



# Bureau of Justice Statistics Executive Summary

March 1996, NCJ-158625

*Jointly Published with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*

## Child Victimiziers: Violent Offenders and Their Victims

By Lawrence A. Greenfeld  
BJS Statistician

### Characteristics of offenses against children

► An estimated 18.6% of inmates serving time in State prisons in 1991 for violent crimes, or about 61,000 offenders nationwide, had been convicted of a crime against a victim under age 18.

► 1 in 5 violent offenders serving time in a State prison reported having victimized a child.

► More than half the violent crimes committed against children involved victims age 12 or younger.

► 7 in 10 offenders with child victims reported that they were imprisoned for a rape or sexual assault.

► Two-thirds of all prisoners convicted of rape or sexual assault had committed their crime against a child.

### Characteristics of the offenders

► All but 3% of offenders who committed violent crimes against children were male.

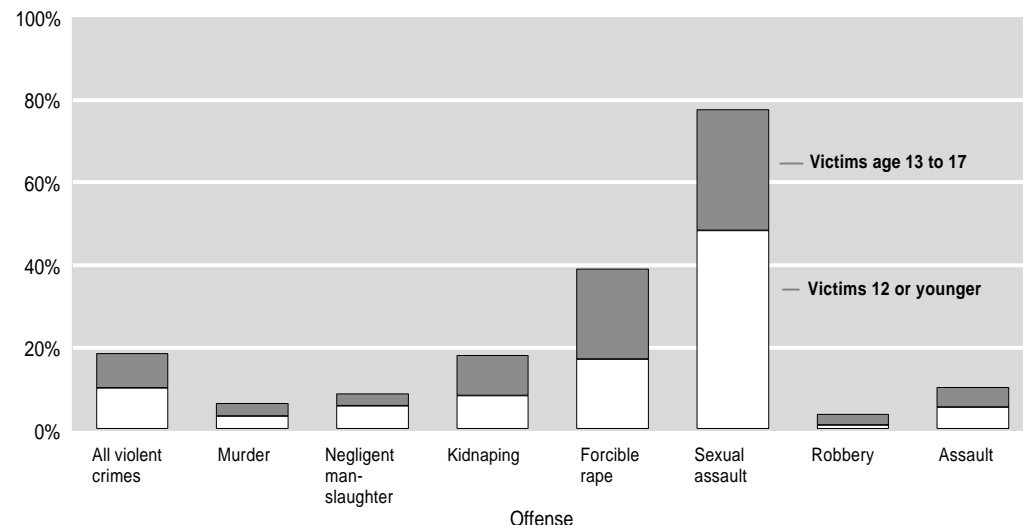
► Offenders who had victimized a child were on average 5 years older than the violent offenders who had committed their crimes against adults. Nearly 25% of child victimizers were age 40 or older, but about 10% of the inmates with adult victims fell in that age range.

► While nearly 70% of those serving time for violent crimes against children were white, whites accounted for 40% of those imprisoned for violent crimes against adults.

► Inmates who victimized children were less likely than other inmates to have a prior criminal record—nearly a third of child-victimizers had never been arrested prior to the current offense, compared to less than 20% of those who victimized adults.

### 19% of violent State prison inmates committed their crime against a child; 78% of those convicted of sexual assault had abused a child

Percent of violent State inmates with victims under age 18



► Violent child-victimizers were substantially more likely than those with adult victims to have been physically or sexually abused when they were children, though the majority of violent offenders, regardless of victim age, did not have a history of such abuse.

► About 14% of child victimizers carried a weapon during the violent crime, compared to nearly half of those who victimized adults.

► About 10% of violent offenders with child victims received life or death sentences and the average prison term was 11 years, somewhat shorter average sentences than received by those with adult victims.

### Characteristics of the victims

► 3 in 10 child victimizers reported that they had committed their crimes against multiple victims; they were more likely than those who victimized adults to have had multiple victims.

► 3 in 4 child victims of violence were female.

► For the vast majority of child victimizers in State prison, the victim was someone they knew before the crime:

A third had committed their crime against their own child

About half had a relationship with the victim as a friend, acquaintance, or relative other than offspring

About 1 in 7 reported the victim to have been a stranger to them.

► Three-quarters of the violent victimizations of children took place in either the victim's home or the offender's home.

