



# ModelsforChange

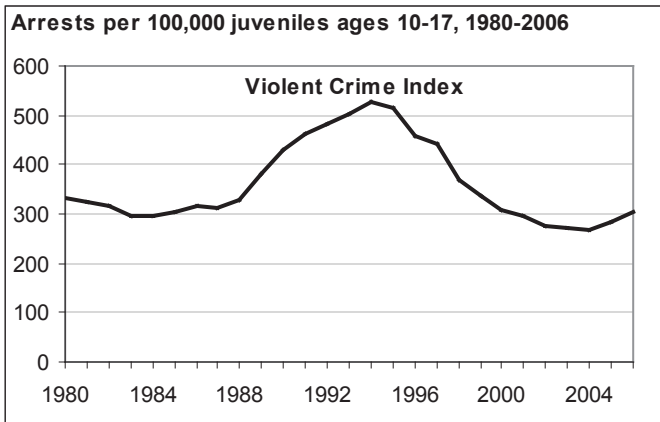
## Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice

### Juvenile Justice System: A National Snapshot

Efforts to ensure a rational, fair, and effective juvenile justice system must be informed with accurate data. This Snapshot provides an overview of national trends in juvenile arrests, juvenile court cases received and the court’s response to those cases. Statistics presented highlight important differences in offense, gender, and race patterns, as well as patterns in juvenile court case processing and practices.

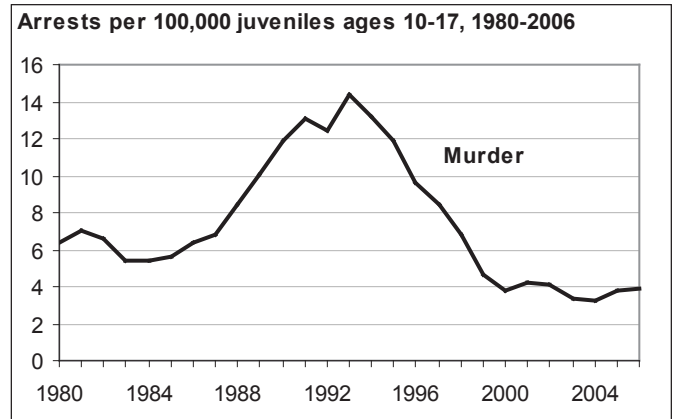
#### Trends in Juvenile Arrests

After years of decline, the juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate increased slightly in 2005 and 2006.



- The juvenile Violent Crime Index arrest rate<sup>1</sup> increased 12% between 2004 and 2006. This increase follows a year in which the rate had reached an historically low level.
- To place the extent of this recent increase in perspective, if the rate continued to increase annually by the same amount, it would be almost 14 years before it returned to the 1994 peak.
- In 2006, there were 302 arrests for Violent Crime Index offenses for every 100,000 youth ages 10-17. If each of these arrests involved a different juvenile (which is unlikely), then no more than 1 in every 330 persons ages 10-17 was arrested for a Violent Crime Index offense in 2006, or about one-third of 1% of all juveniles ages 10-17 living in the U.S.

Of all Violent Crime Index offenses, the juvenile arrest rate for murder showed both the greatest increase and the greatest decline between 1980 and 2006.



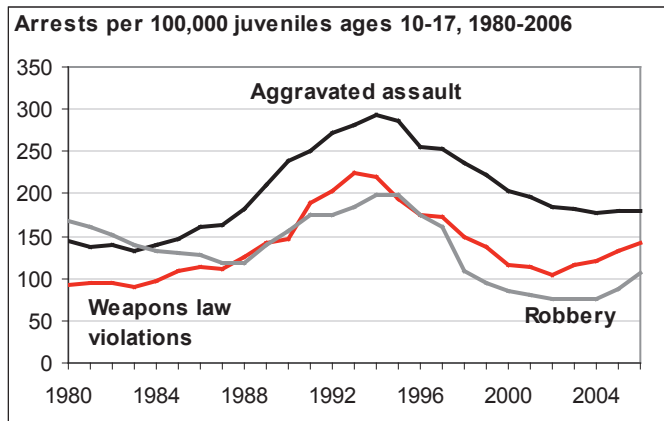
- From the mid-1980s to the peak in 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for murder more than doubled.
- Then, with one exception (2001), the juvenile arrest rate for murder fell each year through 2004, reaching its lowest level in the 27-year period.
- Despite a recent increase, the rate in 2006 was still 73% belows its 1993 peak.

