

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Law Enforcement
Assistance Administration

National Criminal Justice
Information and Statistics Service

Children in Custody:

Advance Report
on the 1977 Census
of Public Juvenile Facilities
No. SD-JD-5A

Consistent with key objectives of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, the number of residents housed nationwide in publicly operated facilities for juveniles *decreased* by about 3,200 individuals, or 7 percent, during a 2½-year period ending on December 31, 1977, while the number of facilities *increased* nearly 14 percent. Although the reduction in the number of residents within facilities operated by State and local government agencies was largely offset by an increase in the number housed in private establishments, the balance was indicative of a continuation of the overall downward trend evidenced since early in the 1970's.¹ The drop in the count of public-custody residents and rise in the stock of "open" facilities generally conformed to the dual goals of diverting juveniles from institutions altogether or of placing them in small, community-based residences near their homes. A total of nearly 46,000 residents occupied the Nation's 992 public juvenile facilities at the end of 1977. Four of every 10 of the facilities were characterized as *open* as opposed to *institutional* and, more significantly, almost two-thirds of all long-term, or post-placement, facilities were of the open type.²

Youths detained pending disposition of their cases made up about a fourth of the nearly 46,000 residents of public juvenile facilities as of December 31, 1977, while virtually all the rest had been committed following adjudication or other formal proceedings. A small number were being housed on the basis of voluntary admission. Delinquent acts—crimes when committed by adults—were attributed to the vast majority of residents, whereas about 1 in 10 were in custody for "status" offenses, acts such as running away from home, truancy, possession of alcoholic beverages, or incorrigibility—illegal for juveniles but not adults.

The decline between mid-1975 and the end of 1977 in the number of juveniles in custody cut into the female population more sharply than the male—21 vs. 3 percent—reducing the former's share of

the total from 19 to 16 percent. Figures on racial composition, gathered for the first time in the 1977 Census of Public Juvenile Facilities, revealed that black youths comprised a third of all residents, or about 2½ times their relative number among the 10-19 age group of the general population. Similarly, first-time data on ethnic makeup put the proportion of Hispanic residents at 9 percent, as compared with 6 percent in the age-relevant segment of the overall population.³ Consistent with national policy emphasis on diversion of young status offenders from juvenile facilities, the average age of residents rose slightly between 1973 and 1977—from 15.2 to 15.4 years for males and from 14.9 to 15.1 years for females.

As in previous census years, the 1977 turnover rate at public juvenile facilities was high, approximately 614,000 admissions and 622,000 departures nationwide; about 5 of every 6 in each category were posted by short-term facilities. In accord with their role, short-term facilities had an average length of stay amounting to 14 days per resident, as compared with 184 days for the occupants of long-term residences. In contrast to the high degree of overcrowding in many adult correctional institutions, only about 1 in 10 of all public juvenile facilities was occupied in excess of design capacity, whereas 1 in 3 was used at a rate of less than 70 percent.

Despite the reduced number of children in custody and the prevalence of low occupancy rates, staff size and expenditures at public facilities continued to rise. A 5-percent growth in full-time staff and more than 50-percent increase in part-time personnel (including volunteers) occurred between mid-1975 and the close of 1977. At the latter point in time, the ratio of juveniles per full-time staff member was 1 to 1, markedly more favorable than the 1.4 to 1 ratio prevailing in 1971. Over the 2½-year period between the latest juvenile facility censuses, total expenditures rose from \$594 million to \$708 million and the per capita costs from \$11,469 to \$14,123, although inflation accounted for a sizable portion of the increase.

tion scheme will appear in a follow-up report.

¹Preliminary results of the 1977 Census of Private Juvenile Facilities indicate that approximately 29,400 individuals were housed in private-sector facilities on December 31, 1977, an increase of about 7 percent over the mid-1975 total. Details on the private-facility census will be presented in a forthcoming report.

