

Youth at the Training School

DEFINITION

Youth at the Training School is the number of youth age 18 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 is responsible for ensuring community safety by promoting the positive development of youth in its care while recognizing that children have different developmental needs than adults.¹

During adolescence, the brain's executive functions (including the ability to regulate emotions, control impulses, and weigh benefits and risk) have not fully developed and judgment and decision-making skills continue to grow into the mid-twenties.² Compared to adults, adolescents often show poor self-control, are easily influenced by peers, and less likely to think through the consequences of their actions. Most youth involved in delinquency in adolescence will cease engaging in law-breaking behavior when they become adults as part of the normal maturation process.³

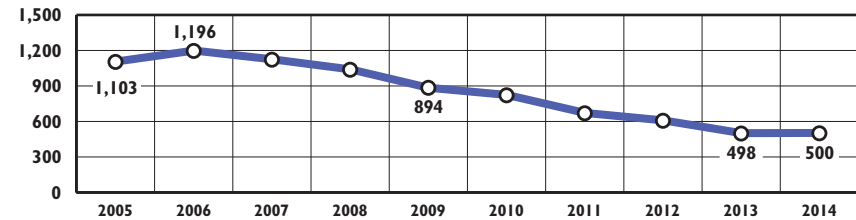
Juvenile justice systems have a range of options for monitoring and

rehabilitating youth in addition to incarceration, including probation, restorative justice programs, and evidence-based treatment programs such as Functional Family Therapy, Multi-Systemic Therapy, and Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care. Alternatives to incarceration have been shown to be more effective in preventing recidivism and more cost-effective than incarceration. The most successful programs involve family in treatment and promote healthy development at the individual, family, school, and peer levels.^{4,5,6}

The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) operates the Rhode Island Training School, the state's secure facility for adjudicated youth and youth in detention awaiting trial. A total of 500 youth (85% male and 15% female) were in the care or custody of the Training School at some point during 2014, up slightly from 498 in 2013. On December 31, 2014, there were 163 youth in the care or custody of the Training School, 97 of whom were physically at the Training School.⁷

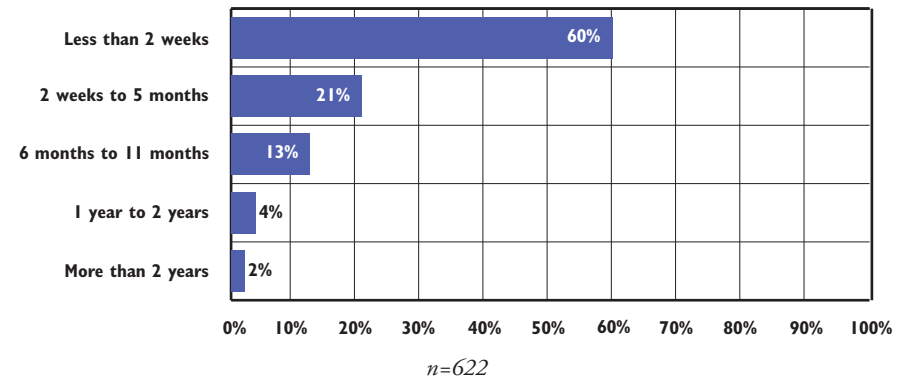
In 2008, the Rhode Island General Assembly instituted a cap on the number of detained and adjudicated youth at the Training School. On any given day, the limit is 148 boys and 12 girls.⁸

Youth in the Care and Custody of the Rhode Island Training School, 2005-2014



◆ Between 2005 and 2014, the annual total number of youth in the care and custody of the Training School declined from 1,103 to 500. Some of this decline is due to the cap that was placed on the population at the Training School in July 2008 of 148 boys and 12 girls on any given day. The population further declined by 44% between 2009 and 2013 but leveled off during 2014.

Discharges From the Rhode Island Training School, by Length of Time in Custody, 2014



Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST, 2005-2014. Total discharges (622) are higher than the total number of youth who passed through the Training School (500) due to some youth being discharged from the Training School more than once in 2014.