*Suggested Citation:*

Adams, B., and Puzanchera, C. (2007) *Juvenile Justice System: A National Snapshot*. Pittsburgh, PA: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

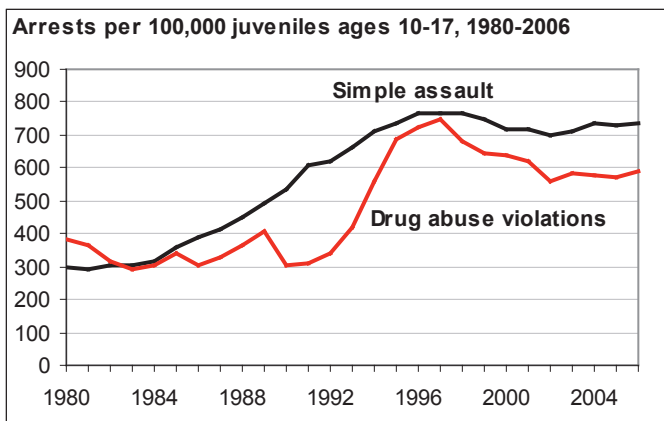


In 2006, the juvenile arrest rates for robbery, aggravated assault, and weapons law violations were each well below their peak levels of the 1990s.



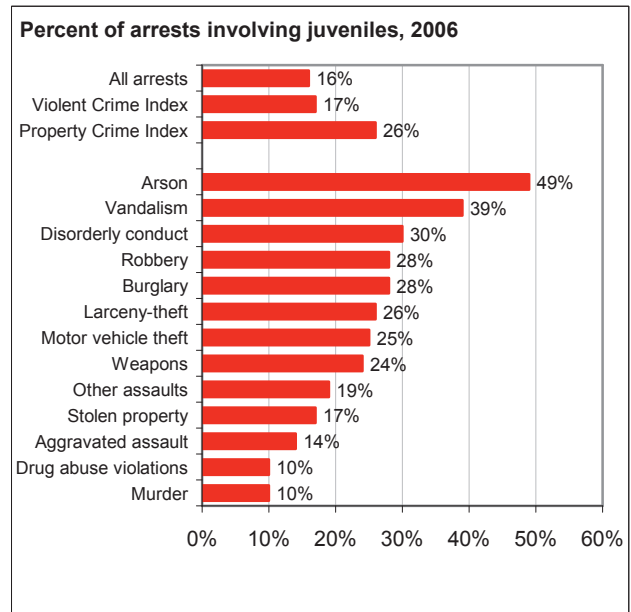
- After declining substantially (62%) between 1995 and 2002, the juvenile robbery arrest rate increased, so that by 2006 the rate was 43% above its low point in 2002 but still 46% below its 1995 peak.
- The juvenile arrest rate for aggravated assault doubled between 1980 and 1994 and then fell 38% by 2006.
- After reaching a peak in 1993, the juvenile arrest rate for weapons law violations fell substantially through 2002. Despite recent increases, the juvenile weapons arrest rate in 2006 was 37% below its peak in 1993.

In 2006, the juvenile arrest rates for simple assault and drug law violations were well above their 1980 levels.

