20.3	23.2	17.3
Alaska	3.4	3.7	3.1	4.3	4.5	4.0	23.1	26.0	20.2
Arizona	6.2	7.6	4.8	5.6	6.0	5.0	34.6	38.2	30.7
Arkansas	4.1	5.3	2.9	3.9	5.1	2.2	26.1	26.3	25.8
Colorado	5.3	5.4	4.6	6.0	6.8	4.7	17.2	19.0	15.0
Connecticut	4.6	5.8	3.4	5.2	7.0	3.3	27.8	32.3	23.3
Delaware	5.0	6.0	4.1	6.1	7.4	4.6	23.1	26.4	19.9
Florida	5.1	6.1	4.0	6.3	8.6	3.9	22.9	26.9	18.8
Georgia	5.4	6.4	3.9	5.6	6.9	4.1	32.1	33.1	30.8
Hawaii	5.0	4.7	5.2	7.6	7.2	7.8	31.7	35.6	28.1
Idaho	4.1	4.9	3.2	4.9	5.8	3.8	24.4	27.9	20.9
Illinois	3.3	4.1	2.6	4.7	6.0	3.3	27.3	31.2	23.4
Indiana	2.0	2.5	1.5	3.3	4.7	1.9	28.3	31.7	24.8
Iowa	2.3	2.9	1.6	3.4	5.1	1.7	11.9	14.5	8.9
Kansas	2.9	3.3	2.4	2.9	4.0	1.7	24.8	27.1	22.4
Kentucky	4.1	5.3	2.7	4.2	5.3	3.0	24.4	26.6	22.1
Louisiana	6.0	7.1	4.6	4.1	6.5	1.7	25.1	29.6	20.9
Maine	3.1	3.8	2.3	–	–	–	21.7	24.6	18.5
Maryland	5.3	5.6	4.8	5.7	6.3	4.5	30.4	33.1	27.4
Massachusetts	3.6	4.5	2.6	6.3	8.9	3.6	27.1	31.4	22.8
Michigan	2.7	3.0	2.2	3.3	4.3	2.2	25.4	29.9	20.6
Mississippi	4.5	6.0	3.0	3.2	4.0	2.3	15.9	20.6	11.3
Montana	3.5	4.4	2.5	5.5	7.0	4.0	25.2	28.7	21.3
Nebraska	3.0	3.4	2.5	2.7	4.5	0.9	20.3	20.7	19.8
New Hampshire	5.6	6.3	4.9	7.3	9.4	4.7	23.1	27.4	18.5
New Jersey	–	–	–	–	–	–	27.3	34.3	20.1
New Mexico	6.4	6.7	6.0	9.7	11.0	8.3	34.5	36.9	32.0
New York	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
North Carolina	5.5	7.1	3.7	5.2	8.1	2.4	29.8	35.5	24.0
North Dakota	3.1	3.4	2.8	3.4	5.3	1.4	20.8	21.5	20.2
Ohio	–	–	–	–	–	–	24.3	27.7	20.3
Oklahoma	2.6	3.0	2.3	2.4	4.0	0.9	17.2	19.4	14.8
Rhode Island	–	–	–	–	–	–	22.4	26.8	18.0
South Carolina	5.9	6.8	4.8	5.2	8.2	2.1	29.3	33.6	24.9
South Dakota	–	–	–	–	–	–	16.0	16.6	15.3
Tennessee	3.2	3.6	2.7	3.6	4.6	2.6	16.5	18.1	14.8
Texas	3.9	3.9	3.7	4.8	7.1	2.3	29.4	31.4	27.3
Utah	2.7	3.4	1.8	4.0	5.5	2.1	21.4	24.4	17.3
Vermont	3.3	4.2	2.2	6.0	7.9	3.9	17.6	22.2	12.6
Virginia	3.3	3.8	2.8	3.5	3.6	3.2	24.0	25.1	22.9
West Virginia	4.2	5.4	3.0	3.0	4.3	1.7	17.3	20.4	14.1
Wisconsin	–	–	–	–	–	–	20.9	25.5	15.9
Wyoming	5.1	6.0	4.1	4.7	6.3	3.0	25.2	26.3	23.8
Median	4.1	4.9	3.0	4.7	6.0	3.0	24.3	26.8	20.4

– Data not available.

Source: Authors' adaptation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2011.

# Juvenile illicit drug use declined during the 1980s and has remained relatively constant since then

In 2010, the proportions of high school seniors who reported using illicit drugs in the previous month was above levels of the early 1990s but well below the levels of the early 1980s



- After years of continuous decline, reported use of any illicit drugs by high school seniors rose sharply after 1992, as did reported use by 8th and 10th graders. This pattern continued into the mid-1990s and beyond that for some drugs. In 1998, illicit drug use by 8th graders began a gradual decline. By 2003, 8th and 10th grader use decreased significantly and use by seniors began to drop. Then, in 2010, all grades reported increased use, although only the increase among 8th graders was significant.
- In recent years, the proportion of students reporting use of illicit drugs during the 30 days prior to the survey appears to have stabilized or declined for many categories of drug use. However, for marijuana, the most widely used illicit drug, use declined from 1997 to 2007, then increased through 2010 for 12th graders (+14%), 10th graders (+18%), and 8th graders (+40%).
- In 2010, the proportion of seniors who said they used marijuana in the past month was more than double the proportion who reported past-month use of illicit drugs other than marijuana (21% vs. 9%) but slightly greater than half the proportion who reported past-month alcohol use (41%).
- Past-month cocaine use among seniors peaked in 1985 at nearly 7%. Use levels for cocaine increased between 1992 and 1999 (100% for seniors). Since 2006, proportions declined steadily to the current level of 1% for seniors.
- For all three grades, past-month alcohol use in 2010 was at its lowest level since the mid-1970s—41% for 12th graders, 29% for 10th graders, and 14% for 8th graders.

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston et al.'s *Monitoring the Future National Survey on Drug Use, 1975–2010. Volume I: Secondary School Students.*

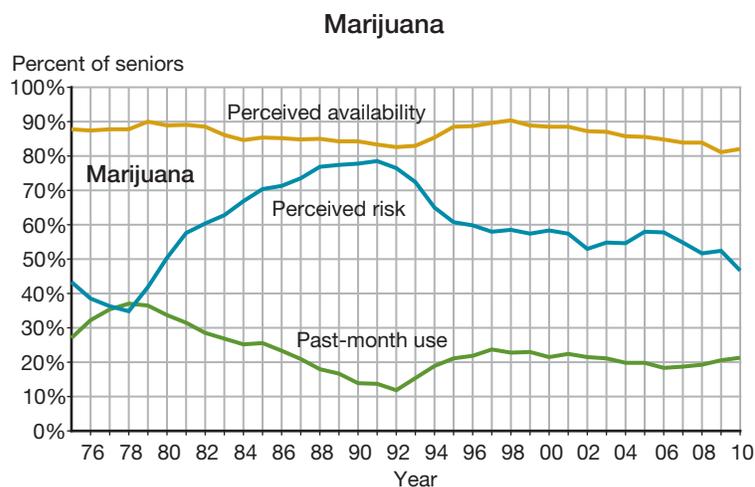
## Change in students' use of marijuana and alcohol is tied to their perception of possible harm from use

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

Between 1975 and 2010, the proportion of high school seniors reporting use of marijuana in the 30 days prior to the survey fluctuated, peaking in 1978 and then declining consistently through 1992. After that, reported use increased and then leveled off, although the 2010 rate was still far below the peak level of 1978. When the perceived risk of harm (physical or other) from either regular or occasional use increased, marijuana use declined; when perceived risk declined, use increased. The perception that obtaining marijuana was "fairly easy" or "very easy" remained relatively constant between 1975 and 2010.