► 4 in 10 child victims of violence suffered either a forcible rape or another injury

### Offense distribution of State prisoners and percent of those prisoners with child victims, 1991

Offense	State prison inmates, by offense				Percent of all prisoners serving time for crimes against children
	All prisoners		Child victimizers		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
<b>All offenses</b>	711,643	100.0%	65,163	100.0%	9.2%
<b>Violent offenses</b>	327,958	46.1%	61,037	93.7%	18.6%
Homicide	87,479	12.3%	5,792	8.9%	6.6%
Murder	74,693	10.5	4,677	7.2	6.3
Negligent manslaughter	12,786	1.8	1,115	1.7	8.7
Kidnaping	8,369	1.2	1,508	2.3%	18.0%
Rape and sexual assault	66,482	9.3%	43,552	66.8%	65.5%
Forcible rape	22,797	3.2	8,908	13.7	39.1
Forcible sodomy	2,036	.3	1,741	2.7	85.5
Statutory rape	1,162	.2	1,102	1.7	94.8
Lewd acts with children	10,799	1.5	10,799	16.6	100.0
Other sexual assault	29,688	4.2	21,002	32.2	70.7
Robbery	104,136	14.6	3,772	5.8%	3.6%
Assault	59,275	8.3%	6,058	9.3%	10.2%
Aggravated assault	55,549	7.8	3,933	6.0	7.1
Child abuse	1,717	.2	1,717	2.6	100.0
Simple assault	2,009	.3	408	.6	20.3
Other violent	2,217	.3%	355	.5%	16.0%
<b>Nonviolent offenses</b>	383,685	53.9%	4,126	6.3%	1.1%

Note: Aggravated assault includes assault on a police officer. The victim-offender relationship was generally asked for those offenders serving time for violence. However, some offenders serving time for the public-order crimes involving offenses against morals and decency reported that their victims had been children. Detail may not add to totals because of rounding.

Source: BJS Survey of State Prison Inmates, 1991

## Child murder victims

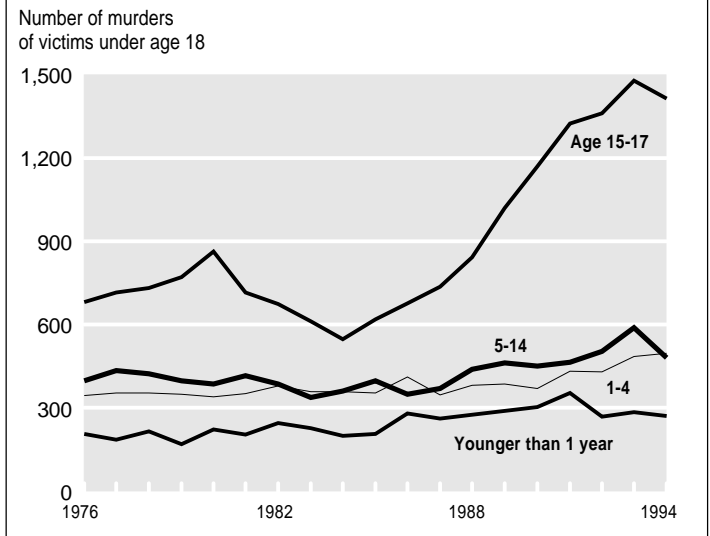
- ▶ Children under the age of 18 accounted for 11% of all murder victims in the United States in 1994. Nearly half of the 2,660 child victims were between ages 15 and 17. About 1 in 5 child victims were known to be killed by another child.
- ▶ Between 1976 and 1994 an estimated 37,000 children were murdered.
- ▶ Since the mid-1980's the increases in both the number and the rate of murder among 15- to 17-year-olds, and particularly among black youth in this age range, have outpaced changes in murder in all other age groups.
- ▶ The victim-offender relationship in child murder varies with the age of the victim: In most murders of a young child, a family member killed the child, while in most murders of an older child, age 15 to 17, the perpetrator was an acquaintance to the victim or was unknown to law enforcement authorities. About 1 in 5 child murders were committed by a family member.
- ▶ Data for the period from 1976 to 1994 indicate that in family murder of a child about 10% of victims were age 15 to 17, while in murders by strangers about 67% of victims were in this age category:

