FACT SHEET

Children and adolescents have among the highest rates of conventional crime victimization and, in addition, suffer from some crimes -- like sexual abuse and family abduction -- specific to childhood. Despite enormous publicity about crime and youth, however, this high vulnerability is seldom mentioned. These facts and statistics about crimes against children are compiled from a variety of sources.

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Overall Crime Victimization of Juveniles

Children have very high rates of crime victimization.

- In 1997, youth 12 through 17 had crime victimization rates over two times higher than adults, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The overall rate of violent crime for youth ages 12 through 17 is 92 per 1,000, compared to 32 per 1,000 for adults and 38 per 1,000 for all persons.

- Victims 12 through 17 constitute 25% of all violent crime victims, according to the NCVS.

  The approximate total number of violent crime victims from birth through 17 is 2,883,000:

  - 2,101,000 twelve through 17 year olds
  - 782,000* birth through 11 year olds

  The approximate number of juvenile crime victims known to police each year is 849,000:

  - 619,000 twelve through 17 year olds
  - 230,000* birth through 11 year olds

  * 1997 National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data indicating 6% of all violent crimes known to police are to persons 0-11


http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv96.htm

Crimes against youth are less likely to be reported to the police.

- In 1995/96, 28% of violent crimes against youth were reported to police versus 48% of crimes to adults.
- Only 10% of thefts from youth were reported, versus 31% of thefts from adults.


Youth are more likely than adults to face a weapon-toting assailant.

- In 1996, the rate for victimization with a weapon was 22.9 per 1,000 for youth, compared to 9.9 per 1,000 for adults.

Juveniles are more likely than adults to experience a victimization related injury.

- In 1996, the rate for victimization injury was 27.1 per 1,000 for youth, compared to 8.9 per 1,000 for adults.


http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/factsheet.html
Crimes against children have been declining in recent years, along with crimes against all individuals.

- Youth crime victimization has declined since 1993.

**Rate of Personal Victimization per 1,000** (excluding murder)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 to 15</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>-27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 19</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These trends parallel declines in crime rates for persons of all ages. Personal crime victimization for all ages declined 22% from 1993 to 1997, including a 7% drop between 1996-1997.

- Homicide

The homicide rate for juveniles of all ages is lower than for adults.

- In 1997, the number of juvenile homicide victims was 2,087. The homicide rate was 3.0 per 100,000 persons ages 0 through 17, compared to 8.1 for adults.

- Eleven percent of the homicides in 1997 occurred in the 17 or younger age group.

- There was a 77% increase in the number of juvenile homicide victims between 1985 and 1993. Almost all of the increase was in the 12 through 17 age group.

- However, from 1993-1997 the number of juvenile homicide victims declined by 28%, but remained well above the levels of the mid-1980's.
### Year | Number of Juvenile Homicides | Rate per 100,000 | Number of Adult Homicides | Rate per 100,000
---|---|---|---|---
1985 | 1,592 | 2.5 | 17,388 | 9.9
1986 | 1,739 | 2.7 | 18,871 | 10.7
1987 | 1,738 | 2.7 | 18,362 | 10.3
1988 | 1,949 | 3.1 | 18,731 | 10.4
1989 | 2,182 | 3.4 | 19,318 | 10.5
1990 | 2,317 | 3.6 | 21,123 | 11.4
1991 | 2,605 | 4.1 | 22,095 | 11.8
1992 | 2,592 | 4.0 | 21,168 | 11.1
1993 | 2,883** | 4.3 | 21,647** | 11.4**
1994 | 2,695** | 4.0 | 20,615** | 10.7**
1995 | 2,652 | 3.9 | 18,948** | 9.8**
1996 | 2,427** | 3.5 | 17,223* | 8.8*
1997 | 2,087* | 3.0* | 16,122* | 8.1*


Rates calculated by CCRC.

**Homicide is one of the five leading causes of juvenile mortality.**

### Leading Causes of Death

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of Death in Rank Order</th>
<th>Ages 1 - 4</th>
<th>Ages 5 - 14</th>
<th>Ages 15 - 24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accidents*</td>
<td>accidents*</td>
<td>accidents*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>birth defects</td>
<td>cancer</td>
<td><strong>homicide</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cancer</td>
<td><strong>homicide</strong></td>
<td>suicide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>homicide</strong></td>
<td>birth defects</td>
<td>cancer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heart disease</td>
<td>heart disease</td>
<td>heart disease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/factsheet.html
Homicide is the only one of these causes to have increased in the last generation.


