

Juveniles at the Training School

DEFINITION

Juveniles at the Training School is the number of juveniles age 21 or under who were in the care or custody of the Rhode Island Training School at any time during the calendar year, including youth in community placements while in the care or custody of the Training School.

SIGNIFICANCE

The juvenile justice system has three primary obligations: to identify and respond to the needs of the young people in its care; to protect youth from legal jeopardy; and to maintain public safety.¹ Early antisocial behavior, cognitive impairment, inadequate parenting skills, child maltreatment, exposure to family violence, association with other high-risk youth, poor academic performance, and poverty increase risk for involvement with the juvenile justice system.^{2,3} Youth at risk of juvenile justice systems involvement often come to the attention of schools, social service agencies and child welfare systems, presenting opportunities to prevent wayward and delinquent behavior.

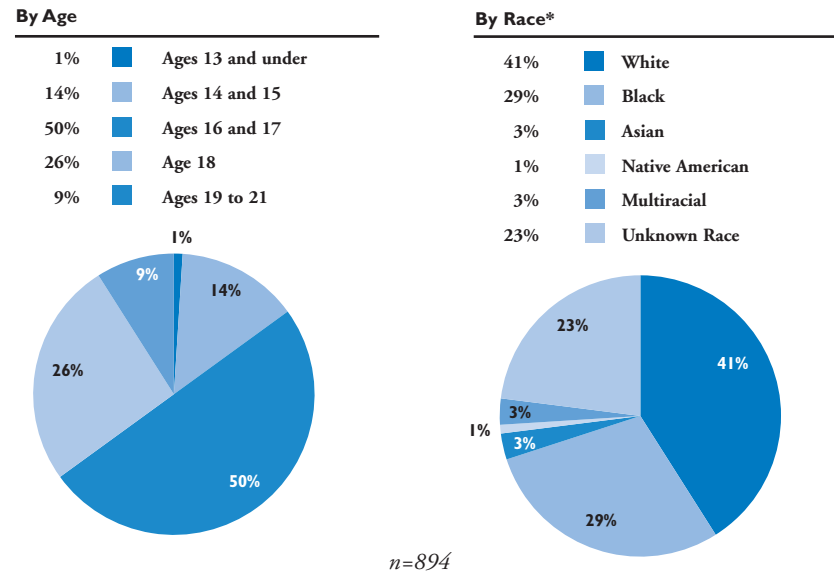
Juvenile justice systems have a range of options for monitoring and rehabilitating juvenile offenders in addition to incarceration, including: electronic monitoring, day and evening reporting centers, skills training

programs, community-based therapy for youth and families and substance abuse treatment.⁴ Alternatives to incarcerating youth have been shown to be more successful in preventing recidivism and more cost-effective than incarceration. Programs that are community-based, intensive, sustained, and involve the families of the youth in individualized treatment programs are the most successful.^{5,6}

The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) operates the Rhode Island Training School, the state's residential detention facility for adjudicated youth and youth in detention while awaiting trial. A total of 894 youth (82% male and 18% female) were in the care or custody of the Training School at some point during 2009, down from 1,084 in 2008. On January 1, 2010, there were 275 youth in the care or custody of the Training School, 110 of whom were physically at the Training School.⁷

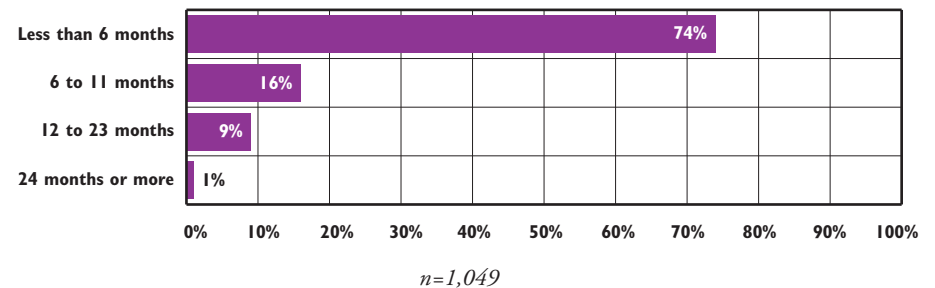
In 2008, the Rhode Island General Assembly instituted a cap on the number of detained and adjudicated youth at the Training School. On any given day, the limit is 148 boys and 12 girls.⁸

Juveniles in the Care or Custody of the Rhode Island Training School, Calendar Year 2009



*In 2009, 264 youth (30%) in the care or custody of the Rhode Island Training School were identified as Hispanic. Hispanic youth may be of any race.