²Facilities enumerated in the 1977 Census of Public Juvenile Facilities were classified as either

open or institutional, based on responses to questions on degree of access to the community and the extent of in-house physical and staff controls. The great majority of facilities identified in earlier censuses as detention centers, diagnostic centers, or training schools, and a significant proportion of ranches, fall into the *institutional* category, whereas most of those identified as shelters or group homes, as well as some ranches, can be classified as *open*. Additional details on the new classifica-

³Data for comparisons on the racial and ethnic composition of the general population were derived from *Demographic, Social, and Economic Profile of States: Spring 1976*, published by the Bureau of the Census in January 1979. Persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish origin are identified as Hispanic.

Approximately 3 of every 5 States experienced a decline in the number of juveniles held in public facilities between mid-1975 and yearend 1977, the largest absolute decreases occurring in Florida (911), Ohio (812), and California (433).⁴ At the time of the latest census, the highest ratios of juveniles per 100,000 population prevailed in the District of Columbia (84), Nevada (55), California (38), and Delaware (37); the lowest were noted in Massachusetts (3), Connecticut (8), and New York and Pennsylvania (9 each). As for facilities, the number rose in 26 States, remained unchanged in 16, and declined in 9. The number of personnel increased in about two-thirds of the States and total expenditures in the same proportion.

The 1977 Census of Public Juvenile Facilities was conducted early in 1978 by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Detailed results of that enumeration, together with a methodology and questionnaire facsimile, will be contained in a future report. Data in this report are preliminary and subject to revision.

⁴Figures for 1975 appear in *Children in Custody 1975: Advance Report*, No. 8D-JD-4, October 1975.

Table 1. Selected characteristics of public juvenile custody residents and facilities, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1977.

Characteristic	1971	1973	1974	1975	1977
Number of residents	57,239	47,983	47,268	49,126	45,920
Juvenile	54,729	45,694	44,922	46,980	44,096
Male	41,781	35,057	34,783	37,926	36,921
Female	12,948	10,637	10,139	9,054	7,175
Adult	2,510	2,289	2,346	2,146	1,824
Average age (years) ¹	NA	NA	NA	NA	15.3
Male	NA	15.2	15.3	15.3	15.4
Female	NA	14.9	14.9	15.0	15.1
Number of admissions ²	616,766	600,960	647,175	641,189	614,385
Number of departures ²	614,606	594,207	640,408	632,983	622,151
Average daily number of residents ²	58,429	47,385	46,753	48,794	48,032
Number of facilities	722	794	829	874	992
Short term	338	355	371	387	448
Long term	384	439	458	487	544
Facility occupancy rate (percent) ²	100	100	100	100	100
Occupied less than 70 percent	36	44	42	36	32
Occupied 70-100 percent	48	44	46	51	59
Occupied more than 100 percent	16	12	12	13	9
Number of personnel	43,372	44,845	46,276	52,534	61,060
Full time	39,521	39,216	39,391	41,156	43,322
Part time	3,851	5,629	6,885	11,378	17,738
Juveniles per full-time staff member	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0
Expenditures (thousands of dollars)	456,474	483,941	508,630	594,146	707,732
Capital	47,365	30,127	24,536	34,510	29,366
Operating	409,109	453,814	484,094	559,636	678,366
Per capita operating cost (dollars) ³	7,002	9,577	10,354	11,469	14,123

NOTE: Data for 1971-75 are as of June 30 and for 1977 as of December 31, except for figures on admissions and departures, average daily number of residents, facility occupancy rate, expenditures, and operating costs, which are for an annual period, either calendar or fiscal year.

NA Not available.

¹Based on juvenile residents only.

²Based on all residents (juvenile and adult).

³Based on average daily number of residents.

Table 2. Selected characteristics of public juvenile custody residents (juveniles only) and facilities, by type of facility, 1977.