Youth at the Training School by Age

- ◆ During 2014, the average age for youth at the Training School was 15.9 years. During 2014, there were two children age 10 or under held at the Training School, six children ages 11-12, 70 youth ages 13-14, 242 youth ages 15-16, and 205 youth ages 17-18.⁹
- ◆ Rhode Island is one of 15 states that has no statutory minimum age for holding children in secure confinement and no minimum age of delinquency jurisdiction.¹⁰

Promoting Rehabilitation and Preventing Recidivism

- ◆ Nationally and in Rhode Island, youth crime, including violent crime, has fallen sharply since 1995.¹¹ In 2010, the rate at which states hold youth in secure confinement reached a 35-year low, with almost every state reducing the number and percentage of youth held in secure facilities.¹²
- ◆ 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. However, a growing body of research shows that incarceration of youth does not reduce and can even increase criminal behavior, as well as increase recidivism among youth with less-serious offense histories. Research also suggests that increasing the length of time a youth is held in secure confinement has no impact on future offending and that sentencing youth to long stays in correctional facilities is an ineffective rehabilitation strategy.^{13,14}
- ◆ Jurisdictions throughout the country have used objective admissions screening tools to limit the use of secure detention to serious offenders. The Rhode Island General Assembly passed a law in 2008 mandating the use of a screening tool for Rhode Island youth being considered for secure detention.^{15,16}
- ◆ Of the 500 youth who were in the care or custody of the Training School at some point during 2014, 22% (108) were admitted at least twice in 2014, and 5% (23) were admitted to the Training School three or more times.¹⁷

Probation for Rhode Island Youth

- ◆ The Juvenile Probation division at DCYF 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.¹⁸
- ◆ On January 2, 2015, there were 578 youth on the DCYF probation caseload (506 males, 71 females, and one youth of unknown gender). Three percent (18) of youth on probation were ages 12 to 13, 21% (119) were ages 14 to 15, 56% (323) were ages 16 to 17, and 20% (118) were age 18 or older.¹⁹
- ◆ Almost half (47%) of youth on probation on January 2, 2015 were White, 21% were Black, 1% were Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% were American Indian, 7% were multiracial, and 21% were of undetermined race. Twenty-nine percent of youth were identified as Hispanic. Hispanic youth may be of any race.²⁰

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI)

- ◆ The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) works in jurisdictions across the U.S. to strengthen juvenile justice systems by promoting policies and practices to reduce inappropriate and unnecessary use of secure detention, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and improve public safety. JDAI promotes the vision that youth involved in the juvenile justice system are best served using proven, family-focused interventions, and creating opportunities for positive youth development. For youth who are not a threat to public safety, JDAI promotes the use of high-quality community-based programs that provide supervision, accountability, and therapeutic services while avoiding some of the negative outcomes associated with incarceration.
- ◆ In 2009, Rhode Island juvenile justice stakeholders joined in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to become a statewide JDAI site. The Rhode Island initiative has used JDAI's strategies to focus on reducing unnecessary and inappropriate use of secure confinement and enhancing community-based alternatives to detention.²¹

Youth at the Training School

Disproportionate Minority Contact in Juvenile Justice Systems

◆ Minority youth, especially Black youth, are disproportionately represented at every stage of the juvenile justice system. Youth of color are more likely to be arrested, formally charged in court, placed in secure detention, and receive harsher treatment than White youth.²² The federal *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP)* requires states to collect data and implement strategies to reduce disproportionate minority contact with the juvenile justice system.²³

Disproportionate Minority Contact in Rhode Island

	% OF TOTAL CHILD POPULATION, 2010	% OF YOUTH IN THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF RHODE ISLAND TRAINING SCHOOL, 2014
White	64%	34%
Hispanic	21%	34%
Black	6%	20%
Asian	3%	1%
Multi-Racial	5%	9%
Other*	2%	2%
Unknown	NA	1%
<i>n</i> =	223,956	500

◆ Youth of color are disproportionately more likely than White youth to be detained or sentenced to the Training School. During 2014, Black youth made up 20% of youth at the Training School, while making up 6% of the child population.