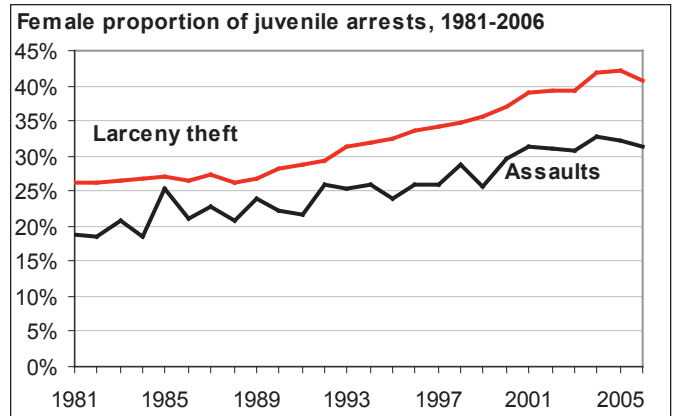


- The juvenile arrest rate for simple assault increased 146% between 1980 and 2006. During this period, the increase in the female juvenile arrest rate for simple assault far outpaced the increase in the male rate (295% vs. 106%, respectively).
- Between 1990 and 1997, the juvenile arrest rate for drug abuse violations increased 145%. The rate declined 21% between 1997 and 2006, but the 2006 rate was still almost double the 1990 rate.

In 2006, juveniles were involved in 1 in 10 arrests for murder and drug abuse violations and 1 in 4 arrests for a weapons violation, robbery, motor vehicle theft, larceny-theft, and burglary.



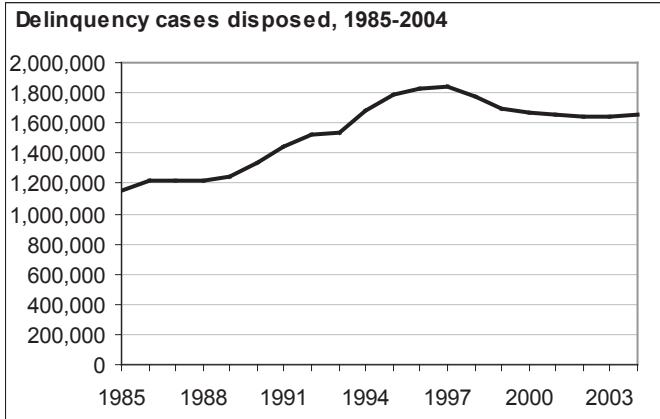
The female proportion of juvenile arrests has increased since the early 1980s.



- The female proportion of all juvenile arrests increased from 20% in 1981 to 29% in 2006.
- Females accounted for 31% of all juvenile assault arrests and 41% of all juvenile larceny-theft arrests in 2006, compared with 19% and 26%, respectively, in 1981.
- The change in the female proportion of juvenile arrests may be due both to changes in behavior on the part of females (more offending) and changes in official responses to female behavior.

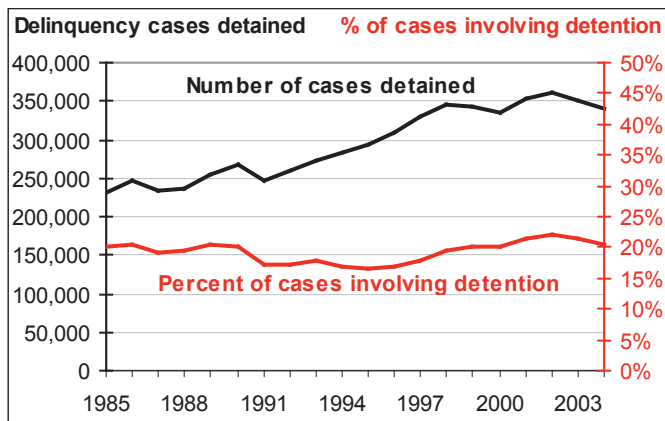
## Trends in Delinquency Case Processing

The number of delinquency cases handled by the Nation's juvenile courts increased 44% between 1985 and 2004.



