

## JUVENILE JUSTICE

# 4,028

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN  
ARRESTED EACH DAY IN AMERICA.  
THAT'S ONE EVERY 21 SECONDS.

The juvenile justice system is the last chance to divert children from the Cradle to Prison Pipeline™ into a pipeline to college and successful adulthood. Children born into neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, with unmet health and mental health needs, who have been victims of violence, or who have spent time in foster care are at increased risk of interacting with the juvenile justice system.

Racial and ethnic disparities are rampant. Children of color ages 10-17 represent only 16 percent of the overall child population ages 10-17, but make up 34 percent of children arrested, 38 percent of children adjudicated, and 68 percent of children in residential placement.<sup>1</sup>

Incarcerated youth are at increased risk of physical abuse, sexual assault and suicide. Children housed in adult jails face greater risks. They are 36 times more likely to commit suicide than children in juvenile detention centers. As youth return to their communities from confinement, many need support to find housing, graduate from school, obtain employment, and maintain their physical and mental health.

There are better choices than incarceration that work for children, keep communities safe, and are more cost-effective. Diversion programs, treatment programs, after-school reporting programs, and family support programs help keep children in school and out of trouble. Positive outcomes are possible when youth development and rehabilitation are the goals.

The most recent data about juvenile justice and youth at risk show that:

- Child arrest rates decreased nearly by half from 1996 to 2010,<sup>2</sup> and the rate of children in confinement decreased by 37 percent.<sup>3</sup>
- Child arrest rates fell 16 percent from 2009 to 2010 to 1.6 million arrests. Of the 40 states reporting sufficient data, all but one (Tennessee) experienced a decline in child arrests in that time period (*see Table J-1*).
- Over 60,000 children were held in residential placement in 2011 (*see Table J-2*). Black children were almost five times more likely to be in residential placement than White children (*see Figure*).<sup>4</sup> Hispanic and American Indian children were two to three times more likely.
- In 2011, more than twice as many boys as girls were arrested (730,589 boys and 302,632 girls).<sup>5</sup> Since 2007, there were decreases in arrests of both boys (30.3 percent) and girls (26 percent).
- The number of children in adult prisons has declined by 54 percent since 2000 and by 22 percent since 2010, but an estimated 250,000 youth are tried, sentenced, or incarcerated as adults each year (*see Table J-3*).<sup>6</sup>

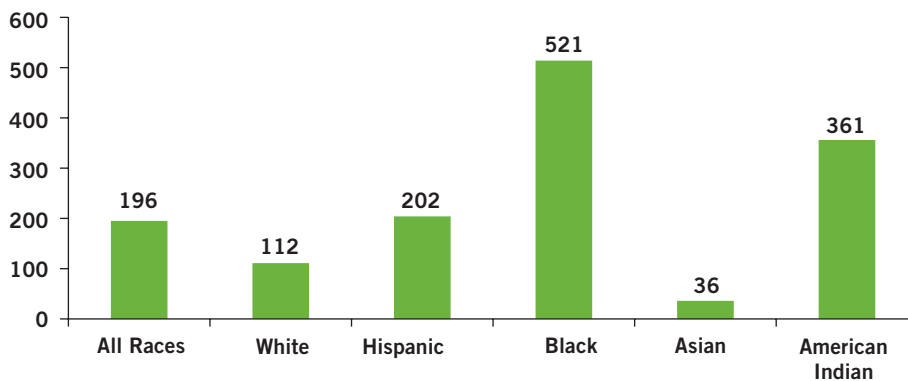
Find state data in Juvenile Justice tables in Appendix.

### Invisible Children

Growing up poor, Black and bright without guidance, by the time Darryl got to high school he felt completely ignored, almost invisible. A high-poverty overcrowded school with few resources made matters worse. When he was 15 Darryl ran away from home, got arrested and sentenced to two months in juvenile detention centers. When he tried to go back to school, school officials said without guidance and support he couldn't come back. They suggested he get a G.E.D. Soon he was arrested again. The turning point for Darryl was getting involved as a community organizer, finding a mentor, and going through leadership training programs.

— Darryl Briggs, Lehman College undergraduate student

Children in Residential Placement,  
per 100,000 Children 10–17, 2011



Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