Students' reported use of alcohol also shifted from 1975 to 2010. After 1978, alcohol use declined through 1993 and then rose slightly until 1997. Since then, there has been a steady downward drift, with a significant decline in 30-day use to 41% in 2010, compared with 53% in 1997 and 72% in 1978. As with marijuana, when the perceived risk of harm from either weekend "binge" drinking or daily drinking increased, use declined; when perceived risk declined, use increased.

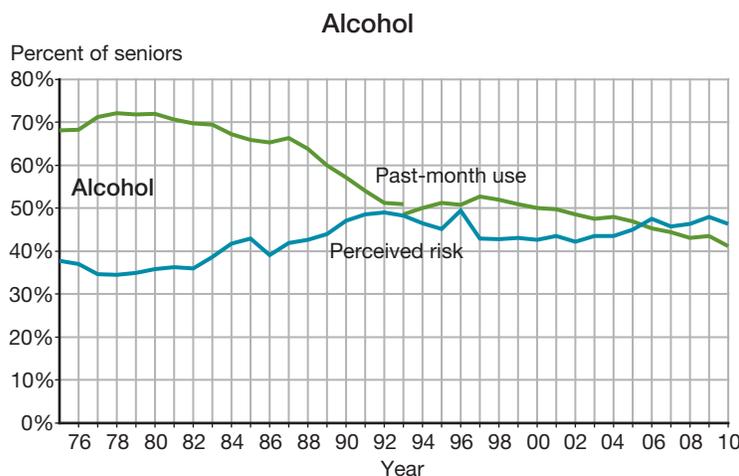
For more than three decades, while marijuana and alcohol availability remained constant, changes in use reflected changes in perceived harm



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

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

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



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

**Past-month use:** Percent using once or more in the past 30 days. (The survey question on alcohol use was revised in 1993 to indicate that a "drink" meant "more than a few sips." In 1993, half the sample responded to the original question and half to the revised question. Beginning in 1994, all respondents were asked the revised question.)

Source: Authors' adaptation of Johnston et al.'s *Monitoring the Future National Survey on Drug Use, 1975–2010. Volume I: Secondary School Students.*

# The prevalence of gang activity remained stable between 2006 and 2010

## The National Youth Gang Survey is an in-depth authoritative source for gang information

Gangs are often associated with violence and serious crimes. Accurately estimating the scope and breadth of the youth gang problem is difficult because of the lack of consensus on what defines a gang and gang activity. The best source on gangs and gang activity has been the National Youth Gang Center's annual Gang Survey. The National Youth Gang Center has collected gang information since 1996, using a national survey to collect data. This national survey is based on a nationally representative sample of law enforcement agencies from cities, suburban areas, and rural areas. The survey has been conducted annually since 1996.

Based on the 2010 National Youth Gang Survey (NYGS), there were an estimated 29,400 gangs composed of 756,000 members in 3,500 jurisdictions in the United States. Large cities of over 50,000 residents and suburban areas were the primary locations for these gangs, with smaller cities and rural areas accounting for just over 36% of gangs.

Participants in the NYGS reported on the presence of gangs in their respective jurisdictions. Gang activity declined from 40% to 24% between 1996 and 2001 and then increased to 34% by 2005, and has stayed between 32% and 35% from 2006 to 2010.

## Gangs are defined differently by the FBI, federal government, and state statutes

A gang is defined by federal statute 18 USC § 521 as an ongoing group, club, organization, or association of five or more persons that has as one of its primary purposes conspiracy to commit or the actual commission of a felony involving a controlled substance or crime of violence. The FBI National

Crime Information Center defines a gang as three or more persons in an organization, association, or group for the purpose of criminal or illegal activity and behavior. State laws vary, but a majority of them define a gang as three or more people in an organization or association. Every state definition includes criminal or illegal activity for a gang. Gang members are specifically defined by 14 states, and 7 states list specific criteria that a person must meet to be a gang member. Gang crime and gang activity are defined by 24 states, and 19 states specifically list crimes that are considered criminal gang activity.

## Youth gang members are overwhelmingly male and predominantly minorities

Law enforcement agencies responding to NYGS over a number of years have reported demographic details regarding gang members in their jurisdictions, including age, gender, and racial

and ethnic background. Although reported characteristics varied considerably by locality—with emergent gangs in less populous areas tending to have more white and more female members—overall, gang demographics have been fairly consistent from year to year.

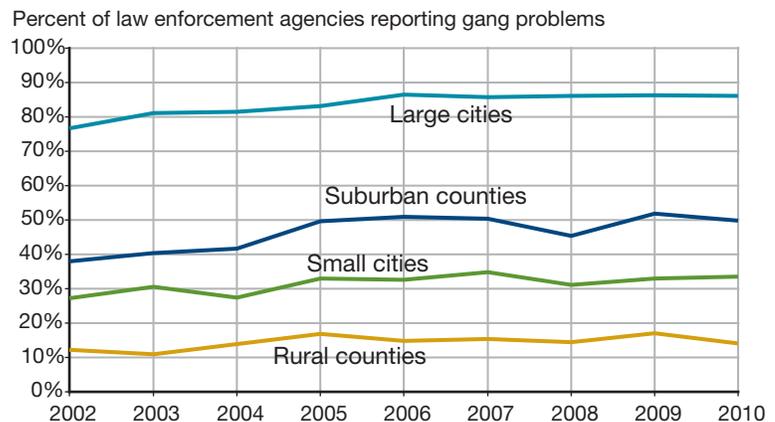
### Race/ethnicity profile of U.S. youth gang members:

Race/ethnicity	2004	2008
Total	100%	100%
Hispanic	49	50
Black	37	32
White	8	10
All other	6	8

### Gender profile of U.S. youth gang members:

Year	Male	Female
1998	92.3%	7.7%
2000	93.6	6.4
2002	92.8	7.3
2004	93.9	6.1
2007	93.4	6.6
2009	92.6	7.4

## Across locality types, the percentage of law enforcement agencies reporting gang problems increased between 2002 and 2006 and then remained relatively constant through 2010



Note: Large cities have populations of 50,000 or more. Small cities have populations between 2,500 and 49,999.

Source: Authors' adaptation of National Gang Center's *National Youth Gang Survey Analysis*.

### **Gang-related offenses primarily occur in large cities**

Over 50% of all gang homicides between 2006 and 2010 occurred in cities with populations over 100,000. Gang-related homicides increased more than 10% from 2009 to 2010 in these same cities. Of the more than 700 homicides that occurred in Chicago and Los Angeles, more than half were gang related.

The composition of gangs also varies, depending on the size of the residential area. The membership of gangs in larger cities and suburban counties was made up of 40% and 43% juveniles, respectively. Smaller cities and rural county gangs were composed of a majority of juveniles, with 61% of the gangs' members being juveniles.

### **Gang member migration is the exception rather than the rule outside of urban areas**

Gang member migration refers to the movement of actively involved youth gang members from one U.S. jurisdiction to another. Gang member migration was present in a majority (71%) of jurisdictions that responded to the NYGS. Gang members migrate for two distinct reasons. The first is legitimate, social decisions such as efforts to improve quality of life, employment opportunities, and educational opportunities. The second reason is illegitimate purposes such as drug trafficking and distribution or avoidance of law enforcement.

Gang member migration was not common outside of large urban areas. Based on NYGS data, 81% of non-metro agencies responded that they had experienced no gang member migration. Even when agencies experienced gang member migration, it was generally a small segment of the gang as a whole, less than 25%.