Juvenile homicide rates are substantially higher for African American and Hispanic American youth.

Large cities have levels that greatly exceed those of rural areas. Washington DC, has 9 times more child murders than the national average.


Teenagers, children in middle childhood, and young children face different homicide perils.

- The homicides of teens (12-17 years) mostly involve male victims and male offenders, many of whom are other youths or young adults, using firearms.
- The homicide risk for middle childhood (6-11 years) is very low compared to that of teenagers or young children.
- The homicides of young children (0-5 years) are committed largely by family members using beatings and suffocation and victimize boys and girls about equally. A large portion of offenders are female.


Sexual Assault

Youths have higher rates of sexual assault victimization than adults.

- In 1996, the sexual assault victimization rate for youths under 18 was 2.7 times (or 170%) higher than for adults, or 3.2 per 1,000, compared to an adult rate of 1.2 per 1,000, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey.

A majority of sexual assaults reported to the police occur to juveniles.

- In 1995, 70% of forcible sex offenses and 95% of non-forcible sex offenses occurred against persons ages 0 through 17.


- According to a self-report study, 51% of lifetime rapes occur prior to age 18, and 29% prior to age 12.

Kilpatrick, D.C., Edmunds, C., Seymour, A. 1992. "Rape in America: A Report to the Nation" from "The National Women’s Study" sponsored by the National Institute of Drug Abuse, National Victim’s Center and National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center at the Medical University of South Carolina. Washington, DC.
The rate of sexual assault of juveniles has declined since 1992.

Changes in Rates of Sexual Assault 1993-1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 to 15</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>-44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 19</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>-22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv96.htm

- Self-report studies suggest 20% of adult females and 5 to 10% of adult males recall a childhood sexual assault or sexual abuse incident.


Non-Family Abduction

Stereotypical stranger abductions of children are rare.

- In 1988, the estimated number of stranger abductions* was 200 to 300, according to the first National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Throwaway Children (NISMART). (A new estimate is due in 2000).

Abductions are considered "stereotypical" when the perpetrator is a stranger and any one of the following occurs: 1) the child is gone overnight; 2) the child is killed; 3) the child is transported a distance of 50 miles or more; 4) the child is ransomed; or 5) the perpetrator evidences intent to keep the child permanently.

- Thousands of other short-term abductions occur to children mostly in the course of sexual assaults and other crimes. In 1988, the number of these short-term abductions known to police was estimated at 3,200 to 4,600. More than two thirds of these abductions occurred during sexual assaults.

Teens are the group at greatest risk for non-family abduction.

- In 1988, three quarters or more of abduction victims were female, and 51% were adolescents, ages 12 through 17.


In police reports of abductions, juveniles are kidnapped as often by non-family acquaintances as by strangers.

- Two-thirds of juveniles kidnapped by acquaintances are female, and most are teenagers.

http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/factsheet.html
Assault

Juveniles are substantially more likely than adults to be assaulted.

- The assault rate for youth 12 through 17 is 2.8 times (or 176%) greater than for adults, or 80 per 1,000 versus 29 per 1,000, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey for 1996.


http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv96.htm

- Other self-report surveys suggest the actual assault rate for youth is higher than estimates from the National Crime Victimization Survey. Annual estimates for youth assault victimization from other surveys are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>% Assaulted in Previous Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Crime Victimization Survey</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring the Future</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Youth Survey</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Youth Victimization Prevention Study</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Juveniles under age 12 also have high assault victimization rates, according to several national and local studies.


Robbery and Theft [Property Crime]

Youth are substantially more likely to be robbed or have property stolen than adults.

- For 1996/1997, robbery rates were 9 per 1,000 for juveniles and 4 per 1,000 for adults, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey.
- For the same period, larceny (theft) rates were 151 per 1,000 for juveniles and 97 per 1,000 for adults.

School is the most common location for juvenile property victimizations.

- In 1996/1997, 54% of juvenile property victimizations happened at or on the way to and from school.
- The next most risky place was a juvenile's home, which saw only 12% of property victimizations.
Juvenile property crimes are different from adult property crimes.