* Other includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and Some other race.

Sources: Child Population data by race are from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census. Youth at the Training School data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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 more likely than boys to be detained for non-serious offenses and many have experienced traumatic events, including physical and sexual abuse. Effective programs for girls in the juvenile justice system promote healing from trauma and abuse, address mental and physical health issues, and meet the needs of pregnant and parenting girls.²⁴

Risk Factors for Rhode Island Youth at the Training School

History of Child Abuse and Neglect

◆ Twenty-eight (6%) of the 500 youth in the care or custody of the Training School during 2014 had at some point in their childhood been victims of documented child abuse or neglect.²⁵

◆ 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.²⁶

Behavioral Health Needs

◆ In 2014, 165 youth (144 males and 21 females) received mental health services at the Training School for psychiatric diagnoses other than conduct disorders and substance abuse disorders. During 2014, 120 residents (108 males and 12 females) received substance abuse treatment services at the Training School. Of these, 67 (all males) received residential substance abuse treatment.²⁷

Educational Attainment

◆ While the average age of youth at the Training School in 2014 was 15.9, students' math skills were on average at the sixth grade level and their reading levels were on average at the seventh grade level at entry to the Training School.

◆ Of the youth in seventh through twelfth grade who received educational services at the Training School during 2014, 40% received special education services and had Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

◆ During 2014, 46 youth graduated from high school while serving a sentence at the Training School (40 earned a GED and six graduated with a high school diploma). An additional 102 youth received post-secondary education services at the Training School in 2014.²⁸

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting

◆ Nationally, 20% of youth in custody report having a child or expecting a child. The percentage of youth in custody who report they already have children (15% of boys and 9% of girls) is much higher than the general population (2% of boys and 6% of girls).²⁹

Table 28.

Youth in the Care or Custody of the Rhode Island Training School, 2014

CITY/TOWN	TOTAL POPULATION AGES 13-18	# OF ADJUDICATED YOUTH AT THE RITS	TOTAL # OF YOUTH AT THE RITS
Barrington	1,802	1	2
Bristol	1,780	0	2
Burrillville	1,319	2	6
Central Falls	1,859	3	17
Charlestown	554	0	1
Coventry	3,010	8	16
Cranston	6,184	12	25
Cumberland	2,746	5	7
East Greenwich	1,362	1	1
East Providence	3,243	7	20
Exeter	642	0	0
Foster	430	0	1
Glocester	878	0	0
Hopkinton	693	0	2
Jamestown	436	0	0
Johnston	2,025	2	6
Lincoln	1,851	1	5
Little Compton	228	0	0
Middletown	1,229	1	10
Narragansett	948	0	2
New Shoreham	50	0	0
Newport	1,604	3	21
North Kingstown	2,407	1	3
North Providence	2,027	3	10
North Smithfield	970	1	4
Pawtucket	5,514	26	53
Portsmouth	1,596	0	3
Providence	16,515	89	160
Richmond	637	1	1
Scituate	963	2	2
Smithfield	1,856	1	5
South Kingstown	3,540	2	4
Tiverton	1,115	2	2
Warren	675	1	4
Warwick	5,883	9	23
West Greenwich	568	0	1
West Warwick	1,891	7	18
Westerly	1,705	0	7
Woonsocket	3,112	21	38
Out-of-State	NA	9	19
Four Core Cities	27,000	139	268
Remainder of State	58,847	73	214
Rhode Island	85,847	212	482

Youth in Detention in Rhode Island

◆ In Rhode Island, the term “detention” is used to describe the temporary custody of a juvenile, who is accused of a wayward or delinquent offense, at the Training School pending the adjudication of his or her case. The legal reasons for pre-trial detention include cases where a youth poses a threat to public safety or is at risk for not attending his or her next court hearing.^{30,31}

◆ In 2014, there were 622 admissions to detention at the Training School, up from 597 in 2013. Of these, 27% resulted in stays of two days or less, 33% resulted in stays of three days to two weeks, and 41% resulted in stays of more than two weeks.³²

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children’s Information System (RICHIST), 2014 and the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Youth included in the adjudicated column may or may not have been in detention at the Training School prior to adjudication.