A majority of agencies that had an ongoing gang problem reported gang member migrants. Agencies serving large cities and suburban areas were more likely to report gang migrants than agencies serving smaller areas.

### **Many large police departments recently established specialized gang units**

In 2007, specialized gang units existed in 365 of the nation's largest police departments and sheriff's offices. More than 4,300 officers were employed by these agencies to address gangs and gang-related activities. Most of the gang units (337) reported their year of establishment, and 35% were formed between 2004 and 2007.

Almost all (90%) of these gang units had a formal definition in place to classify a group or individual as a gang or gang member, and 77% of units had a formal definition in place for both gangs and gang members.

### **Specialized gang units participated in youth gang prevention programs**

In 2007, 74% of gang units distributed gang prevention literature to schools,

parents, and other members of the community. This was the most common gang prevention activity undertaken by gang units. More than half (56%) of gang units facilitated mentoring and leadership programs. Almost half of all units took part in gang prevention activities with gang-involved youth or in partnership with faith-based organizations.

### **In 5 cities with a high prevalence of gang homicides, more than 90% of gang homicides involved firearms**

The Center for Disease Control analyzed data for five cities from the National Violent Death Report System (NVDRS) for the years 2003–2008. NVDRS collects violent death data from sources such as death certificates, coroner's records, and law enforcement reports, including Supplementary Homicide Reports. These five cities met the criteria of having high levels of homicide: Oklahoma City (OK), Los Angeles (CA), Long Beach (CA), Oakland (CA), and Newark (NJ). The study examined gang and nongang homicides in all five cities. Three times as many gang homicide victims were between the ages of 15 and 19 than nongang homicide victims. Firearms were involved in 57%–86% of nongang homicides but were involved in over 90% of gang-related homicides. Gang homicides were committed predominantly by males in all five cities, with a mean age between 22 and 25.

# Most serious juvenile offenders do not make a career of crime, and original crimes do not predict future offending patterns

## Pathways to Desistance followed serious juvenile offenders

For 7 years, the Pathways to Desistance study followed 1,354 serious juvenile offenders (184 females and 1,170 males) from Maricopa County (Phoenix), Arizona, and Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. At the outset, youth enrolled in the study were 14–17 years old and were found guilty of at least one serious (predominantly felony-level) violent crime, property offense, or drug offense. Data collection included extensive interviews with offenders at enrollment (between 2000 and 2003), followup interviews every 6 months for the first 3 years and annually thereafter, interviews following release from residential facilities, collateral interviews with family members and friends, monthly documentation of significant life events, and reviews of official rearrest records.

## Most serious juvenile offenders reduced their offending over time regardless of interventions

Despite their involvement in serious crime, the youth were not uniformly “bad” kids on the road to a lifetime of criminal activity. In fact, most reported engaging in few or no illegal activities after court involvement. Based on self-reports of antisocial activities, the majority (92%) of adolescent, serious offenders decreased or limited illegal activity during the first 3 years following their court involvement. The declining trend remained, even after accounting for time incarcerated.

Institutional placement and type of setting appeared to have little effect on who will continue or escalate their antisocial acts and who will desist. The 3-year follow-up study found that, despite similar treatment by the juvenile justice system (detention, residential placement, supervision, and community-based services), two groups of serious male offenders had different

outcomes. Approximately 9% of male youth reported continued high levels of offending, while about 15% shifted from high levels of offending at the outset to very low levels of offending over the intervening years.

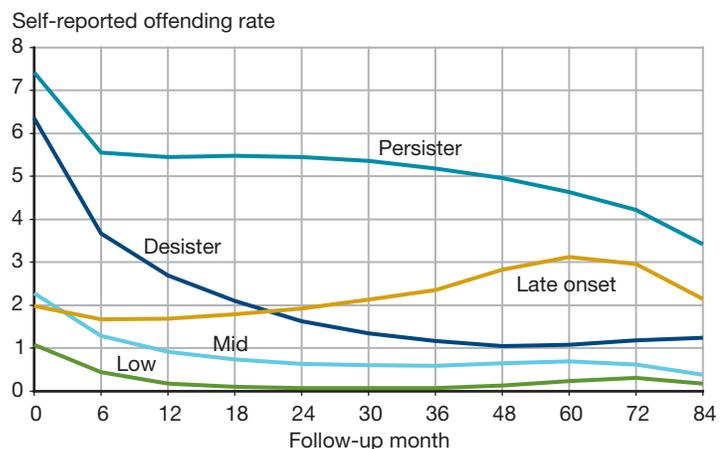
## Substance abuse is strongly related to nondrug-related offending

Although it is difficult to determine a youth’s future on the basis of the original crime, the presence of a substance use disorder and the level of substance use were both strongly and independently related to the level of self-reported offending and number of

arrests. Youth with a substance use disorder were more likely to continue to offend over the 7-year study period and less likely to spend time working or attending school than those with no substance use issues. In addition, heavier users were more likely to be arrested than less frequent users, a pattern that did not change over time.

Substance abuse treatment appeared to reduce both substance use and offending. Interventions that showed substantial reduction in alcohol use, marijuana use, and nondrug-related offending included significant family involvement and treatment lasting for

## Five patterns emerged of youths’ self-reported offenses over the 7 years of data collection



- More than one-half of the serious offenders were youth who start off with low levels of offending and whose offending behavior changes little over time. The “low” group accounted for 26% and the “mid” group for 31% of youth in the study.
- The offending pattern of the “desister” group shifted from high to low over the study. This group accounted for 21% of youth in the study.
- Youth who reported persistently high offending rates were the “persister” group. This group accounted for 10% of youth in the study.
- The final observed pattern represents youth who have relatively few offenses initially and who slightly increase antisocial activities over time. This “late onset” group accounted for 12% of the study population.

Note: Results are based on data from 1,051 males only, with at least 70% of interviews administered.

Source: Authors’ adaptation of Piquero et al.’s Does Time Matter? Comparing Trajectory Concordance and Covariate Association Using Time-Based and Age-Based Assessments, *Crime & Delinquency*.

more than 3 months. However, only one-fourth of substance abuse treatment programs included family participation in the treatment process.

### Quality services and positive experiences in institutions reduce subsequent arrests

Longer lengths of stay (exceeding 3 months) in a juvenile facility did not appear to reduce the rate of subsequent arrest. Further analyses suggest several additional factors that influence youth outcomes, including the quality of youth services, the degree to which services were matched to individual

youth's needs, and a positive institutional experience and facility environment. These results suggest that improved institutional care could reduce the chance of rearrest or return to an institutional setting.

### Increasing the duration of community-based supervision reduced reported reoffending

Investigators examined the effects of aftercare services during the 6 months after a court-ordered placement. Youth who received community-based supervision and aftercare services following residential placement were more likely

to attend school, go to work, and avoid further involvement with the juvenile justice system. Youth contact with aftercare prior to release and extended availability of transitional community-based support services increased these benefits.

