Juvenile Justice in The Post-Pandemic World

Anne Teigen | November 3, 2021
March 2020: The Beginning...
November 2021:

What we have learned so far...

Youth Detention Survey During COVID-19

Produced and Published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation
Gathered from ~150 jurisdictions in 34 states

1. What was the total population of youth in secure detention on the first day of the month?
2. How many young people were admitted to secure detention each month?
3. How can this information be disaggregated by race and ethnicity?
4. How many detention centers had confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19?

Data Caveats

○ The jurisdictions responding to the latest survey are home to 35% of the U.S. population ages 10 to 17. It is not a national estimate or random sample.
○ Data is a snapshot of jurisdictions or communities involved in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), which began nearly three decades ago and reaches nearly one-third of the total U.S. youth population.

Youth Detention Survey During COVID-19

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Detention Rates

1. What was the total population of youth in secure detention on the first day of the month?
2. How many young people were admitted to secure detention each month?

**COVID onset**
- 30% drop in just 9 weeks – more than the US saw over the previous 10 years.

**Now**
- Big initial drop has persisted, thanks to fewer admissions.
- But can it last?

**Takeaways**
- Those left in detention with no opportunity or connections and still at risk of virus.

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**NUMBER OF YOUTH IN DETENTION ON THE 1ST OF EACH MONTH**

- The population fell over 30% from March 1st to May 1st...
- ... and has changed modestly since then.
3. How can this information be disaggregated by race and ethnicity?

**COVID onset**
- Big disparities existed.

**Now**
- Disparities have gotten worse than pre-COVID.

**Takeaways**
- Admissions down for white, Black & Latino youth alike.
- But longer stays for Black & Latino youth.

**Racial and Ethnic Disparities**

**CHANGE IN THE DETAINED POPULATION BY RACE & ETHNICITY**

- Mar-20
- Apr-20
- May-20
- Jun-20
- Jul-20
- Aug-20
- Sep-20
- Oct-20
- Nov-20
- Dec-20
- Jan-21
- Feb-21
- Mar-21
- Apr-21
- May-21
- Jun-21
- Jul-21
- Aug-21

- White
- Black
- Latino
“Jurisdictions have told us they think that longer lengths of stay in detention are being driven by a detention population that now only contains youth with the most serious offenses and complex cases,” said Nate Balis, the director of the Foundation’s Juvenile Justice Strategy Group. “If that’s so for all racial and ethnic groups, then jurisdictions must determine why it’s primarily Black and Latino youth who seem to be getting stuck in detention.”
## Other Takeaways and Lessons Learned

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| • Justice-involved youth may be hit particularly hard by school closures and online education. | • A Balance of In-Person and Virtual Services needed.  
• Progress in treatment, especially for less-severe forms of mental illness, can still be made remotely.  
• Time savings for both probation officers and the young people they supervise, creating more capacity for frequent and substantive engagement. | • Community Based service providers faced colliding challenges. |
What Does Juvenile Justice Look Like in a Post-Pandemic World?
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