

## Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests

In 1997, juveniles accounted for about one-fifth (20.3%) of all persons arrested for all Oklahoma crimes.

In 1997, nearly twelve hundred (1,171) Oklahoma youths from the ages of 10 through 17 were arrested for committing violent crimes. Twenty-four were arrested for murder, four for manslaughter, 63 for forcible rape, 332 for robbery and 748 for aggravated assault.

The overwhelming majority of youth arrested for violent crimes in Oklahoma are male (982 youth or 83.9%).

During this past year the proportion of Oklahoma youths from the ages of 10 through 17 arrested for violent crimes continued to improve from 1995's record high (*from* 393.2 arrests per 100,000 youths in 1995 *to* 341.5 arrests per 100,000 youths in 1996 *to* 283.7 arrests per 100,000 youths in 1997), with comparable rates also improving or remaining the same during the most recent year in the large majority (56 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties.

Oklahoma's current juvenile violent crime arrest rate (283.7 arrests per 100,000) remains significantly higher than that of 1980 (172.4 arrests per 100,000), with such rates also worsening in a majority (45 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties during the same period.

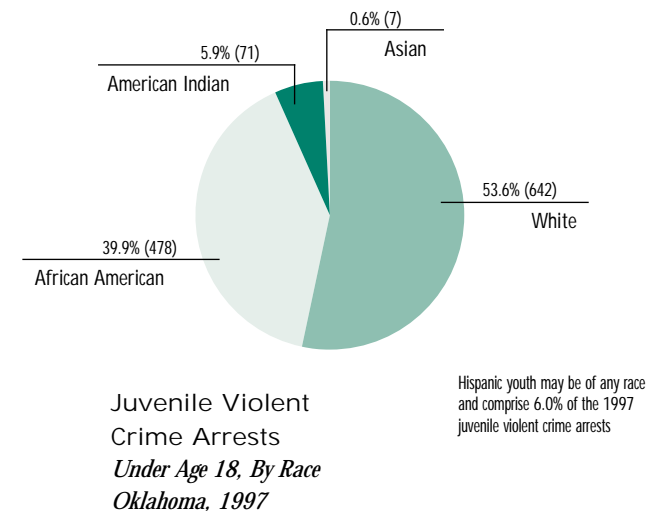
The juvenile violent crime arrest rates for 1997 were better than the average county rate (153.7 arrests per 100,000) in most of Oklahoma's counties (50 of 77). During this most recent period, the highest and worst rate of youths from the ages of 10 through 17 (771.5 arrests per 100,000) arrested for violent crimes is found in Kay County. The lowest and best rates (0.0 arrests per 100,000) are in nineteen Oklahoma counties (Adair, Alfalfa, Atoka, Beaver, Choctaw, Delaware, Ellis, Grant, Harmon, Harper, Haskell, Jefferson, Love, Major, McIntosh, Nowata, Okfuskee, Roger Mills and Woods).

While non-White children comprise only about one-fifth (21.7%) of the child population, they account for nearly half (46.6%) of the violent crime arrests of children under age 18. Hispanic children, recorded as a nationality rather than a race, comprise just over five percent (5.5%) of Oklahoma's child population. A slightly higher proportion of the juvenile violent crime arrests in Oklahoma (6.0%) were arrests of Hispanic youth.

Based on the latest figures available (1995), Oklahoma's current rate (283.7 arrests per 100,000) of arresting young people for violent crimes continues to remain well below the corresponding national rate of 507 arrests for every 100,000 youths ages 10 through 17.

## Impact on Oklahoma

- *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.



► **Risk factors.** Children at higher risk for involvement in violence and crime include teenage boys born to adolescent mothers, young people doing poorly in school, youth who expect to die young, youth who are neither in school nor working and those living in urban areas. In 1996, a majority of Oklahoma inmates were high school dropouts. Victims of child abuse and neglect are more likely than others to 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 poor child is more likely than a non-poor child to be a current victim and a later perpetrator of violent crime.

► **Juvenile crime prevention begins in the home.** Adolescents living in homes where there is easy access to guns are more likely to be involved in violent behaviors. The rise in handgun use has resulted in youth violence becoming more lethal. 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 violence watched on television in their own homes.

► **Improving the outcomes.** 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 violence, death and crime.

Juvenile Violent Crime Arrests  
*Rate per 100,000 Youths Ages 10 through 17;*  
*Oklahoma: 1997, State Rate: 283.7 per 100,000 Youths,*  
*Average of County Rates: 153.7 per 100,000 Youths*