### Several other policy take-aways were observed from the Pathways to Desistance study

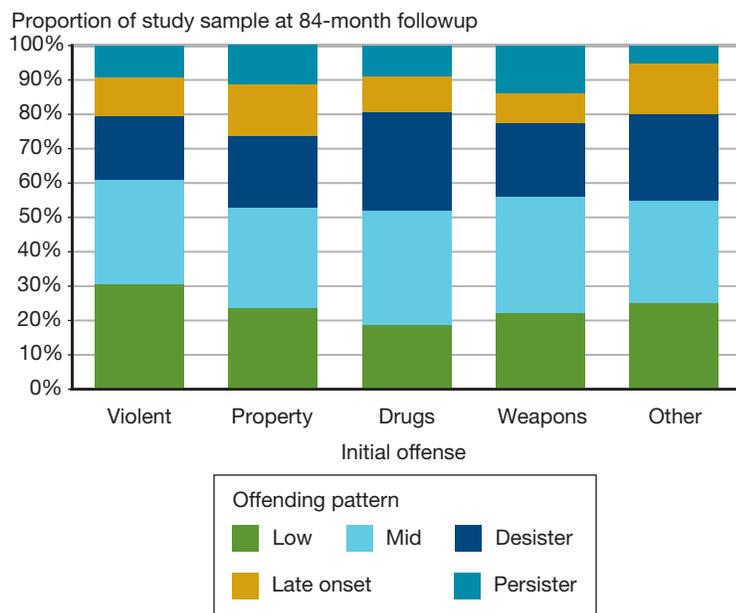
The Pathways study also provides information on youth's attitudes toward the law and the justice system. Attitudes toward the law, or legal socialization, influence whether youth cooperate with authorities, whether they obey the law, and how they react to punishment. Legal socialization is influenced by youth's perceptions regarding procedural justice—fair and respectful treatment by police, judges, and probation and correctional officers. Other influences include the likelihood of punishment and the cost of offending (thrills and social and financial rewards). Researchers identified several take-aways regarding legal socialization.

Harsh punishment may have unintended effects: Offending rates increase when youth experience harsh punishment.

Police matter: Fair and respectful treatment by the police helps to reduce youth offending.

Adolescent offenders are rational: They do weigh costs, risks, and rewards but not always in a way that leads to desistance. Immature youth are less rational.

### Youth's initial offenses do not predict whether they will be persisters or desisters



- A similar mix of offending patterns was found across all offense categories. This finding means that offense alone is not a good predictor of which youth are good candidates for diversion.

Source: Authors' adaptation of MacArthur Foundation's *Models for Change: Research on Pathways to Desistance*.

# In 2010, the number of murders by juveniles reached its lowest level since at least 1980

## About one-third of murders in the U.S. are not solved

In 2010, the FBI reported that 14,700 persons were murdered in the U.S. In about 9,600 (65%) of these murders, the incident was cleared by arrest or by exceptional means—that is, either an offender was arrested and turned over to the court for prosecution or an offender was identified but law enforcement could not place formal charges (e.g., the offender died). In the other 5,100 murders (35%) in 2010, the offenders were not identified and their demographic characteristics are not known.

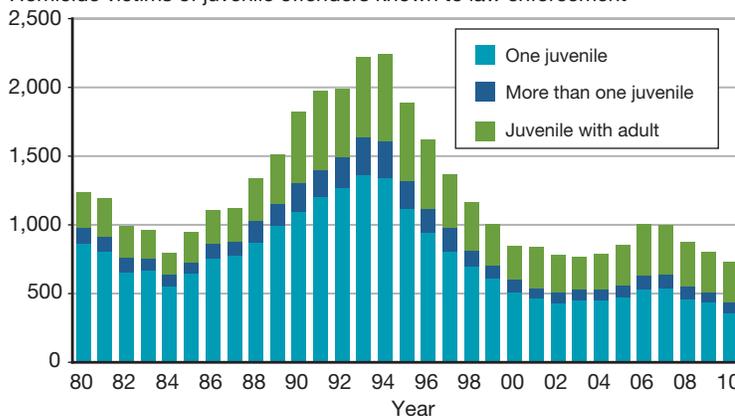
Estimating the demographic characteristics of these unknown offenders is difficult. The attributes of unknown offenders probably differ from those of known murder offenders. For example, it is likely that a greater proportion of known offenders have family ties to their victims and that a larger proportion of homicides committed by strangers go unsolved. An alternative to estimating characteristics of unknown offenders is to trend only murders with known offenders. Either approach—to trend only murders with known offenders or to estimate characteristics for unknown offenders—creates its own interpretation problems. For the purpose of this report, all analyses of the FBI's Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHRs) focus solely on known offenders and, therefore, known juvenile offenders.

## In 2010, 1 in 12 murders involved a juvenile offender

Juvenile offenders were involved in an estimated 800 murders in the U.S. in 2010—8% of all murders. The juvenile offender acted alone in 48% of these murders, acted with one or more other juveniles in 9%, and acted with at least one adult offender in 43%.

## Between 1994 and 2010, the number of murders involving a juvenile offender fell 67% to its lowest level in more than 3 decades

Homicide victims of juvenile offenders known to law enforcement

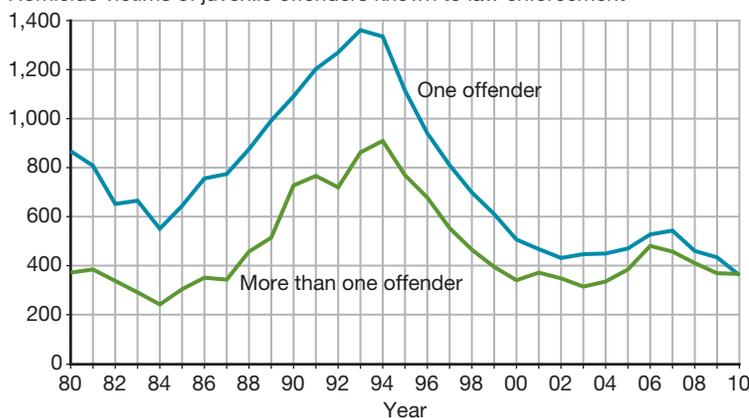


- In the 1980s, one-fourth (25%) of the murders involving a juvenile offender also involved an adult offender. This proportion grew to 31% in the 1990s and then increased to 38% for the years 2000–2010.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

## Murders by juveniles in 2010 were less likely to be committed by a lone juvenile offender than in any year since at least 1980

Homicide victims of juvenile offenders known to law enforcement



- Between 1980 and 2010, the annual proportion of murders involving a juvenile offender acting alone gradually declined, from 66% in the 1980s to 59% in the 1990s to 52% between 2000 and 2010.
- Between 1993 and 2010, murders by juveniles acting alone fell 73% and murders with multiple offenders declined 57%.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

In 2010, 85% of the victims of juvenile murderers were male, 45% were white, and 53% were black. Most victims of juvenile offenders (76%) were killed with a firearm. Family members accounted for 12% of the victims of juvenile offenders, acquaintances 53%, and strangers (i.e., no personal relationship to the juvenile offenders) 36%.

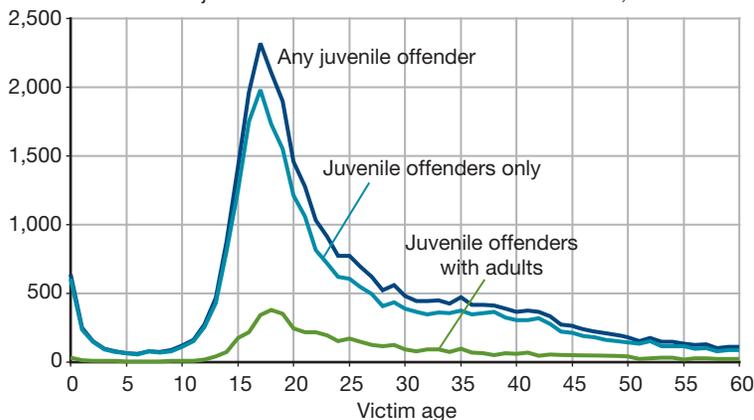
From 1980 through 2010, the proportion of murders with a juvenile offender that also involved multiple offenders gradually increased. In the 1980s, about one-third of all murders with juvenile offenders involved more than one offender; in 2010, this proportion was more than half (52%). Similarly, the proportion of murders with a juvenile offender that also involved an adult gradually increased, from 25% in the first half of the 1980s to 43% in 2010. Throughout this period, on average, 89% of these adult offenders were under age 25.