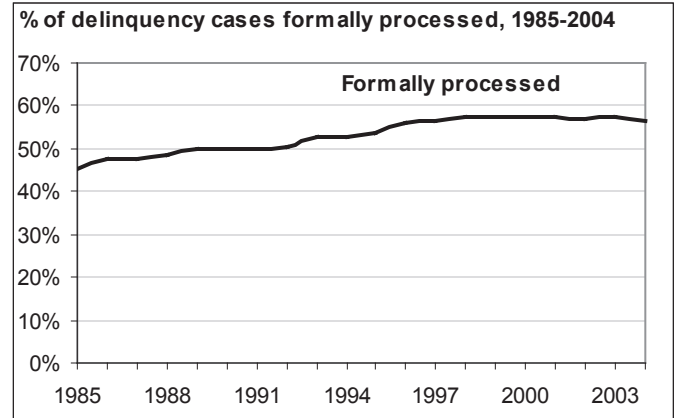
- On any given day in 2004, juvenile courts handled 4,500 delinquency cases. In comparison, in 1985 approximately 3,100 delinquency cases were processed daily.
- The number of person, drug, and public order offense cases handled by juvenile courts more than doubled between 1985 and 2004, while the number of property offense cases declined.

The number of delinquency cases involving detention increased 47% between 1985 and 2004. During that period, the proportion of delinquency cases detained ranged from 16% to 22%.



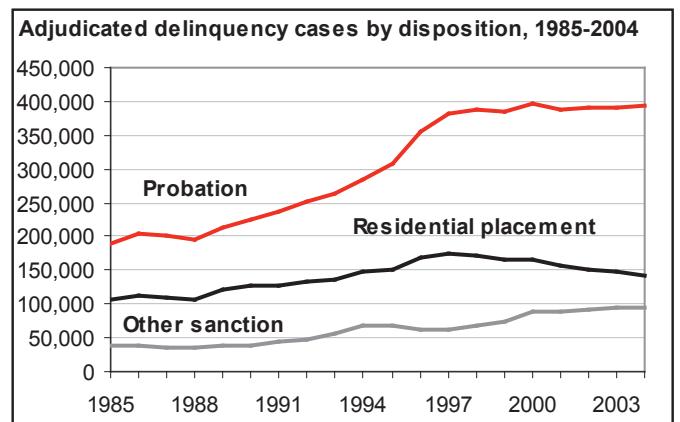
- Juveniles were held in detention facilities at some point between referral to court and case disposition in 21% of all delinquency cases handled in 2004.

The proportion of delinquency cases formally processed in juvenile court grew between 1985 and 2004.



- Between 1985 and 2004, juvenile courts handled an increasing proportion of its delinquency cases with the filing of a petition (up from 45% in 1985 to 57% in 2004).
- Following the increased use of formal processing, the proportion of delinquency cases adjudicated delinquent or waived to criminal court grew between 1985 and 2004. In 2004, for example, youth were adjudicated delinquent or waived to criminal court in 38% of all delinquency cases referred to juvenile court, compared to 29% in 1985.

The number of cases ordered to formal probation increased substantially between 1985 and 2004.

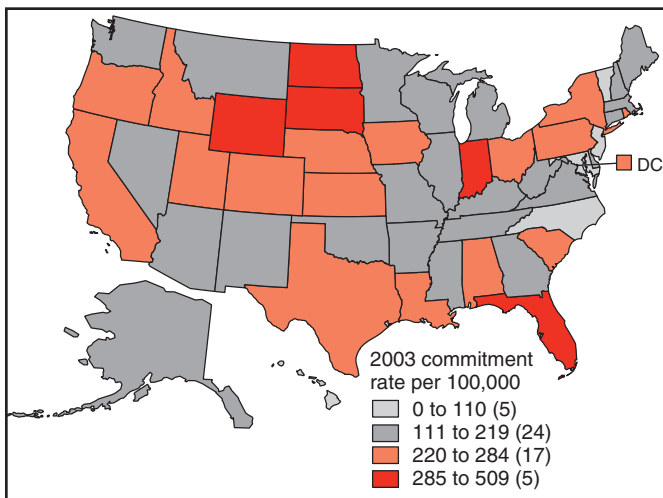


- The number of adjudicated delinquency cases resulting in formal probation doubled from 1985 to 1998, then remained essentially constant through 2004.
- The number of adjudicated delinquency cases resulting in residential placement increased 67% from 1985 to 1997, then declined 20% by 2004. As a result, the number of adjudicated delinquency cases resulting in placement in 2004 was 34% above the 1985 level.
- In 2004, 63% of all adjudicated delinquency cases were ordered to formal probation and 22% were ordered to residential placement.