Discharges From the Rhode Island Training School, by Length of Time in Custody, Calendar Year 2009



Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST, 2009. Total discharges (1,049) are higher than the total number of youth who passed through the Training School (894) due to some youth being detained and/or adjudicated and then discharged from the Training School more than once in 2009.

Disproportionate Minority Contact in Juvenile Justice Systems

◆ At every point in juvenile justice systems in the U.S., minority youth (both males and females) are likely to receive harsher treatment than White youth for comparable offenses. Minority youth are more likely than White youth to be detained, formally charged in juvenile court, placed in a secure facility (and less likely to receive probation), waived to adult court and incarcerated as an adult once waived to the adult system. In addition, a national review of more than 150 studies has shown that racial bias plays a definite part in the overrepresentation of minority youth in juvenile justice systems.^{9,10,11,12}

Disproportionate Minority Contact in Rhode Island

	% OF TOTAL CHILD POPULATION 2006-2008	% OF JUVENILES DETAINED BY POLICE 2008	% OF JUVENILE OFFENSES REFERRED TO FAMILY COURT, 2009	% OF JUVENILES WHO PASSED THROUGH THE TRAINING SCHOOL, 2009	% OF JUVENILES ADJUDICATED TO THE TRAINING SCHOOL, JAN. 1, 2010	% OF JUVENILES ON PROBATION JAN. 4, 2010
White	74%	54%	44%	41%	31%	44%
Black	7%	26%	18%	29%	35%	25%
Asian	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%	3%
Native American	1%	<1%	NA	1%	<1%	1%
Multi-Racial	4%	NA	NA	3%	3%	3%
Other/Unknown	11%	<1%	24%	23%	27%	24%
Hispanic	19%*	17%	12%	30%*	32%*	28%*

◆ Youth of color are disproportionately more likely than White youth to have contact with juvenile justice systems in Rhode Island. Black youth are more likely to be adjudicated to the Training School than White youth, despite making up 7% and 74% of the state's child population, respectively. Hispanic youth made up 30% of youth who passed through the Training School in 2009, while they were 19% of the state's child population.

Sources: *Child Population by race* is from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2008. *Police Detentions* are from the Juvenile Detention Data Summaries submitted by Rhode Island Police Departments to the Rhode Island Justice Commission, 2008. *Family Court referrals* are from the Rhode Island Family Court, 2009. *Passed through the Training School* are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), 2009. *Adjudicated to the Training School* are point-in-time data from DCYF for January 1, 2010. *Probation* are point-in-time data from DCYF for January 4, 2010. *Hispanics in these columns are also included in other racial categories.

Risk Factors for Rhode Island Youth at the Training School

History of Child Abuse and Neglect

- ◆ Almost one-third (31%) of the 275 youth in the care or custody of the Training School on January 1, 2010 had at some point in their childhood been victims of documented child abuse or neglect.¹³
- ◆ Nationally, youth in child welfare systems are 2.5 times more likely to enter the juvenile justice system if they are placed in group homes instead of foster care homes.¹⁴

Behavioral Health Needs

- ◆ In 2009, 92 youth at the Training School were prescribed psychiatric medications for psychiatric diagnoses other than conduct disorders and substance abuse disorders. Between April and December 2009, 126 youth (119 males and 7 females) at the Training School received residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment services through the CEC/CiviGenics Straight Ahead Program.¹⁵

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting

- ◆ Two of the 13 adjudicated or detained females at the Training School during the week of January 10, 2008 were pregnant. Nine of the 110 adjudicated males at the Training School during this period reported already being a parent and two reported being an expectant parent.¹⁶

