



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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Juvenile Delinquency Probation Caseload, 1990–1999

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Four of every ten delinquency cases resulted in probation in 1999

Courts with juvenile jurisdiction handled nearly 1.7 million delinquency cases in 1999. Probation supervision was the most severe disposition in 40% (677,000) of all delinquency cases. The number of cases placed on probation grew 44% between 1990 and 1999. During that time, the overall delinquency caseload increased 27%. These findings are based on national data on delinquency cases processed by juvenile courts from 1990 through 1999. The national estimates were generated using information contributed to the National Juvenile Court Data Archive. The analysis is based on data from nearly 2,000 jurisdictions containing 70% of the U.S. juvenile population (youth age 10 through the upper age of original juvenile court jurisdiction in each state).

Probation can be court ordered or voluntary

Some youth are ordered to probation after being adjudicated delinquent (analogous to being convicted in criminal court). In contrast to court-ordered probation, some youth who are not adjudicated

delinquent voluntarily agree to abide by certain probation conditions, often with the understanding that if they successfully complete their probationary period, their case will be terminated without any formal processing.

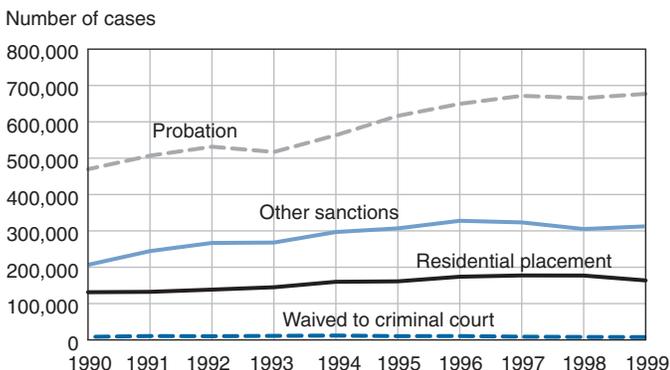
In 1999, adjudicated delinquents ordered to probation (398,200 cases) accounted for more than half (59%) of all delinquency cases placed on probation. In the remaining delinquency cases (41%), the youth agreed to some form of voluntary, or informal, probation. The number of adjudicated cases that resulted in court-ordered probation rose 80% from 1990 through 1999. In comparison, the number of cases that resulted in informal probation increased 12%, reflecting the trend toward more formal processing of delinquency cases.

Probation was the most likely disposition for cases in which the juvenile was adjudicated delinquent

Most severe disposition	1990	1995	1999
Total	100%	100%	100%
Probation	56	54	62
Residential placement	32	27	24
Other sanction	9	13	10
Released without additional sanction	3	6	4

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Probation was ordered in 58% of the more than 1 million cases that received a juvenile court sanction in 1999



Probation cases accounted for 60% of the increase in delinquency cases that received a juvenile court sanction (those that were not dismissed or otherwise released).

The demographic profile of probation cases changed little since 1990

In 1999, 69% of cases placed on probation involved white juveniles, 28% involved black juveniles, and 3% involved juveniles of other races.¹ Between 1990 and 1999, the probation caseload grew 38% for black juveniles (from 135,200 to 186,600) and 47% for white juveniles (from 320,500 to 470,400). Most cases (76%) placed on probation in 1999 involved males (about 514,600 cases). However, the female share of the probation caseload has grown in the last decade—from 19% in 1990 to 24% in 1999. Juveniles who

¹ Juveniles of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race, but most are included in the white racial category.

were 14 to 16 years old accounted for 62% (about 421,700 cases) of the probation caseload in 1999.

Property offense cases made up the greatest proportion of the probation caseload

The offense profile of the probation caseload has changed somewhat since 1990. Property offense cases continued to account for the majority of cases placed on probation, but their share of the probation caseload declined. For example, the proportion of adjudicated cases that involved property offenses and received formal probation as the most severe disposition declined 18 percentage points between 1990 and 1999 (from 59% to 41%). As a result, the profile of the formal probation caseload contained greater proportions of person, drug, and public order offense cases in 1999 than in 1990.

Across offenses, the likelihood of probation for cases in which the youth was adjudicated delinquent increased since 1995

Most serious offense	1990	1995	1999
Total	56%	54%	62%
Person	55	54	63
Property	58	56	64
Drugs	54	54	63
Public order	52	50	60

For further information

This Fact Sheet is based on the forthcoming Report *Juvenile Court Statistics 1999*, which will be available on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) Web site (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp). To learn more about juvenile court cases, visit OJJDP's *Statistical Briefing Book* (ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/index.html) and click on "Juveniles in Court." OJJDP also supports Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics, a Web-based application that analyzes the data files used for the *Juvenile Court Statistics* Report. This application is available from the *Statistical Briefing Book*.

Charles M. Puzzanchera is a Research Assistant with the National Juvenile Court Data Archive, which is supported by an OJJDP grant.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

Offense profile of cases in which the juvenile was adjudicated delinquent and placed on probation

Most serious offense	1990	1995	1999
Total	100%	100%	100%
Person	18	22	23
Property	59	49	41
Drugs	7	11	12
Public order	16	18	23

Detail may not add to 100% because of rounding.