



OJJDP FACT SHEET

John J. Wilson, Acting Administrator October 2000 #15

Juvenile Court Placement of Adjudicated Youth, 1988–1997

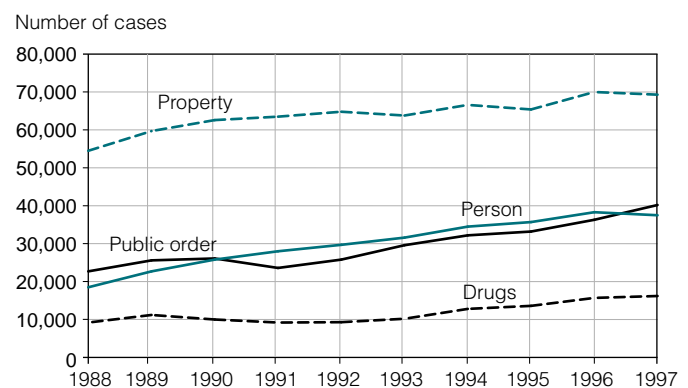
by Charles M. Puzzanchera

In 1997, more than one in four adjudicated delinquency cases resulted in out-of-home placement

Juvenile courts employ a variety of dispositions for youth adjudicated as delinquent. In 1997, 28% (163,200) of adjudicated delinquency cases resulted in a judicial disposition of out-of-home placement (i.e., placement in a residential treatment center, juvenile corrections facility, foster home, or group home). Fifty-five percent (318,700) resulted in an order of probation; 13% (72,700) resulted in some other disposition, such as restitution, fines, community service, or referral to other treatment agencies; and 4% (23,000) were released at disposition without sanction.

According to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, as of October 29, 1997, 71,700 juveniles were in out-of-home

Adjudicated delinquency cases placed out of home, 1988–97



Residential placement in adjudicated delinquency cases

	Percent of Adjudicated Cases Resulting in Placement		
	1988	1993	1997
Total Adjudicated Delinquency Cases	31%	29%	28%
Most Serious Offense			
Person	33%	32%	30%
Property	28%	26%	26%
Drug	34%	31%	24%
Public order	37%	34%	33%
Sex			
Male	31%	30%	30%
Female	25%	24%	22%
Race			
White	29%	27%	26%
Black	34%	33%	32%
Other	30%	35%	29%
Age at Referral			
12 or younger	22%	21%	19%
13 to 15	32%	30%	29%
16 or older	31%	30%	29%
Predisposition Detention			
Detained	49%	47%	48%
Not detained	20%	22%	21%

placement as a result of court commitment for delinquency. Of these, 70% were in public facilities and 30% were in private facilities. As of the time of the census, the average time juveniles had spent in public facilities was 192 days and the average time spent in private facilities was 174 days.

In 1997, juveniles adjudicated for drug offenses were less likely to be placed outside the home than were those adjudicated for other types of offenses. Following adjudication, placement was ordered in 24% (16,200) of drug offense cases, compared with 26% (69,300) of property offense cases, 30% (37,500) of person offense cases, and 33% (40,200) of public order offense cases, such as weapons offenses, disorderly conduct, and obstruction of justice. A relatively high proportion of public order offense cases resulted in out-of-home placement because this category included escapes from institutions and probation and parole violations.

Placement cases grew 56% between 1988 and 1997

The number of adjudicated delinquency cases that resulted in out-of-home placement rose from 104,800 in 1988 to 163,200 in 1997. The largest percentage increase was in the number of person offense cases resulting in placement, which grew 103% from

1988 to 1997. Placements for drug offense cases and public order offense cases each grew 77% during this period, while placement for property offense cases grew 27%. All of the increase in placements was the result of the increase in the total number of adjudicated delinquency cases between 1988 and 1997. The number of adjudicated drug offense cases grew 145%, person offense cases grew 121%, public order offense cases grew 102%, and property offense cases grew 33%. In fact, although the number of adjudicated delinquency cases that resulted in out-of-home placement increased between 1988 and 1997, the overall proportion of cases that were placed out of home declined from 31% in 1988 to 28% in 1997.

Characteristics of adjudicated delinquency cases resulting in out-of-home placement

	Percent of All Placement Cases		
	1988	1993	1997
Most Serious Offense			
Person	18%	23%	23%
Property	52	47	42
Drug	9	8	10
Public order	22	22	25
Sex			
Male	89%	88%	86%
Female	11	12	14
Race			
White	61%	57%	60%
Black	35	38	36
Other	3	5	4
Age at Referral			
12 or younger	5%	5%	4%
13 to 15	50	53	51
16 or older	46	42	45
Predisposition Detention			
Detained	57%	49%	47%
Not detained	43	51	53

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

The number of out-of-home placements between 1988 and 1997 increased across all racial groups

Of the estimated 163,200 adjudicated cases that resulted in out-of-home placement in 1997, 97,900 (60%) involved white youth, 59,200 (36%) involved black youth, and 6,000 (4%) involved youth of other races. That same year, 26% of adjudicated cases involving white youth resulted in out-of-home placement, compared with 32% of cases involving black youth and 29% of cases involving youth of other races. Between 1988 and 1997, the number of adjudicated cases resulting in out-of-home placement increased less for white youth (52%) than for black youth (60%) or youth of other races (69%). Although these data do not control for the severity of the offense or the court histories of the youth, the disproportionate representation of minorities in out-of-home placement is a national concern. Suggestions of bias by courts when assessing the home conditions of minority youth and the lack of available community resources to provide needed supports have been raised as possible factors contributing to racial disparities in placement practices.

For further information

This Fact Sheet, which continues the Residential Placement of Adjudicated Youth series, is based on the Report *Juvenile Court Statistics 1997*. Copies are available from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse by calling 800-638-8736. OJJDP also supports distribution of a PC-compatible software version of the data analyzed in *Juvenile Court Statistics*. For a free copy of the software, *Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics*, call the National Juvenile Court Data Archive at the National Center for Juvenile Justice, Pittsburgh, PA, 412-227-6950. This software can be downloaded from OJJDP's Web site: www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org.

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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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