

Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests

In 1998, juveniles accounted for just under one-fifth (18.5%) of all persons arrested for all Oklahoma crimes.

During the most recent three-year period (1997 - 1999) more than a thousand (1,089) Oklahoma youths from the ages of 10 through 17 were arrested each year for committing violent crimes. Each year an average of twenty-six were arrested for murder, three for manslaughter, 60 for forcible rape, 268 for robbery and 732 for aggravated assault.

During these three years the overwhelming majority of youth arrested for violent crimes in Oklahoma were male (83.8%).

During the most recent three-year period (1997 - 1999), the proportion of Oklahoma youths from the ages of 10 through 17 arrested for violent crimes continued to decrease when compared to the three-year period just one year earlier (1996 - 1998). Oklahoma violent crime arrest rates for this age group moved from 297.9 to 271.4 per 100,000 youth, with comparable rates staying the same or improving in most (56 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties.

The current proportion of Oklahoma youths from the ages of 10 through 17 arrested for violent crimes continues to improve from the record highs recorded during the 1990's. The rate of arrest for these youth (271.4 arrests per 100,000 youth) during the most recent three-year period (1997 - 1999) is substantially improved over that of the comparison three-year period (334.1 arrests

per 100,000 youth for 1990 - 1992). Comparable rates also improved or remained the same during the same period in just under half (36 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties.

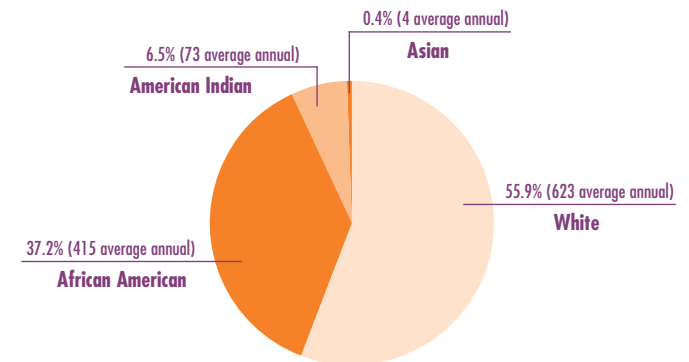
The current juvenile violent crime arrest rate is better than the average county rate (161.2 arrests per 100,000 youth) in most of Oklahoma's counties (45 of 77). During this most recent period, the highest and worst rate of youths from the ages of 10 through 17 (568.3 arrests per 100,000 youth) arrested for violent crimes is found in Tulsa County. The lowest and best rates (0.0 arrests per 100,000 youth) are in seven Oklahoma counties (Alfalfa, Beaver, Ellis, Grant, Harper, Love and Roger Mills).

While non-White children comprise only about one-fifth (21.7%) of the child population, they accounted for nearly half (44.1%) of the violent crime arrests of children under age 18 during the most recent three-year period. Hispanic children, recorded as a nationality rather than a race, comprise just over five percent (5.5%) of Oklahoma's child population. A similar proportion of the juvenile violent crime arrests in Oklahoma (5.7%) are arrests of Hispanic youth.

Based on the latest figures available, Oklahoma's 1997 rate (289 per 100,000 youths ages 10 through 17) of arresting young people for violent crimes continued to remain well below the corresponding national violent crime arrest rate (412 per 100,000 youths ages 10 through 17).

Impact on early childhood and Oklahoma's future

- » *Juvenile crime prevention begins in early childhood.* Experts blame the rise in juvenile crime on the failure of families, schools, and communities to recognize early warning signs. Being connected with community, school and family decreases the risk of later violence, death and crime. Denying an at-risk child access to a quality child development program may multiply by five times the risk that he or she will be a chronic law-breaker as an adult. Children enrolled in public-funded Child-Parent Centers had their risk of being arrested for juvenile crimes cut in half. Children receiving care in high quality



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Under Age 18, By Race
Oklahoma, 1997-1999

Hispanic youth may be of any race and comprise 5.5% of the 1997-1999 juvenile violent crime arrests

centers as infants and toddlers were only half as likely to have serious behavioral problems upon entering kindergarten. Impressionable young children are numbed to the real effects of violence by viewing over 10,000 murders, rapes and aggravated assaults each year on television. Children imitate the violence watched on television in their own homes.

» *Early childhood problems are a predictor of future crime.* Children at higher risk for involvement in violence and crime include boys born to teen mothers, children from families whose parents never completed high school and young people

doing poorly in school. Victims of child abuse and neglect are more likely than others to later be arrested for delinquent behavior, adult criminality, crimes of violence and prostitution. Girls who are abused and neglected in childhood are seventy-seven percent more likely to be arrested as juveniles. A young poor child is more likely than a non-poor one to be a current victim and a later perpetrator of violent crime.

» *Disquieting trends.* The number of juveniles arrested for carrying or being in the possession of a weapon is on the rise in Oklahoma. Juvenile drug possession arrests have tripled in the past decade.

Juvenile arrests for violent crimes are outpacing juvenile arrests for non-violent crimes. Police in Oklahoma are increasingly likely to refer juvenile violators to criminal or adult court.

» *Fight Crime – Invest in Kids.* Good educational child care is one of the most powerful weapons against crime. Poor quality child care multiplies the risk that a child will grow up to be a threat to society. Nine out of ten police chiefs say crime would be greatly reduced by expanding educational child care programs and after-school programs. Failure to invest now will result in paying far more later in crime, welfare and other costs.

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Three-year Rate of Violent Crime Arrests per 100,000 Youths Age 10 through 17; Oklahoma & Counties: 1997-1999, State Rate: 271.4 per 100,000 youth, Average of County Rates: 161.2 per 100,000 youth

Well over half (621 per year or 57.0%) of the violent crime arrests of youths from the age of 10 through 17 were in one of the state's two large metropolitan counties (Oklahoma or Tulsa County) which together are populated with only one-third (32.6%) of all youths age 10 through 17.