Educational Attainment

- ◆ In January 2008, students' reading and math skills were on average at the 5th grade level at entry to the Training School. At exit, their reading and math skills were on average at 6th grade levels.¹⁷
- ◆ Of the 787 youth in 7th through 12th grades who received educational services at the Training School during 2009, 193 (25%) received special education services. Fifty-three percent of these youth had emotional disorders, 33% had learning disabilities and 14% had other health impairments.¹⁸

- ◆ During 2009, 62 youth graduated from high school while serving a sentence at the Training School (57 received a GED and five graduated with a high school diploma). An additional 66 youth received post-secondary education services at the Training School in 2009.¹⁹

Juveniles at the Training School

Girls in the Juvenile Justice System

◆ Girls in the juvenile justice system enter with different personal and offense histories and needs than their male peers. Girls are less likely than boys to commit violent offenses. The majority of offenses committed by girls are property crimes and status offenses (age-related acts that would not be punishable if the offender were an adult, such as truancy). Girls are disproportionately arrested for running away from home. Girls in the juvenile justice system are very likely to have histories of physical and sexual abuse and exposure to violence. As a result, they may have a higher prevalence of self-abusive behaviors, mental health issues (like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder), substance use and suicide attempts, requiring support services tailored to their needs.^{20,21}

Alternatives to Juvenile Detention and Incarceration

- ◆ The Rhode Island Training School is an important resource for the rehabilitation of youth who commit serious offenses and who pose a danger to the community. For youth who do not pose a danger to public safety, expanding Rhode Island's capacity to provide effective community-based alternatives to detention and incarceration is essential.
- ◆ The rehabilitation of youth and the prevention of recidivism (repeat offending) with the goal of protecting public safety are key elements of juvenile justice systems. National research shows that an over-reliance on the incarceration of juveniles is not cost-effective and leads to worse public safety outcomes and higher rates of recidivism than the use of community-based alternatives to incarceration.^{22,23}
- ◆ Key components of successful community-based programs to prevent juvenile recidivism include intensive family therapy and an acknowledgment of the critical roles that families, homes and communities play in resolving delinquency. Successful programs also work with youths' strengths and provide a wide range of services and resources tailored to the needs of youth and their families, including academic and job skills assistance, substance use and mental health treatment and supports.^{24,25}
- ◆ Peer influences can be a significant factor in the development of antisocial behavior. Placing delinquent youth together (such as in a Training School) may reduce positive program impacts and may even lead to negative outcomes.^{26,27}

Probation for Rhode Island Youth

- ◆ The Juvenile Correctional Services Division of DCYF includes the Training School and Juvenile Probation and Parole. Juvenile Probation and Parole works to rehabilitate youth in the community to ensure public safety and full compliance with court orders and conditions of probation. Adolescents are placed on probation by the Family Court either as an alternative to incarceration at the Training School or as the final part of their sentence after being incarcerated at the Training School. Parole is not currently used for youth in Rhode Island.²⁸
- ◆ On January 4, 2010, there were 1,102 youth on the DCYF probation caseload. One-quarter (24%) of youth on probation were ages 12 to 15, 51% were ages 16 to 17 and 25% were ages 18 to 21.²⁹
- ◆ Almost half (44%) of youth on probation were White, 25% were Black, 3% were Asian, 1% were Native American, 3% were multiracial and 24% were of unknown race. More than one-quarter (28%) of youth were identified as Hispanic. Hispanic youth may be of any race.³⁰

Prevention of Recidivism Among Delinquent Youth

- ◆ Of the 894 youth who were in the care or custody of the Training School at some point during 2009, 20% (183) were admitted at least twice in 2009, and 3% were admitted to the Training School three or more times in 2009.³¹
- ◆ There are three evidence-based interventions that have repeatedly been shown in scientific trials to reduce recidivism among delinquent youth, all of which involve the youth and his or her family in counseling and other treatments, and all of which cost less than incarceration.³²
- ◆ Effective reentry programs that include pre-release planning, access to services and active case management for at least a year after release can enable youth to successfully reintegrate into their communities. Reentry services are most effective when they recognize youths' diverse needs, are located where youth live, provide individualized services, concentrate on ensuring school attendance and success, focus on permanent family/guardianship connections, include access to mental health and substance abuse treatment, include employment supports, and provide housing assistance when needed.³³

