

Overview

National Center for Juvenile Justice
710 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
(412) 227-6950

ncjj



The National Center for Juvenile Justice (the Center) was founded in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1973 by U.S. District Court Judge Maurice B. Cohill, Jr. and others in the field of juvenile justice who were frustrated by a lack of solid research to guide juvenile and family court judges dealing with youth crime, victimization, and child maltreatment.

In the years since its inception, the Center has played a critical role in supporting the professionals on the front lines of our national struggle to preserve the delicate balance between protecting children in a free society and protecting society against juvenile criminal behavior. The Center has distinguished itself as the only private, non-profit research organization in the United States whose resources are concentrated solely on the juvenile justice system.

True to its mission, the Center seeks to prevent juvenile delinquency, child abuse, and child neglect through research and technical assistance. The Center is a widely used and acclaimed resource that has been and continues to be used by the Department of Justice, juvenile and family court judges, probation officers, court administrators, state and federal legislators, social researchers, legal researchers, the media, child advocates, juvenile correctional personnel, practicing attorneys, lobbyists for children's programs, parents, and children themselves.

By gathering the facts needed to produce successful results with juvenile offenders, the Center makes an invaluable contribution toward solving the national dilemma of juvenile delinquency. Prior to the establishment of the Center, there was precious little empirical documentation of the ways that courts dealt with delinquent youth. Now, over twenty years later, the Center has a vast body of knowledge on how many youths are charged with what crimes and how many are adjudicated and what dispositions they receive. We know what types of offenders come back a second, third, fourth or tenth time—for the same offense or for others. We know more and more about which communities are succeeding in preventing and controlling criminal law violations by juveniles, permitting us to link communities experiencing problems with communities that have found solutions to those problems. The potential we are developing for preventing juvenile delinquency and its related human and social costs is enormous and exciting.

Although the projects have varied over the years, the Center's primary goal has remained its dedication to quality research in the juvenile justice field, and the subsequent improvement in the ways our youth are handled judicially throughout the nation. Most importantly, the Center prides itself on providing practitioners objective, factual information while maintaining a politically and socially neutral stance.

The Center operates as the research division of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (the Council), a membership organization of 2,500 juvenile justice professionals across the nation. The Council, founded in 1937 by judges who believed in the improvement of juvenile justice through education and information exchange, plays a leadership role in society's critical efforts to prevent and mitigate juvenile crime. Although the Center is a division of the Council, it has its own charter and policy board and is responsible for raising its own operational support.

A Board of Fellows, made up of distinguished professionals in jurisprudence, treatment, and law guide and support the Center Director. With a staff of over twenty individuals and pro-tem consultants as required, the Center produces publications, provides data sets, and renders extensive technical assistance to a wide variety of public and private agencies working with troubled young people. It is their expertise and leadership which support those on the front lines of the struggle to abate juvenile crime.

For a brief description of the Center's Board of Fellows, please refer to the back of this sheet.

Board of Fellows 1995 - 1996

The Board of Fellows is comprised of seven judge members and six lay members. This group represents extensive knowledge and experience in the field of juvenile justice and provides policy guidance for the Center.

Judge Maurice B. Cohill Jr. is the Chairman of the Board of Fellows—a position to which he has been elected unanimously since the Center's inception. Judge Cohill has long been recognized by the Pittsburgh community for his sincere interest in our nations' youth. He served for almost eleven years as a juvenile court judge in Allegheny County (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) and, in June of 1976, he became a United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania where he served as Chief Judge from 1985 to 1992. Judge Cohill is a graduate of Princeton University and the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

Prof. Anthony N. Doob became a member of the Board of Fellows in 1995. He is currently a professor of criminology at the University of Toronto (Canada). He received his A.B. from Harvard in 1964 and received his Ph.D. in psychology from Stanford University in 1967.

Judge Carmen A. Ferrante is Immediate-Past President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He was appointed to the Juvenile and Domestic Court for two terms and then tenured as a judge of the superior court of New Jersey and has been presiding judge of the Family Division of Passaic County since 1977. He is a graduate of Seton Hall University and Seton Hall Law School.