Age of child victim	Victim-offender relationship, 1976-94			
	Family	Acquaintance	Stranger	Unknown
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Less than 1 year	31.2	4.8	1.4	6.9
1-4	36.3	17.0	6.4	9.9
5-14	22.6	20.6	25.0	21.0
15-17	9.9	57.6	67.3	62.3
Total number	10,795	13,060	4,006	9,092

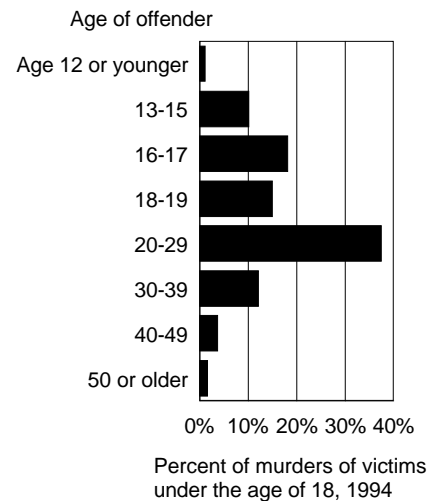
- ▶ Half of all child murders in 1994 were committed with a handgun; about 7 in 10 victims age 15 to 17 were killed with a handgun.

Source: FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976-94

**Victims age 15 to 17, both white and black, accounted for almost all the increase in child murders, 1976-94**



**Children under age 18 were responsible for nearly 30% of murders of children in 1994**



Note: Excludes 749 child murder cases in which the offender was unknown (from a total of 2,660 cases).

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**Yes! Send me 1 copy of *Child Victimizers: Violent Offenders and Their Victims* (28 pages), NCJ-153258.**

**FAX to 410-792-4358, or fold, tape, and mail this page to the address above, with first-class stamp.**

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**Executive Summary**

To: Catherine Doyle and Eileen Garry

From: Marilyn Marbrook, 2/6/96

Attached is a new draft of the Child Victimiziers Executive Summary.

The full report is 27 pages plus 4 pages of front matter, back matter, and covers. Cheryll and Kris have recommended that we print:

25,000 full reports, 10,000 for BJS and 15,000 for OJJDP  
vellum cover      slick cover to match JJ green  
 cost to OJJDP: \$3,823      \$5,021  
 cost to BJS:    2,210      2,983  
 total:            \$6,033      \$8,004

55,000 Exec Summaries, 50,000 for BJS and 5,000 for OJJDP  
 cost to OJJDP: \$ 403  
 cost to BJS:    1,335  
 total:            \$1,738

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**Victim-offender relationship among prisoners serving time for violence against children, 1991**

Single-victim incident	Number of State prison inmates	Percent of State prison inmates serving time for a violent crime, by relationship to their child victim				
		Stranger	Own child <sup>a</sup>	Other family	Acquaintance	Intimate <sup>b</sup>
Total	42,616	14.6%	32.1%	11.1%	38.4%	3.8%
Homicide	3,545	29.5%	23.3%	8.2%	37.4%	1.6%
Murder	2,906	29.1	23.3	9.3	38.3	0
Negligent manslaughter	639	31.5	23.3	2.8	33.7	8.7
Kidnaping	1,153	55.5%	7.1%	7.5%	16.8%	13.1%
Rape and sexual assault	32,923	9.9%	33.4%	12.5%	40.1%	4.1%
Forcible rape	7,099	11.9	36.2	8.9	36.9	6.0
Forcible sodomy	1,303	4.3	35.9	27.9	22.2	9.6
Statutory rape	878	0	27.9	0	72.1	0
Lewd acts with children	7,136	6.9	31.9	17.9	40.8	2.6
Other sexual assault	16,507	11.3	32.9	11.2	40.9	3.6
Robbery	811	55.3%	8.4%	6.5%	22.6%	7.3%
Assault	3,895	20.3%	39.1%	4.6%	35.9%	0
Aggravated assault	2,253	29.8	25.7	5.4	39.1	0
Child abuse	1,390	4.3	63.9	4.3	27.5	0
Simple assault	252	--	--	--	--	--
Other violent	288	--	--	--	--	--

Note: This table is based on prisoners who reported having a single victim.

--Too few sample cases for an accurate estimate.

<sup>a</sup>Includes stepchildren.

<sup>b</sup>Boyfriend or girlfriend.

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