Total number of youth includes adjudicated and detained youth who were in the care or custody of the Rhode Island Training School during Calendar Year 2014 (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, four core cities, or remainder of state totals.

There is no statutory lower age limit for sentencing, however adjudicated children under age 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. They are not included in the Rhode Island total.

References

^{1,3,5,14,22} National Research Council. (2013). *Reforming juvenile justice: A developmental approach*. Committee on Assessing Juvenile Justice Reform, R. J. Bonnie, R. L. Johnson, B. M. Chemers, & J. A. Schuck, Eds. Committee on Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

² Gottesman, D. & Wile Schwarz, S. (2011). *Juvenile justice in the U.S.: Facts for policymakers*. New York, NY: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.

⁴ Juvenile Justice Information Exchange. (n.d.). *What are community-based alternatives?* Retrieved March 4, 2015, from www.jjie.org

^{6,13} *No place for kids: The case for reducing juvenile incarceration*. (2011). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

(continued on page 180)

References

(continued from page 97)

References for Youth Referred to Family Court

^{3,6,9} Rhode Island Family Court. (2015). *2014 Juvenile offense report*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island Family Court.

^{4,7} U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1.

⁵ Rhode Island Family Court. (2014). *2013 Juvenile offense report*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island Family Court.

⁸ National Research Council. (2012). *Reforming juvenile justice: A developmental approach*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

¹⁰ *No place for kids: The case for reducing juvenile incarceration*. (2011). Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

^{11,20,22} *A road map for juvenile justice reform: 2008 KIDS COUNT essay summary*. (2008). Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.

¹² *The costs of confinement: Why good juvenile justice policies make good fiscal sense*. (2009). Washington, DC: Justice Policy Institute. Retrieved February 25, 2013, from www.justicepolicy.org

¹³ Rhode Island General Laws, Sections 14-1-32.1, 14-1-32.4, 14-1-33, 14-1-51, 14-1-67.

^{14,15,17} Rhode Island Family Court, 2014.

¹⁶ Rhode Island Family Court. (n.d.). *Juvenile drug court*. Retrieved February 8, 2011, from www.courts.ri.gov/family/drugcourt.htm

¹⁸ 2013 Juvenile Hearing Board data, Rhode Island for Community and Justice, 2015.

¹⁹ Majd, K., Marksamer, J. & Reyes, C. (2009). *Hidden injustice: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in juvenile courts*. Washington, DC: Legal Services for Children, National Juvenile Defender Center, and National Center for Lesbian Rights.

²¹ Mulvey, E. P. & Schubert, C. A. (2012). *Transfer of juveniles to adult court: Effects of a broad policy in one court*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

²³ Gottesman, D. & Wile Schwarz, S. (2011). *Juvenile justice in the U.S.: Facts for policymakers*. New York, NY: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.

²⁴ Rhode Island General Laws, Sections 14-1-5; 14-1-7; 14-1-7.1; 14-1-7.2 & 14-1-7.3.

^{25,26} Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General, January 2014.

²⁷ Rhode Island Office of the Attorney General, January 2007.

(continued from page 101)

References for Youth at the Training School

^{7,9,17,19,20,25,32} Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), Calendar Years 2013 and 2014, and January, 2015.