Youth in Detention in Rhode Island

◆ In 2008, 29% of admissions to detention at the Training School that did not lead to adjudications to the Training School or Temporary Community Placements (TCP) resulted in stays of two days or less, 43% resulted in stays of three days to two weeks, and 28% resulted in stays of more than two weeks.³⁴

◆ Five of the 17 unadjudicated youth in detention on January 1, 2010 had been there for more than two months; many youth who stay in detention for long periods of time are waiting for waivers to the adult system.³⁵

Table 27. Youth at the Rhode Island Training School, 2009

CITY/TOWN	TOTAL POPULATION AGES 13-21	# OF DETAINED YOUTH	# OF ADJUDICATED YOUTH	TOTAL # OF YOUTH
Barrington	2,009	3	6	9
Bristol	3,525	1	4	5
Burrillville	2,067	6	3	9
Central Falls	2,625	5	13	18
Charlestown	755	2	1	3
Coventry	3,688	7	8	15
Cranston	8,499	7	29	36
Cumberland	3,325	11	10	21
East Greenwich	1,397	0	0	0
East Providence	5,092	16	13	29
Exeter	730	1	0	1
Foster	512	0	1	1
Glocester	1,251	3	2	5
Hopkinton	912	0	3	3
Jamestown	536	0	0	0
Johnston	2,624	1	7	8
Lincoln	2,260	8	7	15
Little Compton	351	1	0	1
Middletown	1,647	3	7	10
Narragansett	2,798	1	2	3
New Shoreham	70	0	1	1
Newport	3,755	3	23	26
North Kingstown	2,773	4	10	14
North Providence	3,045	5	13	18
North Smithfield	1,073	2	2	4
Pawtucket	8,298	28	68	96
Portsmouth	1,723	1	2	3
Providence	33,871	97	246	343
Richmond	783	0	0	0
Scituate	1,155	0	2	1
Smithfield	3,890	2	3	5
South Kingstown	6,532	3	7	10
Tiverton	1,523	3	4	7
Warren	1,208	0	3	3
Warwick	8,863	19	18	37
West Greenwich	599	0	0	0
West Warwick	3,177	10	18	28
Westerly	2,414	10	6	16
Woonsocket	5,034	11	36	47
Out of State/Unknown	NA	13	30	43
Core Cities	56,760	154	404	558
Remainder of State	79,629	149	144	293
Rhode Island	136,389	316	578	894

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2009; and the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Data are for adjudicated and detained youth who were in the care or custody of the Rhode Island Training School during calendar year 2009 (including youth from out of state, those with unknown addresses and those in temporary community placements). Youth with out-of-state and unknown addresses are not included in the Rhode Island, core cities or remainder of state totals.

The total unduplicated column includes youth who were detained and/or adjudicated to the training school as well as youth who received Temporary Community Placement (TCP) adjudications. Youth who received TCP adjudications are included in the adjudicated column. Youth who are counted in the detained columns did not receive adjudications to the Training School or TCP. Youth included in the adjudicated columns may or may not have been in detention at the Training School prior to adjudication.

There is no statutory lower age limit for sentencing, however adjudicated children under the age of 13 typically do not serve sentences at the Training School.

An "out-of-state" designation is given to youth whose parent(s) have an address on file that is outside of Rhode Island or to a youth who lives in another state, but commits a crime in Rhode Island and is sentenced to serve time at the Training School.

References

- 1 Grisso, T. (2004). *Double jeopardy: Adolescent offenders with mental disorders*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- 2,10 Smith, C. A. (2008). Juvenile delinquency: An introduction. *The Prevention Researcher: Preventing Juvenile Delinquency*, 15(1), 3-6.
- 3 Wasserman, G. A., Keenan, K., Tremblay, R. E., Coie, J. D., Herrenkohl, T. I., Loeber, R. & Petechuk, D. (2003). Risk and protective factors of child delinquency. *Child Delinquency Bulletin Series*. (NCJ Publication No. 193409). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

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