Characteristic	Type of facility		
	All facilities	Short-term	Long-term
Number of juveniles	44,096	11,929	32,167
Sex	44,096	11,929	32,167
Male	36,921	9,521	27,400
Female	7,175	2,408	4,767
Average age (years)	15.3	15.2	15.6
Race	44,096	11,929	32,167
White	27,963	7,893	20,070
Black	14,865	3,609	11,256
Other	1,045	204	841
Not reported	223	223	0
Ethnic composition	44,096	11,929	32,167
Hispanic	4,009	1,336	2,673
Non-Hispanic	40,087	10,593	29,494
Adjudication status	44,096	11,929	32,167
Detained	11,190	10,619	571
Committed	32,477	1,305	31,172
Voluntary admission	429	5	424
Reason held	44,096	11,929	32,167
Delinquency	37,846	10,074	27,772
Status offense	4,916	1,540	3,376
Other ¹	1,334	315	1,019
Physical environment	44,096	11,929	32,167
Institutional facilities	32,197	11,363	20,834
Open facilities	11,899	566	11,333
Average length of stay (days)	107	14	184
Detained	12	12	18
Committed	179	76	188
Number of facilities	992	448	544
Institutional facilities	596	396	200
Open facilities	396	52	344
Frequency of community access	992	448	544
Daily or almost daily	313	NA	NA
Weekly or less frequently	264	NA	NA
Never	415	NA	NA
Security level	992	448	544
Strict	202	202	26
Medium	390	192	198
Minimal or none	374	54	320
Number of personnel	61,060	22,150	38,910
Payroll	46,840	16,863	29,977
Nonpayroll	3,014	1,648	1,366
Community volunteer	11,206	3,639	7,567

NOTE: All data are as of December 31, 1977, except average length of stay which are for the calendar year.

NA Not available.

¹This category includes 706 nonoffenders held for dependency, neglect or abuse, and 115 for emotional disturbance or mental retardation; 429 juveniles who admitted themselves to a facility or were referred by a parent, court, or school, without being adjudged for an offense; and 84 who were not classifiable.

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Table 3. Selected characteristics of public juvenile custody facilities—States, December 31, 1977.

State	Residents	Facilities	Staff	Expenditures ¹ (thousands of dollars)
United States	45,920	992	61,060	707,732
Alabama	474	21	694	6,250
Alaska	131	2	129	3,541
Arizona	653	17	527	7,854
Arkansas	423	10	397	4,767
California	10,031	114	15,941	162,046
Colorado	779	13	513	7,046
Connecticut	235	4	377	4,433
Delaware	213	5	281	3,405
District of Columbia	567	13	446	7,684
Florida	2,026	50	1,892	26,815
Georgia	1,194	26	1,213	13,585
Hawaii	103	3	136	2,570
Idaho	128	2	156	2,470
Illinois	1,208	25	1,826	24,397
Indiana	1,008	17	1,206	11,966
Iowa	409	14	553	7,465
Kansas	627	14	801	10,584
Kentucky	635	23	1,063	7,071
Louisiana	923	13	1,415	12,148
Maine	157	1	230	2,601
Maryland	972	15	1,144	14,119
Massachusetts	180	9	283	3,682
Michigan	1,884	49	2,216	34,503
Minnesota	626	21	952	12,410
Mississippi	364	7	343	3,194
Missouri	1,130	55	1,523	12,879
Montana	264	8	289	3,829
Nebraska	242	4	256	3,244
Nevada	347	6	283	5,471
New Hampshire	164	1	154	2,336
New Jersey	1,094	43	1,860	21,205
New Mexico	373	4	267	3,628
New York	1,545	95	3,011	37,054
North Carolina	868	15	934	9,760
North Dakota	116	6	128	1,547
Ohio	2,717	49	3,752	41,683
Oklahoma	918	10	1,086	12,945
Oregon	769	11	955	10,218
Pennsylvania	1,087	31	1,640	28,559
Rhode Island	91	2	208	2,657
South Carolina	595	8	866	5,976
South Dakota	183	5	149	1,987
Tennessee	1,323	17	1,182	12,830
Texas	1,952	30	2,443	29,356
Utah	233	9	472	4,452
Vermont	98	1	108	1,425
Virginia	1,348	40	1,745	18,247
Washington	1,117	32	1,797	22,477
West Virginia	369	10	341	3,967
Wisconsin	887	10	775	11,873
Wyoming	140	2	102	1,525

¹Total capital and operating expenditures during either the 1977 fiscal or calendar year. Detail does not add to total because of rounding.

END