⁸ Rhode Island House Fiscal Advisory Staff. (n.d.). *FY 2009 budget at a glance*. Retrieved February 24, 2011, from www.rilin.state.ri.us/genmenu

¹⁰ Szymanski, L. A. (2004). Minimum and maximum age of juvenile correctional custody. *NCJJ Snapshot*, 9(5), Retrieved February 26, 2015, from www.ncjj.org

¹¹ Puzanchera, C. & Kang, W. (2014). *Easy access to FBI arrest statistics 1994-2011*. Retrieved June 14, 2014, from www.ojjdp.gov

¹² KIDS COUNT. (2013). *Data snapshot: Reducing youth incarceration in the United States*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

¹⁵ Chappell, A. T., Maggard, S. R. & Higgins, J. L. (2013). Exceptions to the rule? Exploring the use of overrides in detention risk assessment. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 11(4), 332-348.

¹⁶ Rhode Island General Laws, Section 14-1-11.

¹⁸ Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Juvenile Correctional Services Division, February 2008.

²¹ Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. (n.d.). *Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative*. Retrieved February 26, 2015, from www.rikidscount.org

²³ Leiber, M., Bishop, D. & Chamlin, M. B. (2011). Juvenile justice decision-making before and after the implementation of the disproportionate minority contact (DMC) mandate. *Justice Quarterly*, 28(3), 460-492.

²⁴ Watson, L. & Edelman, P. (2012). *Improving the juvenile justice system for girls: Lessons from the states*. Washington, DC: Georgetown Center on Poverty, Inequality and Public Policy.

²⁶ Ryan, J. P., Marshall, J. M., Herz, D. & Hernandez, P. M. (2008). Juvenile delinquency in child welfare: Investigating group home effects. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 2(4), 1-12.

²⁷ Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School for Youth, 2014.

²⁸ Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School, Alternative Education Program, 2014.

²⁹ Sedlack, A. J. & Bruce, C. (2010). *Youth's characteristics and backgrounds: Findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

³⁰ Rhode Island General Laws, Sections 14-1-11 and 14-1-27.

³¹ Coalition for Juvenile Justice. (n.d.). *Alternatives to detention in the juvenile justice system*. Retrieved February 22, 2013, from www.juvjustice.org

(continued from page 103)

References for Children of Incarcerated Parents

⁶ Phillips, S. D., Dettlaff, A. J. & Baldwin, M. J. (2010). An exploratory study of the range of implications of families' criminal justice system involvement in child welfare cases. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 32, 544-550.

⁷ United States Government Accountability Office. (2011). *More information and collaboration could promote ties between foster care children and their incarcerated parents*. (GAO Publication No. GAO-11-863). Retrieved January 18, 2013, from www.gao.gov

⁸ *When a parent is incarcerated: A primer for social workers*. (2011). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

⁹ *Mothers behind bars: A state-by-state report card and analysis of federal policies on conditions of confinement for pregnant and parenting women and the effect on their children*. (2010). Washington, DC: The Rebecca Project for Human Rights & The National Women's Law Center.

¹⁰ De Masi, M. E. & Teuten Bohn, C. (2010). *Children with incarcerated parents: A journey of children, caregivers and parents in New York state*. New York, NY: Council on Children and Families.

^{11,12,13,14} Rhode Island Department of Corrections, October 1, 2014.

¹⁵ Meade, E. & Mellgren, L. (2011). *Overview and inventory of HHS efforts to assist incarcerated and reentering individuals and their families*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

¹⁶ Fontaine, J. (2013). *Examining housing as a pathway to successful reentry: A demonstration design process*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

(continued from page 105)

References for Children Witnessing Domestic Violence

⁷ Cohen, E., McAlister Groves, B. & Kracke, K. (2009). *The Safe Start Center series on children exposed to violence: Understanding children's exposure to violence*. North Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Safe Start Center.

⁸ McAlister Groves, B. & Augustyn, M. (2009). *The Safe Start Center series on children exposed to violence: Pediatric care settings*. North Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Safe Start Center.

⁹ Finkelhor, D., Turner, H., Ormrod, R., Hamby, S. & Kracke, K. (2009). *Children's exposure to violence: A comprehensive national survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.