Mr. Ernesto Garcia was the Director of Juvenile Court Services for the Juvenile Division of the Superior Court in Maricopa County (Phoenix), Arizona, before his retirement. Mr. Garcia is a graduate of the College of Business of Arizona State University and holds bachelor's and master's degrees in Business Administration.

Judge David E. Grossmann is President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He has been Administrative Judge of the Hamilton County Juvenile Court in Cincinnati, Ohio, since 1976. Judge Grossmann graduated from Cincinnati's Walnut High School, the University of Cincinnati, and the U.C. Law School.

Judge Thomas E. Hornsby is President-Elect of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Illinois and a J.D. degree from the John Marshall Law School. He is currently the Presiding Circuit Court Judge in Lee County, Illinois.

Judge Jerry L. Mershon is currently Administrative District Judge for the Twenty-First Judicial District in Riley and Clay Counties in Kansas. Judge Mershon is a graduate of Kansas State University (Pre Law) and Washburn School of Law where he received both his L.L.B. and J.D. degrees.

Judge Eugene Arthur Moore was first elected Oakland County Probate Judge in November 1966. He graduated from the University of Michigan School of Business and Administration and the University of Michigan Law School in 1960.

Ms. Loretta R. O'Brien is currently the Deputy Director of The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. Ms. O'Brien obtained her Baccalaureate Degree in Communications from Southern Illinois University and her Masters in Library Science from the University of Michigan.

Judge Gerald E. Radcliffe is serving his fourth consecutive six-year term in the Ross County Probate Court in Chillicothe, Ohio. Judge Radcliffe graduated from Ohio University in 1948 and the College of Law of the University of Cincinnati in 1950.

Ms. Jill E. Rangos is a litigation attorney with the Pittsburgh law firm of Thorp, Reed & Armstrong. She received her undergraduate degree from Dickinson College and her law degree from The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law.

Prof. Robert E. Shepherd Jr. is currently a professor of law at the University of Richmond Law School. Professor Shepherd obtained his B.A. and L.L.B. degrees from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia.

Herbert E. Thomas, M.D. is a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry in the School of Medicine, University of Pittsburgh and, prior to his retirement, an Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry and Law in the School of Law, University of Pittsburgh. He is a consultant to treatment programs associated with the criminal justice system in Pittsburgh, and he also has a private practice in New York City.