## Juveniles in Residential Placement

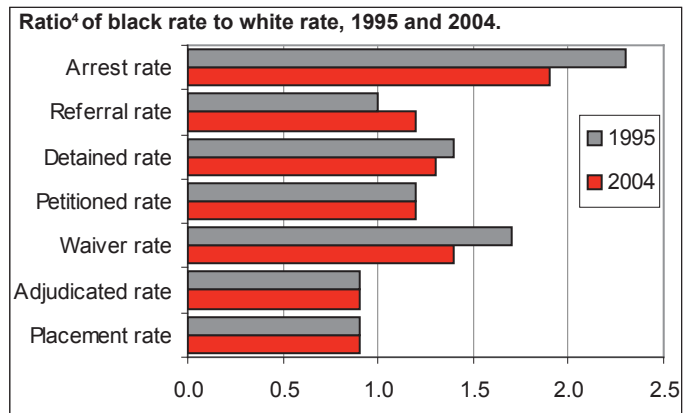
## Disproportionate Minority Contact

State commitment rates varied considerably in 2003, from 30 to 509 per 100,000 juveniles.



- Nationwide in 2003, there were 219 juvenile offenders committed<sup>2</sup> to juvenile facilities per 100,000 juveniles<sup>3</sup> in the population.
- The national commitment rate in 2003 was 15% lower than the rate in 1997. More than half of the states (32) had lower commitment rates in 2003 than in 1997.

Racial disparities occur at various decision points within the juvenile justice system.



- The degree of racial disparity in the juvenile justice system declined between 1995 and 2004 at three decision points: arrest, detention, and waiver to criminal court.
- In 1995, for example, the black juvenile arrest rate was more than double the rate for whites; by 2004, the disparity had declined, so that the black juvenile arrest rate was 90% greater than the white rate.

## Notes and Data Sources

### Trends in Juvenile Arrests

Adapted from Snyder, H. *Juvenile Arrests 2006* [Forthcoming]. Washington, D.C.: OJJDP.

<sup>1</sup> Rates are arrests of persons ages 10-17 per 100,000 persons ages 10-17 in the resident population. The Violent Crime Index includes the offenses of murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

### Trends in Delinquency Case Processing

Adapted from Stahl, A., et al. 2007. *Juvenile Court Statistics 2003-2004*. Washington, D.C.: OJJDP.

### Juveniles in Residential Placement

Adapted from Snyder, H. & Sickmund, M. 2006. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report*. Washington, DC: OJJDP.

<sup>2</sup> Commitment refers to juveniles placed in a residential facility as part of a court-ordered disposition. These youth may have been adjudicated and disposed in juvenile court or convicted and sentenced in criminal court. This excludes detention.

<sup>3</sup> The commitment rate is the number of juvenile offenders in residential placement on October 22, 2003 per 100,000 juveniles age 10 through the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction in each State.

### Disproportionate Minority Contact

Adapted from Snyder, H., Puzzanchera, C., and Adams, B. 2007. *National Disproportionate Minority Contact Databook*. Developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice for the OJJDP. Online. Available: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/dmcd/b/>

<sup>4</sup> A ratio of 1.0 represents equal rates (e.g., or no disparity). A ratio of less than 1.0 indicates that the black rate is below the white rate, while a ratio greater than 1.0 indicates that the black rate is higher than the white rate.

For more information on these topics, visit OJJDP's Statistical Briefing Book at <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/index.html>