- Juveniles are much more likely than adults to have bicycles, clothing, collections and electronic gear stolen.
- Many items reported as stolen from adults are communal property such as TV’s, appliances, and autos, whose loss impacts juveniles as well as adults in a household.
- The majority (59%) of items stolen from juveniles are valued at under $50, while the majority (63%) of items taken from adults are worth more than $50.

Few juvenile property crime victimizations get reported to police.

- Only 13% of all juvenile property victimizations get reported.
- Reporting can improve the chances of recovering stolen items: 26% of juvenile property victimizations reported to police had items recovered versus only 14% of incidents not reported.

Property crime rates are declining.

- Property crime rates for both juveniles and adults dropped 20-25% between 1993 and 1997.


Child Maltreatment, Child Abuse and Neglect

Note: Child maltreatment statistics are generally confined to episodes involving offenders who are relatives and caretakers. This excludes physical and sexual assaults by peers, adult acquaintances, or strangers.

Large numbers of children are abused and neglected.

- The estimated number of substantiated cases of child maltreatment in 1998 was 1,009,000.
- The estimated rate of substantiated cases of child maltreatment in 1998 was 14 per 1,000 children.
- Approximately two additional children are reported for suspicion of child abuse and neglect for every allegation that is substantiated.
- The total number of children reported for suspicion of child abuse and neglect in 1998 was 3,154,000. This is a rate of 45 per 1,000 children.


http://www.childabuse.org/50data97.html

After growing dramatically between 1976 and 1992, rates of child maltreatment reports and substantiations have been at a plateau since 1992.

- Trends in Reporting Rates (per 1,000)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Rate per 1,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>989,430</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>966,000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1,018,000</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1,009,000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1,010,000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1,025,000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>998,000</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1,074,000</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1,009,000</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trends in Substantiated Child Abuse Cases: Numbers and Rates per 1,000**

The National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-3) showed child abuse had increased by 67% in 1993 compared to 1986.

- The number of children abused or neglected in 1986 was 931,000; in 1993 the number of children was 1,553,800. (This is a two point estimate that does not reflect the flattening trend since 1992. The NIS-3 number for 1993 is higher than the number reported in the Annual Fifty State Survey because it included cases not known to child protection agencies.)


Only a small proportion of child maltreatment victims are removed from their homes.

- Placement occurred in 16% of child maltreatment substantiations in 1997.


Child Physical Abuse

Approximately 192,000 cases of child physical abuse were substantiated in 1998.

- Physical abuse constituted 19% of all child maltreatment substantiations for 1998.


- Child physical abuse substantiations fell somewhat after 1992:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Estimated Number of Children</th>
<th>Rate per 1,000 children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>228,000</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>235,000</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>241,000</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>241,000</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Estimated Number of Children</td>
<td>Rate per 1,000 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>146,000</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>149,000</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>147,000</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>128,000</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Child Sexual Abuse**

**Approximately 101,000 cases of child sexual abuse were substantiated in 1998.**

- Child sexual abuse constituted about 10% of all child maltreatment cases substantiated.

**Child sexual abuse substantiations have declined in recent years.**

- In 1986, child sexual abuse cases were 16% of all reported cases. In 1998, child sexual abuse cases were 10% of all reported cases.


[http://www.childabuse.org/50data97.html](http://www.childabuse.org/50data97.html)

- There has been a 22% decline in the number of child sexual abuse substantiations since 1992.

- There has been a 26% decline in the rate per 1,000 of substantiated cases of child sexual abuse since 1992.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>124,000</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>117,000</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/

**Child Neglect**

**Approximately 569,000 cases of child neglect were substantiated in 1997.**

- Neglect constitutes 54% of all substantiated cases. It is the most common type of reported and substantiated maltreatment.


  http://www.childabuse.org/50data97.html

- There has been no clear trend in rate per 1000 of substantiated neglect cases.

  1990: 7.6
  1991: 7.7
  1992: 7.7
  1993: 6.8
  1994: 7.8
  1995: 7.5
  1996: 7.2
  1997: 7.5


  http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/

**Family Abduction**

**Little current data is available on family abduction.**

- For 1988, the National Incidence Study of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMAART), estimated that 354,000 children had experienced some level of family abduction, including many very short-term violations of custody rights, and 163,000 children were abducted in...
more serious episodes that involved concealment, interstate flight or an intent to keep a child permanently.