March 1996

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RESOURCES & SERVICES

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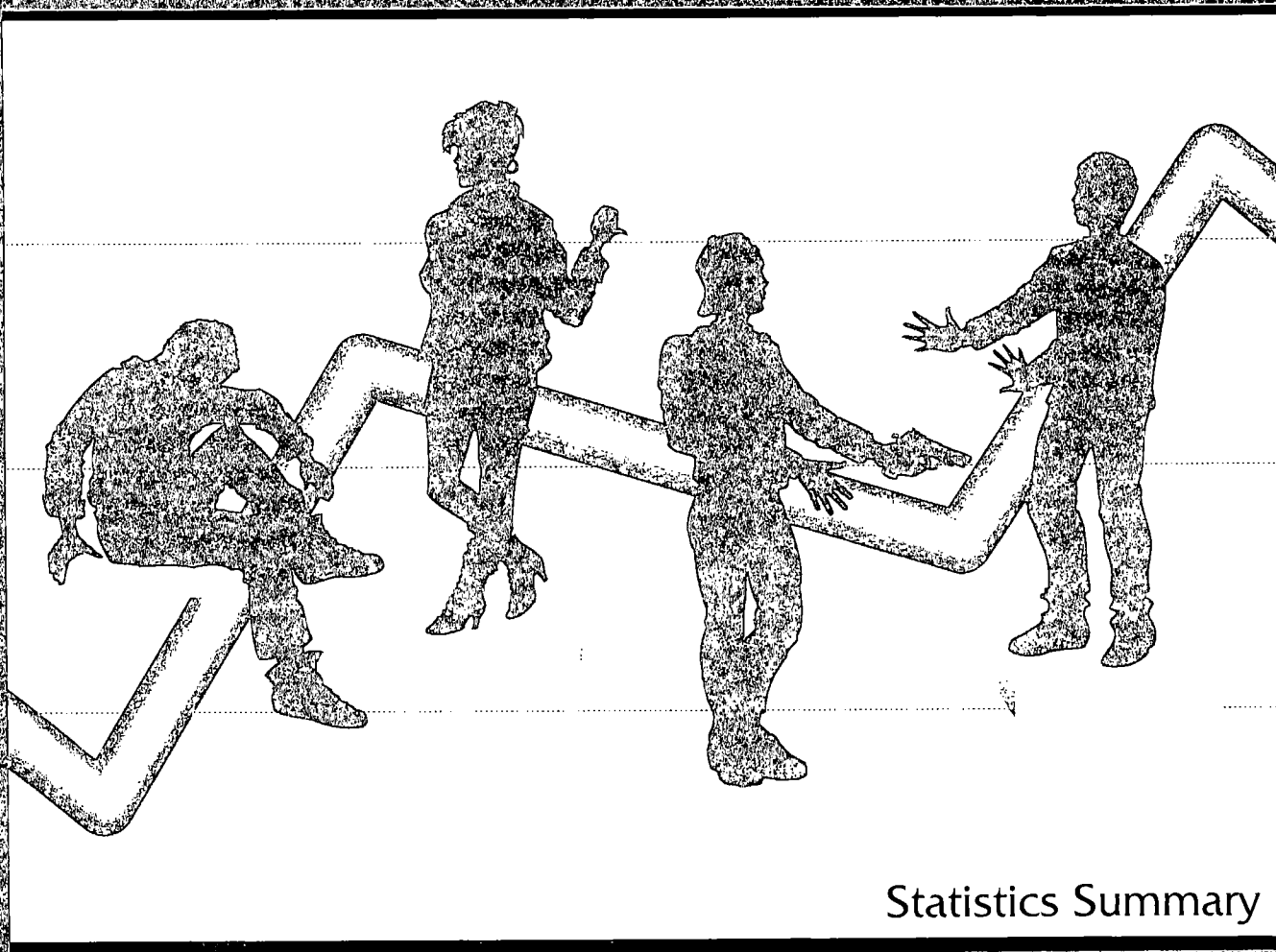
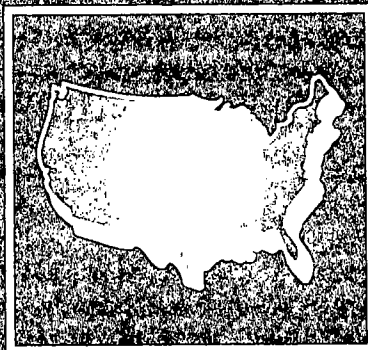
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Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1996 Update on Violence



Statistics Summary

National Juvenile Court Data Archive

July 1978–Ongoing

Total Funding to Date: \$6,864,356

Source of Funding: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Background

The juvenile court statistics project has a long history. It began in 1927 collecting data from a small number of courts. From that time through the 1960s, the work was the responsibility of the Children's Bureau. Little information was collected and the work had little impact. It was evident by the early 1970s that accurate information describing the workloads and activities of the nation's juvenile courts was nonexistent at the national level. This situation led policy makers, planners, and system managers to rely on inadequate information to develop policy and programs for the juvenile justice system. It was also evident that the situation would continue unless some action were taken. In 1975, at the request of the Department of Justice, the Center assumed the responsibility for collecting statistics on the activities of the juvenile courts in the United States.

When the Center assumed responsibility, the last annual data collected by the Children's Bureau were stored in a small cardboard box on pink and blue index cards, each containing a count of the number of male or female cases processed in the year by a single juvenile court. The Center initiated a revolutionary data collection strategy and moved the project into the computer age. The Center was awarded a grant to begin a program of detailed analysis of the available computerized juvenile court data and to improve both the quality and quantity of the national statistics. In its approach the Center asks courts, not to fill in a short reporting form, but to forward copies of the automated case records generated by their management information systems. These large, detailed data files, therefore, serve two purposes. They meet the information needs of the local courts who designed and maintain them and, secondarily, they support national information needs.