### Fewer juveniles were involved in murder in 2010 than in the 1990s

During the 1990s, widespread concern about juvenile violence resulted in a number of changes in state laws with the intent to send more juveniles into the adult criminal justice system. The focal point of this concern was the unprecedented increase in murders by juveniles between 1984 and 1994. Then, just as quickly, the numbers reversed: juvenile arrests for murder fell steadily since 1994, reaching a level in 2010 that was at its lowest point since at least 1980. Today's youth are considerably less likely to be implicated in murder than youth in the 1990s. The number of known juvenile homicide offenders in 2010 was one-third the number in the 1994 peak.

### Between 1980 and 2010, half of all murder victims killed by juveniles were ages 14–24

Homicide victims of juvenile offenders known to law enforcement, 1980–2010

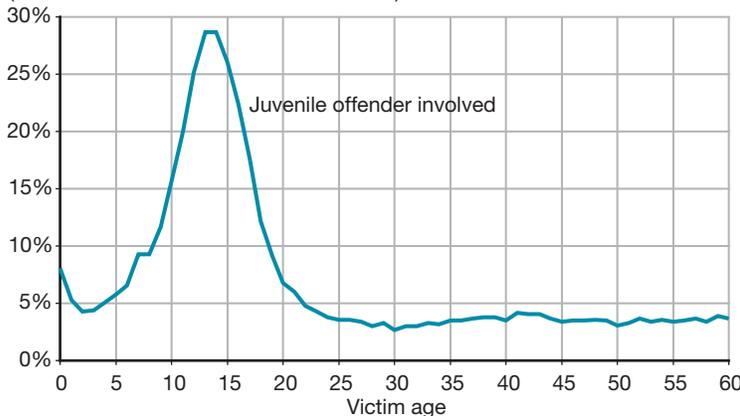


- Of all the murder victims of juvenile offenders, 29% were under age 18.
- Four percent (4%) of murder victims of juvenile offenders were over age 64.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

### Between 1980 and 2010, youth ages 13 and 14 were most likely to be killed by a juvenile offender

Percent of all murder victims in age group, 1980–2010 (with offender known to law enforcement)



- Among all murder victims from 1980 through 2010, the proportion killed by juvenile offenders dropped from 29% for victims ages 13 and 14 to 4% for victims age 25 and then remained at or near 4% for all victims older than 25.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

### The overall trend in murders by juveniles is a composite of separate trends

Specific types of murders drove the decade-long rise in youth murder offending between 1984 and 1994. During this period, the overall annual number of juvenile homicide offenders identified by law enforcement tripled. However, the number of juvenile females identified in murder investigations increased less than 40%, while the number of juvenile males increased more than 200%. Thus, the increase between 1984 and 1994 was driven by male offenders.

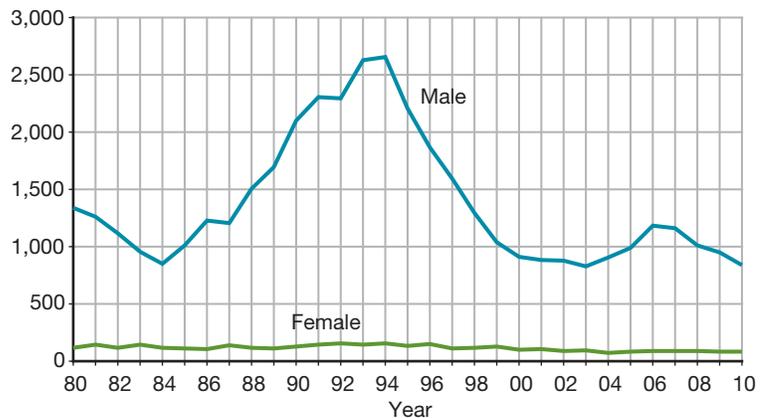
During the same period, the number of juveniles who committed murder with a firearm increased about 320%, while murders committed without a firearm increased about 30%. Thus, the overall increase was also linked to firearm murders.

Finally, from 1984 to 1994, the number of juveniles who killed a family member increased about 20%, while the numbers of juveniles who killed an acquaintance or a stranger both increased about 220%. Therefore, the historic rise in juvenile murder offending between 1984 and 1994 was the result of a growth in murders by male juveniles, who committed their crime with a firearm and whose victims were nonfamily members.

By the early 2000s, the decade-long increase in murder committed by juvenile offenders had been erased, as the number of known juvenile murder offenders declined 67% between 1994 and 2003. About 70% of the overall decline was attributable to the drop in murders of nonfamily members by juvenile males with a firearm.

### The number of male juvenile homicide offenders varied substantially between 1980 and 2010, unlike the number of female offenders

Juvenile homicide offenders known to law enforcement

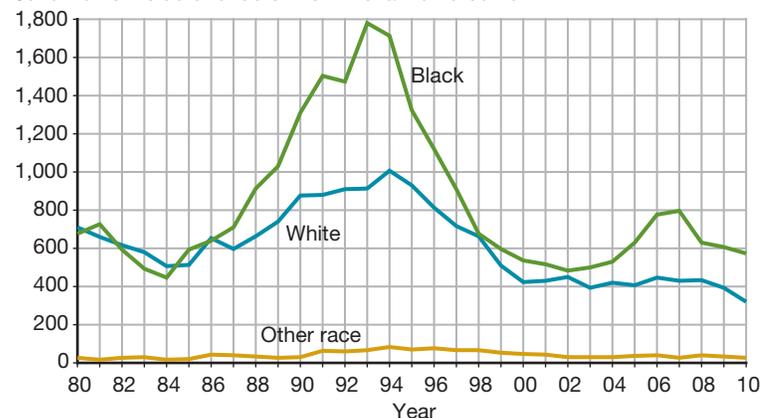


- After falling 29% between 2006 and 2010, the number of male juvenile murder offenders known to law enforcement in 2010 was at its lowest level since 2003.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

### The number of juvenile homicide offenders in 2010 was about one-third the number in 1994 for both white youth and black youth

Juvenile homicide offenders known to law enforcement



- Between 1984 and 1994, the number of known white juvenile murder offenders doubled and the number of black offenders quadrupled.
- Following a 68% decline since 1994, the number of known white juvenile murder offenders in 2010 was at its lowest point since at least 1980. Similarly, the number of known black juvenile murder offenders fell 67% during the same period; as a result, the number of known black juvenile homicide offenders in 2010 was at its lowest point since 2004.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

Despite a slight increase in the mid-2000s, the number of juvenile homicide offenders has been relatively stable over the last decade. The number of known juvenile murder offenders in 2010 returned to the level of 2003, the lowest level since at least 1980.

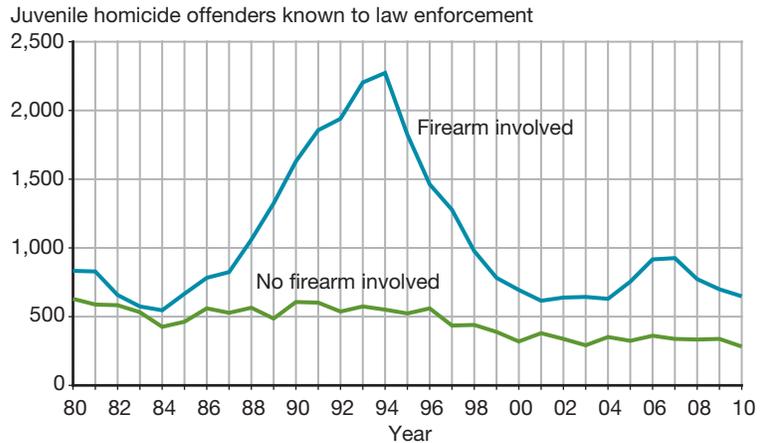
Compared with the 1994 peak, the 2010 profile of homicide offenders has a greater proportion of older juveniles and females, and a smaller proportion of firearm-related homicides.