- The NISMART report estimated that 1% to 3% of children of recently divorced parents experience family abductions involving concealment, interstate flight or an intent to keep the child permanently.


- New data on family abduction are due in the year 2000 from the second NISMART survey.

Exposure to Domestic Violence

Many children witness violence in their homes.

- Thirteen percent of adults recall violent incidents between their parents, according to the 1985 Family Violence Survey.


- Seven percent of children ages 10 through 16 answer "yes" to the question, "Have you ever seen any of the adults in your household hit each other?"


- Children make 10 percent or more of domestic violence emergency calls to police in cities where data about callers have been gathered.


School Assaults

A majority of violent victimizations to juveniles occur outside of school, while a majority of thefts occur in school.

- In 1997, students ages 12 through 18 were victims of approximately 202,000 non-fatal serious violent crimes (sexual assault, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) at school and 636,000 incidents out of school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-School Compared to Out-of-School Victimization, 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Crime</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Violent*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/factsheet.html
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1,055,000 (40%)</th>
<th>1,556,000 (60%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>1,666,000 (52%)</td>
<td>1,552,000 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,721,000 (47%)</td>
<td>3,107,000 (53%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* serious violent = sexual assault, rape, robbery or aggravated assault

**violent = serious violent and simple assault

The victimization rate for crime in school declined from 1993 to 1997.

- From 1993 to 1997, the in-school victimization rate for all crimes declined from 155 to 102 incidents per 1,000 students, ages 12 through 18.
- From 1993 to 1997, the in-school rate for serious violent crimes declined from 13 to 8 incidents per 1,000 students.


In-school homicides are rare.

- In the 1997-1998 school year, there were 58 violent deaths in schools and on school grounds in the United States. (This figure includes deaths of adults, homicides by adults and suicides of both youth and adults.)


- Between 1992 and 1994, the rate of violent deaths in schools was .09 per 100,000 students, including suicides. The out-of-school homicide rate in 1995 was 3.8 per 100,000 juveniles, or about 40 times the in-school rate for violent deaths.


http://www.cjci.org/jpi/schoolhouse.html

Most schools have no serious violence in a typical year.

- Ninety percent of over 1200 public school principals in a national sample reported no incidents of serious violent crime (murder, suicide, rape or sexual battery, robbery or physical attack with a weapon) during the 1996-1997 school year.
- Eighty percent of the principals reported five or fewer crimes of any kind, including petty crimes, during the 1996-1997 school year.
- The overall rate of serious violent crimes in school was 50 per 100,000 students, during the 1996-1997 school year.

There has been little change in school victimization rates.

- An annual nationwide survey of 12 through 19 year old students found only a .1 % (from 14.5% to 14.6%) change in victimization rates in school from 1989 to 1995. (In this survey victimization included physical assault, robbery and theft.)

Victimization rates for high school seniors changed little between 1976 and 1996.

- The most common type of victimization at school reported by high school seniors in both 1976 and 1996 was having something stolen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Rates of Victimization for a One Year Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injured with a weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injured without a weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened with a weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threatened without a weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property damaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property stolen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Data from the Monitoring the Future Study.

http://www.isr.umich.edu/src/mtf/index.html

However, fear of victimization in school has increased.

- In 1989, 6% of middle and high school students reported they feared being attacked or harmed in school. This rose to 9% in 1995.

- In 1989, 5% of middle and high school students said they avoided places at school for fear of their own safety. This rose to 9% in 1995.
The percentage of students reporting street gang presence at school nearly doubled between 1989 and 1995, from 15.3% to 28.4%.

http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/src.htm

**Also, bullying is a problem in many schools.**

- Eight percent of students in grades six through twelve report they are bullied at school. Bullying is defined as being "picked on a lot" or being made to give up money or other items.

- Bullying is more of a problem for younger students. Over 13% of sixth-graders say they are bullied, compared to about 3% of twelfth-graders.


- Some studies suggest that about 10% of school children are chronically abused by peers.


**Fact sheet prepared by Kathy Kopiec with assistance from David Finkelhor, Richard Ormrod, and Kelly Foster. Edited by Janis Wolak.**