Description

The National Juvenile Court Data Archive stores all available data on cases processed by the nation's juvenile courts. The information housed in the Archive ranges from annual reports produced by state and local juvenile courts to copies of computerized case records from courts with automated information systems. Each year automated case records describing over 700,000 of all delinquency cases and status offense processed by juvenile courts across the country are collected by the Archive. Using these data, the project publishes the annual *Juvenile Court Statistics* reports which describe court workloads and the characteristics of the cases handled. Each year planners, policy makers, and researchers use information based on data stored in the Archive to provide policy and planning guidance, to monitor the impact of programs and legislative changes, to aid in the development of theories and models of juvenile justice, and to develop system standards. Interested individuals are encouraged to consult the National Juvenile Court Data Archive as a routine part of their planning, evaluation, and research procedures.

Through the Center's efforts, this major national data collection project evolved from the simple tabulation of summary statistics to a major national data base which now contains well over 10,000,000 automated juvenile court case records. The National Juvenile Court Data Archive has become the largest and most detailed source of juvenile justice system processing information in the country and it continues to grow. The primary publication of

the project is the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series which is, and has been since 1929, the primary source of information on the activities of the nation's juvenile courts. In addition, the project has expanded far beyond its national reporting activities. The project annually publishes a series of studies and special reports addressing areas of concern to the juvenile justice community. The project also encourages and supports other researchers to direct their interests and energies to the important problems of the field by providing the raw data needed to explore key issues. In addition, the project has become a major national information resource for federal, state, and local agencies and the media. The project annually responds to about 700 telephone and written requests for statistical information. Another key aspect of the project is support of the development of new, and the enhancement of existing, juvenile court information systems. This facet of the work has two goals: to improve the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system and to provide new sources of data for national reporting.

Together, the volume of information contained in the Archive and the continuity in the *Juvenile Court Statistics* series make the Archive a unique and irreplaceable resource for the juvenile justice community. In many ways, the Archive is also the heart of the Center. The project supports and enhances the Center's ability to provide technical assistance. Through this work the Center has come to better understand juvenile justice system outcomes—to better understand juvenile courts.

Activities

Data Collection Activities

Request data from current suppliers. Automated case-level data are collected from thirty-two states. Aggregate statistical data are collected from all fifty states and the District of Columbia.

Study submitted data files. All data files must be understood before they are placed in the Archive and used for national estimation purposes. This process requires extensive discussions with data suppliers to obtain information to supplement existing system documentation.

Prepare Archive version of submitted data files. Files must be cleaned of coding errors. Some data sets must be restructured into case-level files.

Standardize data files. To produce the national estimates of court activity each data file must be rewritten into a common data structure so that it can be combined with data files from other jurisdictions.

Data Use and Dissemination

Prepare national reports. Analyses of juvenile court data to produce national estimates and subnational tables for the *Juvenile Court Statistics* reports are conducted. Supporting data files are analyzed (Census population data). Text, tables, and graphics are produced.

Prepare special topic reports. Each year special topic reports are prepared to support the *Update* bulletin series of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention within the U.S. Department of Justice. Topics have included the juvenile court's response to violent crime, drug and alcohol offenses, runaways, and property crimes, as well as the use of detention, restitution, and juvenile court careers. Some 15,000 copies of each *Update* bulletin are disseminated to practitioners, policy makers, researchers, the media, etc.

Prepare data documentation. *User's Guides* are prepared for archived data files to facilitate secondary use of the data.

Disseminate data files. The interest in and demand for the Archive's holdings have grown in recent years. The *Guide to the Data Sets in the National Juvenile Court Data Archive* informs potential users of data availability, file content, and access procedures. Following

initial consultation with researchers, from the point of their request for authorization for access to a data file, all activities are performed by project staff on a cost recovery basis.

The Center developed a data and analysis package entitled *Easy Access* that enables quick and easy analyses of the nation's juvenile courts' activities. The *Easy Access* diskette contains five years of national juvenile court delinquency case records (1988-1992) and a simple analysis interface which anyone can use to study court activity and case trends. The five annual data files each contain information on over one million case records. NCJJ is distributing this data base and analysis software free of charge and, following the approach popularized by Shareware, is asking those who find the software useful to make a small, voluntary contribution to support the continuation of this effort to make large data files accessible to a broader audience.