Profile of juvenile homicide offenders known to law enforcement:

Characteristic	1994	2010
Age	100%	100%
Younger than 15	12	9
Age 15	18	15
Age 16	29	30
Age 17	41	46
Gender	100%	100%
Male	94	91
Female	6	9
Race	100%	100%
White	36	35
Black	61	63
Other race	3	3
Weapon presence	100%	100%
Firearm	81	70
No firearm	19	30
Relationship to victim	100%	100%
Family	7	11
Acquaintance	55	48
Stranger	37	42

Note: 1994 was the peak year for number of juvenile homicide offenders. Detail may not total 100% because of rounding.

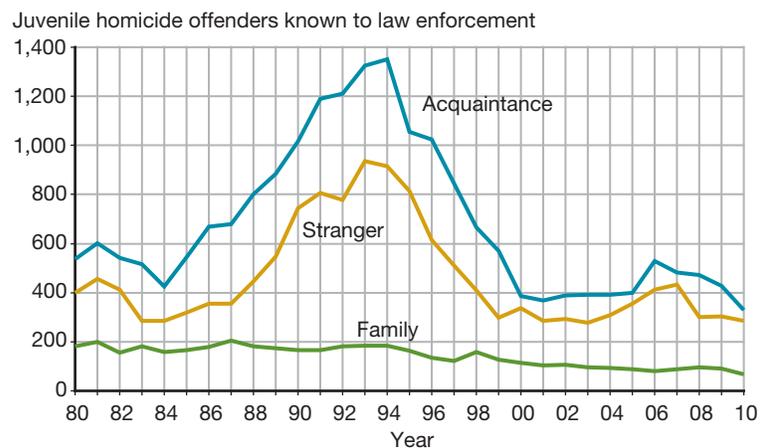
### The number of juvenile offenders who committed their crime with a firearm fell 30% between 2007 and 2010



- Between 2001 and 2010, the number of nonfirearm-related homicides committed by known juvenile offenders was relatively stable. However, murders by juveniles with firearms increased between 2001 and 2007 and then declined through 2010.
- In 1994, about 80% of known juvenile homicide offenders committed their crime with a firearm; this percentage fell to 70% in 2010.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

### The number of juvenile offenders who killed acquaintances and strangers varied considerably between 1980 and 2010



- The number of known juvenile homicide offenders who killed an acquaintance or stranger rose dramatically between 1980 and 1994. The decline since 1994 has been equally dramatic: by 2010, the number who killed an acquaintance was at its lowest level since at least 1980, and the number that killed a stranger was at its lowest level since 2003.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

**In the 10 years from 2001 through 2010, the characteristics of murders committed by juvenile offenders varied with the age, gender, and race of the offenders**

Characteristic	Juvenile offenders known to law enforcement, 2001–2010							
	All	Male	Female	Younger than age 16	Age 16	Age 17	White	Black
Victim age	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Younger than 13	4	3	18	8	3	3	6	4
13 to 17	20	20	16	24	21	17	22	18
18 to 24	32	33	24	24	33	37	31	33
Older than 24	43	43	42	45	43	43	41	45
Victim gender	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Male	86	88	65	82	87	88	83	88
Female	14	12	35	18	13	12	17	12
Victim race	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
White	49	49	55	53	49	47	89	23
Black	47	47	42	43	48	49	9	75
Other race	4	4	3	4	3	4	2	2
Victim/offender relationship	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Family	11	8	37	18	9	8	16	7
Acquaintance	50	51	45	48	49	52	50	50
Stranger	39	41	19	35	41	40	34	43
Firearm used	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Yes	69	71	38	61	69	72	57	77
No	31	29	62	39	31	28	43	23
Number of offenders	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
One	41	41	42	43	41	40	43	40
More than one	59	59	58	57	59	60	57	60

- Between 2001 and 2010, a greater percentage of the victims of male juvenile murder offenders were adults than were the victims of female offenders (76% vs. 66%). The juvenile victims of female offenders tended to be younger than the juvenile victims of male offenders.
- Adults were the victims of 72% of white juvenile murder offenders and 78% of black juvenile murder offenders.
- Although 75% of the victims of black juvenile murder offenders were black, black murder offenders were much more likely than white offenders to have victims of another race (25% vs. 11%).
- Female juvenile murder offenders were much more likely than male juvenile murder offenders to have female victims (35% vs. 12%) and to have victims who were family members (37% vs. 8%).
- Firearms were more likely to be involved in murders by male offenders than female offenders (71% vs. 38%) and in murders by black offenders than white offenders (77% vs. 57%).
- Homicide victims of white juvenile offenders were more likely to be a family member than were homicide victims of black offenders (16% vs. 7%).
- Younger murder offenders (younger than age 16) were somewhat more likely than older youth (age 17) to commit their crimes alone (43% vs. 40%), and white offenders were more likely to act alone than were black offenders (43% vs. 40%). In contrast, juvenile murder offenders' gender was unrelated to the proportion of crimes committed with co-offenders.

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

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *Supplementary Homicide Reports* for the years 1980 through 2010 [machine-readable data files].

# The daily patterns of juvenile violent, drug, and weapons crimes differ on school and nonschool days

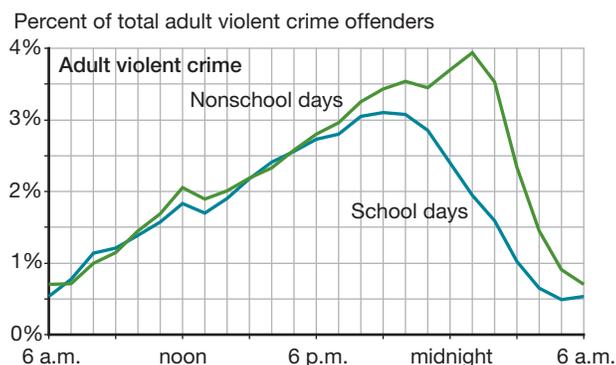
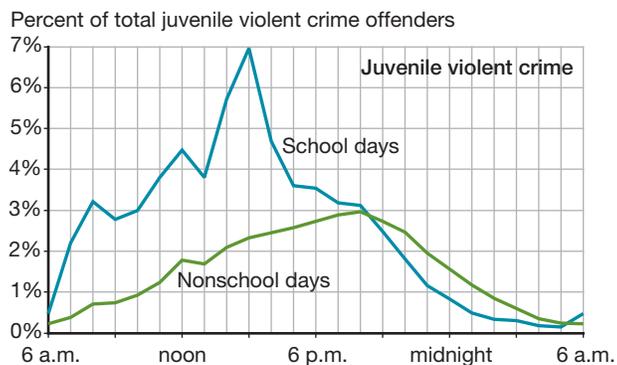
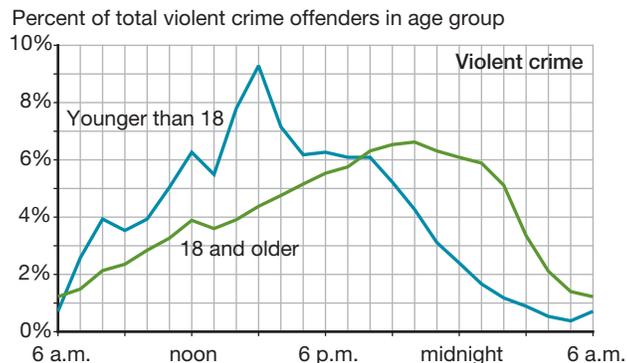
## Peak time periods for juvenile violent crime depend on the day

The FBI's National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) collects information on each crime reported to contributing law enforcement agencies, including the date and time of day the crime occurred. For calendar years 2009 and 2010, agencies in 35 states and the District of Columbia provided information on the time of day of reported crimes. Analyses of these data show that for many offenses, juveniles commit crimes at different times than adults, and the juvenile patterns vary on school and nonschool days.

