

## 2008 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook: Juvenile Justice Indicators

---

### THE RHODE ISLAND FAMILY COURT

In 2007, 5,275 youth were referred to the Rhode Island Family Court for 8,301 wayward and delinquent offenses. Of these, 395 (5%) involved violent offenses, 242 (61%) of which occurred in the core cities.

In 2007, 2,249 juveniles were referred to the Truancy Court and 346 juveniles who committed drug offenses or had highlighted drug issues were diverted to the Juvenile Drug Court. The Family Court also administers 30 Juvenile Hearing Boards that serve 32 communities. These Boards permit the diversion of juveniles accused of status offenses or misdemeanors. Sanction options in this process include community service, restitution and/or counseling. A total of 840 cases were heard before Juvenile Hearing Boards in 2006.

In 2007, the Attorney General's Office filed 19 motions to waive jurisdiction to try juveniles as adults (3 mandatory and 16 discretionary waivers). Five were waived voluntarily, four were waived after a hearing, and three were withdrawn. As of January 2008, seven motions from 2007 were pending before the Family Court. A juvenile also may be "certified" allowing a court to sentence the juvenile beyond age 19 if there is otherwise an insufficient period time in which to accomplish rehabilitation. There were two discretionary certifications in 2007. While the child is a minor, the sentence is served at the Training School. The youth can be transferred to an adult facility upon reaching age 19, if the court deems appropriate.

---

### THE RHODE ISLAND TRAINING SCHOOL

The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) operates the Rhode Island Training School for Youth, the state's residential detention facility for adjudicated youth and youth awaiting trial. A total of 1,122 youth (80% male and 20% female) were in the care and custody of the Training School at some point during calendar year 2007. On January 1, 2008, there were 158 youth on the grounds at the Training School, 22 under capacity.

#### **Risk Factors for Rhode Island Youth at the Training School**

##### ***History of Child Abuse and Neglect***

- ❖ Nearly half (47%) of the adjudicated youth in the care and custody of the Training School on January 1, 2008 had at some point in their childhood been victims of documented child abuse or neglect.

##### ***Behavioral Health Needs***

- ❖ Nearly one-third (31%) of the adjudicated or detained females (4 of 13) and 14% of the adjudicated males (15 of 110) at the Training School during the week of January 10, 2008 were receiving psychotropic medications.
- ❖ During 2007, 60 males participated in the six-month residential substance abuse treatment program at the Training School, designed specifically for youth offenders. Half of youth at the Training School during the week of January 10, 2008 were receiving outpatient substance abuse treatment.

## 2008 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook: Juvenile Justice Indicators

### Teen Pregnancy and Parenting

- ❖ Two of 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 2 reported being an expectant parent.

### Educational Attainment

- ❖ A review of 123 randomly-selected records of adjudicated male students and adjudicated or detained female students at the Training School on January 15, 2008 found 27 students (22%) had no school records available. Of those with school records, 12 (13%) had failed all classes before entering the Training School. Approximately half of students at the Training School receive special education services. Although the average age of youth tested at the Training School is 16, the average pre-test scores for both reading and math skills were at fifth grade levels.
- ❖ During the 2006-2007 school year, 69 adjudicated youth graduated from high school while serving a sentence at the Training School. Forty-four of these students graduated with a General Educational Development (GED) diploma and 25 graduated with a high school diploma.

### Most Serious Charges of Youth at the RI Training School

Highest Level Current Charges of Youth Incarcerated at the Training School, January 2008

CHARGE	# BOYS	% BOYS	# GIRLS	% GIRLS
Crimes against property	24	22%	1	8%
Felony assault	20	18%	2	15%
Violation of probation	20	18%	0	---
Illegal substance-related crime	13	12%	2	15%
Simple assault	7	6%	3	23%
Obstruction, resist, escape	6	5%	1	8%
Possession of a weapon	6	5%	3	23%
Sex crime	4	4%	0	---
Traffic: Driving w/out a license, DUI	2	2%	1	8%
Unknown charge	8	7%	0	---
Total Youth*	110	100%	13	100%

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, week of January 14, 2008. \*Data were gathered for the 110 boys adjudicated to the RITS and the 13 girls in residence at the RITS (8 adjudicated and 4 detained).

Of the 1,122 youth who were at the Training School at some point during 2007, 24% (268) had been admitted previously. One quarter (66) of the youth previously admitted had been at the Training School three or more times.

Of the 262 adjudicated juveniles at the Training School on January 1, 2008, 45% were White, 33% were Black, 3% were Asian, 1% were Native American, 2% were multi-racial and 16% were of unknown race. Of these youth, 28% were identified as Hispanic (Hispanic youth may be of any race).