Respond to information requests. The volume of information requests has increased dramatically in the last few years to about 700 requests annually. This is primarily because *Juvenile Court Statistics* and the *Update Bulletins* are now being published and widely distributed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The project's promotional activities have also introduced the Archive to new audiences. Requests come primarily from federal, state, and local juvenile justice agencies, researchers, and the news media.

Data Improvement Activities

Provide technical assistance and advocate for national reporting concerns. The project must do what it can to ensure that data collected by juvenile courts are useful at the national level. The project does this through its *Guidelines for the Coding of Data Elements*, review of draft system design documents, system evaluations, and consultations with system designers.

Expand the sample. Attempts are ongoing to recruit new data suppliers. In-house data files not yet fully studied because of their complexity and small size will be processed.

National Center for Juvenile Justice

NCJJ

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412-227-6950 • FAX: 412-227-6955Research Division of the
National Council of Juvenile
and Family Court Judges, Inc.
Louis W. McHardy,
Executive Director

Dear Colleague:

Tanya Kozicky (Gov Anne Carlson) - (MN)
Court Improvement

Our records indicate that you recently requested and received information or materials from the National Center for Juvenile Justice. We are interested in learning about the value of that service so that we might improve our ability to deliver assistance in the future. Would you please respond briefly to the following questions and return this letter in the envelope provided. Thank you.

1. Did you receive the information/material? ☒ Yes ☐ No

a. The response time was:

Very prompt 5 4 3 2 1 Way too long

2. Was it what you expected? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Explain: _____

a. In terms of subject matter, was the assistance:

Right on target 5 4 3 2 1 Not very useful

b. The quality of the material was:

Very current 5 4 3 2 1 Out-dated

Technically

Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor

c. The quantity of the material was:

Too much 5 4 3 2 1 Not enough

3. Did you read the information? ☒ Yes ☐ No4. Did you use the information? ☒ Yes ☐ No

How or what is the potential for use?

as background for development
of Governor Carlson's Crime Initiative

5. Do you anticipate any change in your activities, planning, or opinion as a result of this information?

☒ Yes ☐ No Explain:Continued assessment of potential
changes to Governor's Justice System

6. Are there improvements in our delivery of assistance you can suggest for the future?

no

Sincerely,

Pat Torbet

Patricia McFall Torbet, Project Director

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RESEARCH

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National Center for Juvenile Justice

Justice for Children and Families



1995 Annual Report

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JUVENILE AND FAMILY LAW DIGEST

Volume 28, Number 10 / October 1996

This Month's Highlights

DELINQUENCY — Rights

This case raises the legal issue of the application of the Double Jeopardy Clause to a public school suspension. Juvenile moved to dismiss a juvenile prosecution against him for possession of a dangerous weapon on school property. He claimed that suspension from school for the same conduct was “punishment” barring further punishment in juvenile court. The trial court denied the juvenile’s motion and adjudicated him delinquent. Appeals court affirms lower court, stating that the suspension may be characterized as remedial. (Minn., p. 1476)

PARENT/CHILD — Generally

W.G.T., who is presently incarcerated on Death Row, at Florida State Prison, appeals an order denying his petition seeking visitation with his minor son, C.B.T., and other relief. The appeals court affirms the denial of visitation, but remands to the trial court for consideration of W.G.T.’s request that he be provided information about his son’s welfare. (Fla., p. 1480)

SCHOOLS — Students’ Rights

High school student was suspended for three days after threatening to shoot school counselor in connection with proposed schedule change. Appeals court held that statement made by angry high school student to school guidance counselor was not protected by first amendment. (Cal., p. 1482)

TRIALS — Jury

Juvenile contests the constitutionality of his conviction on the ground that he was not tried by a jury of his peers. The appeals court affirms his conviction and holds that a 16-year-old in a trial by jury does not have a constitutional right to have 16 and 17-year olds included in the pool of prospective jurors. The sixth amendment merely requires that each jury be selected from a jury pool representing a fair cross-section of the community. (Minn., p. 1486)