The number of violent crimes (murder, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault) by adult offenders increased hourly through the morning, afternoon, and evening hours, peaking around 10 p.m., then declining to a low point at 6 a.m. In contrast, violent crimes by juveniles peaked between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. (the hour at the end of the school day) and then generally declined hour by hour until the low point at 5 a.m. At 10 p.m. when the number of adult violent crimes peaked, the number of violent crimes involving juvenile offenders was about half the number at 3 p.m.

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

## Violent crime by juvenile offenders peaks in the afterschool hours on school days



- The small difference in the adult patterns on school and nonschool days probably is related to the fact that nonschool days are also weekend or summer days.

Note: Violent crimes include murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System: Extract Files* for the years 2009 and 2010 [machine-readable data file].

Finally, the time pattern of juvenile violent crimes on nonschool days is similar to that of adults (but peaks a few hours earlier than that of adults).

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

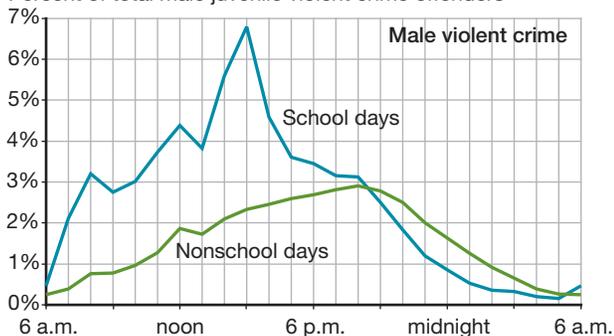
The number of school days in a year is essentially equal to the number of nonschool days in a year. Based on

2009–2010 NIBRS data, 62% of all violent crimes committed by juveniles occurred on school days. In fact, nearly 1 of every 5 juvenile violent crimes (19%) occurred in the 4 hours between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on school days. A smaller proportion of juvenile violent crime (14%) occurred during the standard juvenile curfew hours of 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. However, the annual number of hours in the curfew period (i.e., 8 hours every day in the year) is 4 times

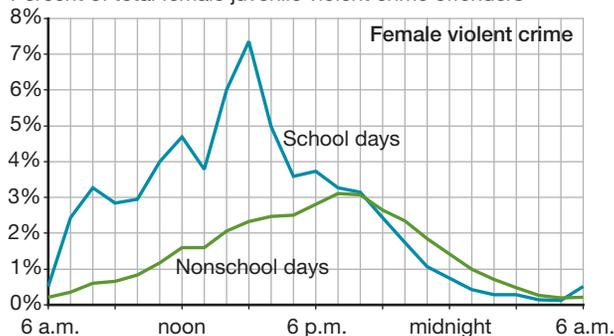
greater than the number of hours in the 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. period on school days (i.e., 4 hours in half of the days in the year). Therefore, the rate of juvenile violence in the afterschool period was more than 5 times the rate in the juvenile curfew period. Consequently, efforts to reduce juvenile crime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

### The patterns of juvenile violent crime are similar for males and females and for whites and blacks on school and nonschool days

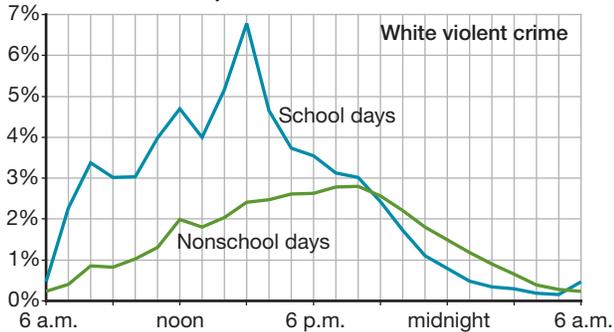
Percent of total male juvenile violent crime offenders



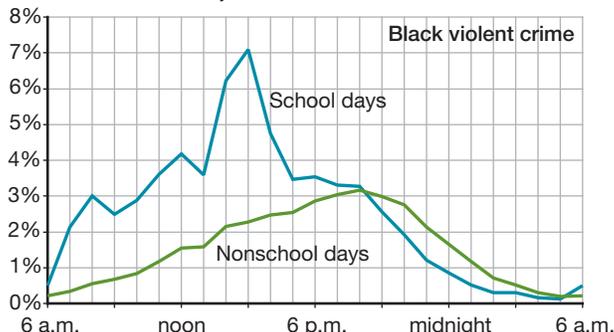
Percent of total female juvenile violent crime offenders



Percent of total white juvenile violent crime offenders



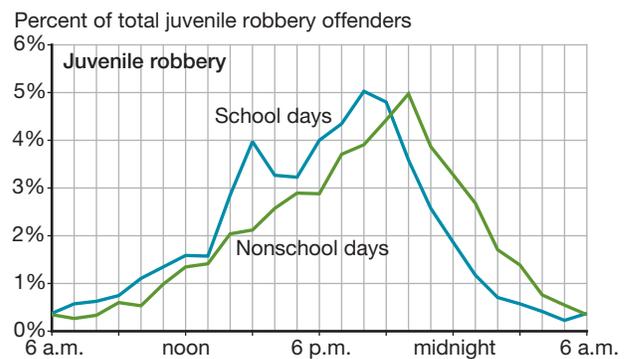
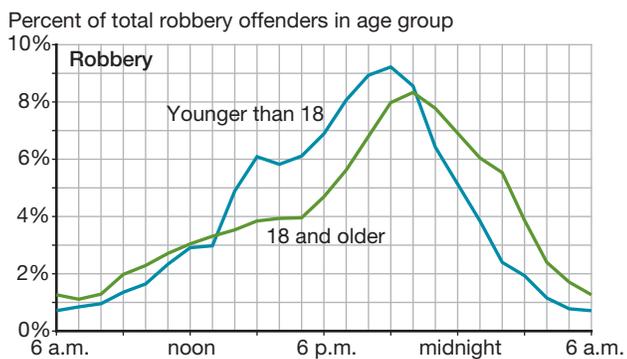
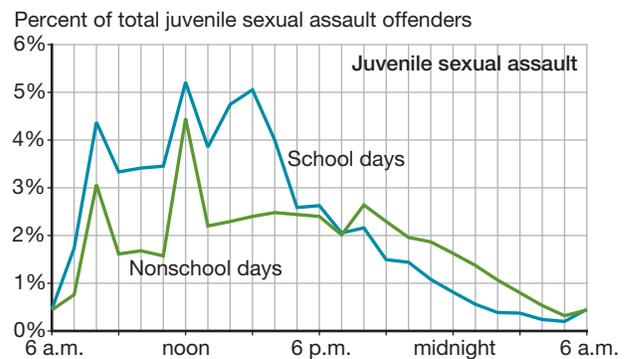
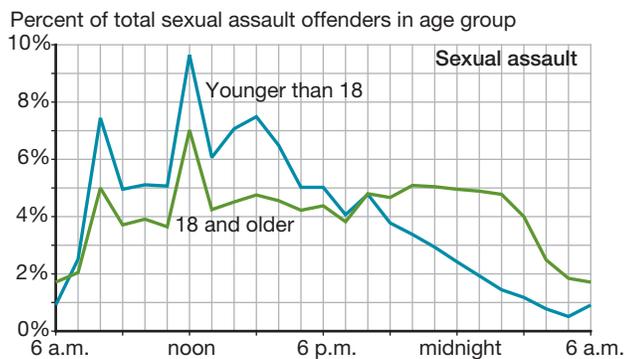
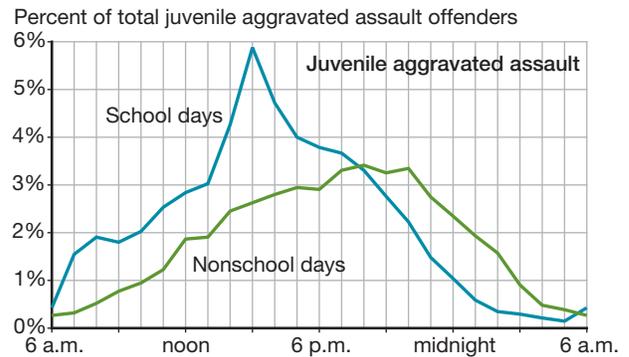
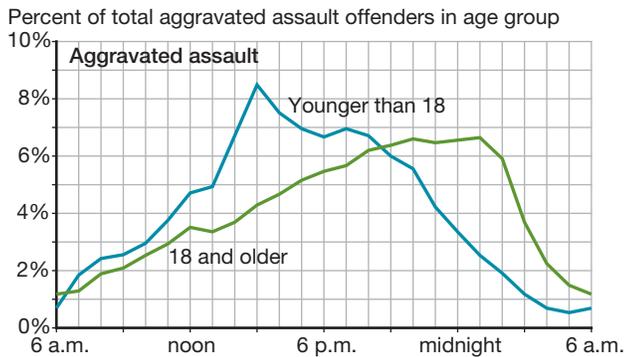
Percent of total black juvenile violent crime offenders



Note: Violent crimes include murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System: Extract Files* for the years 2009 and 2010 [machine-readable data file].

**Aggravated assault by juvenile offenders peaked at 3 p.m. on school days, coinciding with the end of the school day**

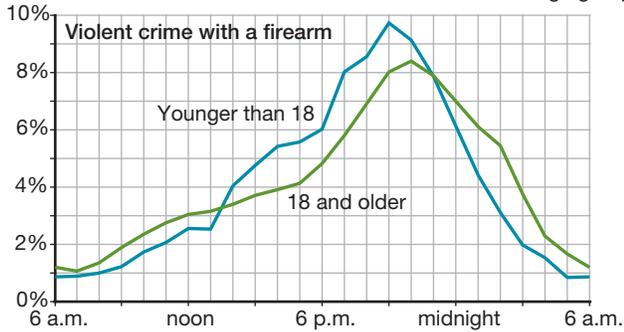


- Sexual assaults by juvenile offenders spike at 8 a.m. and noon on both school and nonschool days and at 3 p.m. on school days.
- Unlike other violent crimes, the daily timing of robberies by juvenile offenders is similar to the adult patterns, peaking in the evening hours on both school and nonschool days.
- Before 8 p.m., persons are more at risk of becoming an aggravated assault victim of a juvenile offender on school days than on nonschool days (i.e., weekends and all summer days).

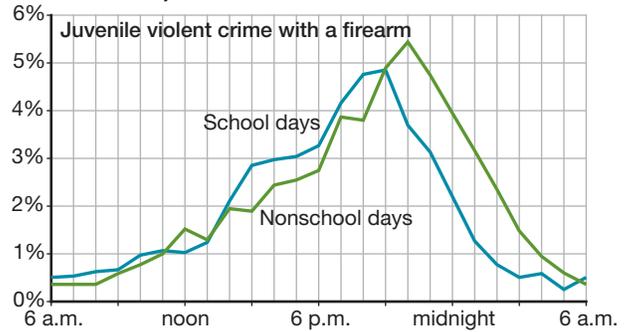
Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System: Extract Files* for the years 2009 and 2010 [machine-readable data file].

**Similar to adults, juveniles are most likely to commit a crime with a firearm between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m.**

Percent of total violent crime offenders with a firearm in age group



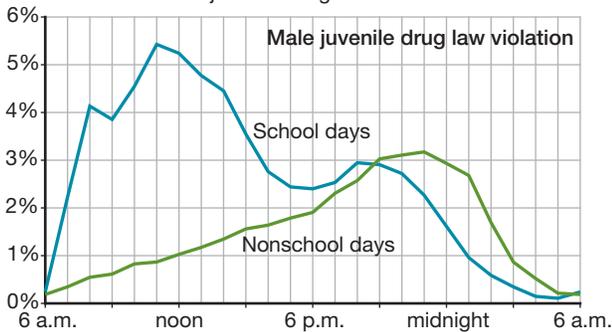
Percent of total juvenile violent crime offenders with a firearm



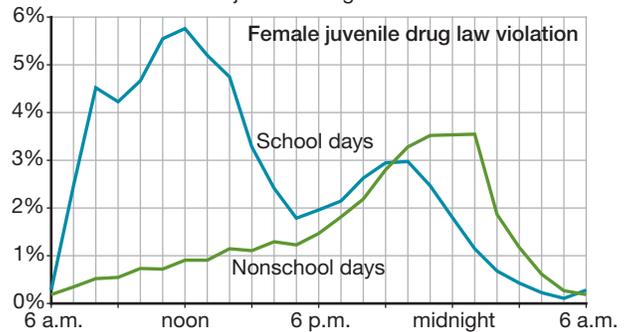
Note: Violent crimes include murder, violent sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault.

**The temporal patterns of drug law violations known to law enforcement for both male and female juveniles indicate how often schools are a setting for drug crimes and their detection**

Percent of total male juvenile drug law violation offenders

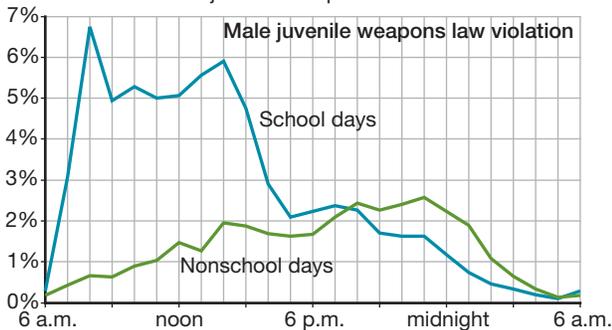


Percent of total female juvenile drug law violation offenders

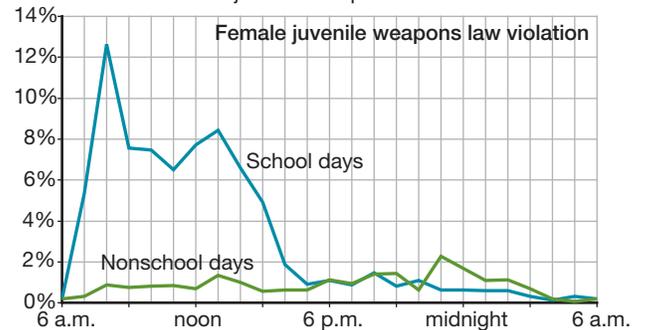


**The time and day patterns of juvenile weapons law violations by males, and especially by females, reflect the major role schools play in bringing these matters to the attention of law enforcement**

Percent of total male juvenile weapons law violation offenders



Percent of total female juvenile weapons law violation offenders



Source: Authors' analyses of the FBI's *National Incident-Based Reporting System: Extract Files* for the years 2009 and 2010 [machine-readable data file].

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