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Juvenile

DELINQUENCY

THEORY, PRACTICE, AND LAW

LARRY J. SIEGEL | BRANDON C. WELSH

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

THEORY, PRACTICE, AND LAW

TWELFTH EDITION

LARRY J. SIEGEL

University of Massachusetts, Lowell

BRANDON C. WELSH

Northeastern University



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Larry J. Siegel and Brandon C. Welsh

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DEDICATION

*To my wife, Therese J. Libby, and my children,
Julie, Andrew, Eric, and Rachel*

—L.J.S.

To my wife, Jennifer, and our son, Ryan

—B.G.W.

About the Authors

Larry J. Siegel

Larry J. Siegel was born in the Bronx, New York. While living on Jerome Avenue and attending City College of New York in the 1960s, he was swept up in the social and political currents of the time. He became intrigued with the influence contemporary culture had on individual behavior. Did people shape society or did society shape people? He applied his interest in social forces and human behavior to the study of crime and justice. After graduating CCNY, he attended the newly opened program in criminal justice at the State University of New York at Albany, earning both his MA and PhD degrees there. After completing his graduate work, Dr. Siegel spent nine years at Northeastern University, and also held teaching positions at the University of Nebraska–Omaha, and Saint Anselm College in New Hampshire before joining the faculty at the University of Massachusetts–Lowell. Dr. Siegel has written extensively in the area of crime and justice, including books on juvenile law, delinquency, criminology, criminal justice, and criminal procedure. He teaches courses in criminal justice, criminology, and delinquency at both the undergrad and grad level. He is a court-certified expert on police conduct and has testified in numerous legal cases. The father of four and grandfather of three, Larry and his wife, Terry, reside in Bedford, New Hampshire, with their two dogs, Watson and Cody.



Brandon C. Welsh

Brandon C. Welsh is a Professor of Criminology at Northeastern University and Senior Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement at Free University in Amsterdam. He received his undergraduate and MA degrees at the University of Ottawa and his PhD from Cambridge University in England. His research interests focus on the prevention of crime and delinquency and evidence-based crime policy. Dr. Welsh has published extensively in these areas and is an author or editor of ten books.



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Preface

Two recent Supreme Court cases have touched on the issue of whether juvenile offenders can be placed in confinement for the remainder of their lives. The first, decided on May 17, 2010, in the case of *Graham v. Florida*, put an end to the practice of life sentences without the possibility of parole for juveniles convicted of nonhomicide crimes.¹ The Court agreed that this sentence violated the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The Court did, however, leave in place the prospect that juveniles could continue to receive a life sentence without parole for crimes in which someone is killed.

This decision came a little more than a year to the day after the Court agreed to accept appeals from two individuals, both from Florida, who were serving life sentences for nonhomicide crimes committed when they were juveniles. In the first case, which goes back to 1989, Joe Sullivan, then 13, was convicted of raping a 72-year-old woman. In the other case, Terrance Graham, who was 17 years old, was convicted of a probation violation for a home invasion robbery in 2004. In their briefs to the Court, both petitioners argued that the sentence of life without the possibility of parole violates the Eighth Amendment's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment. In oral arguments before the Court, the justices did not revisit the question that "juveniles generally are psychologically less mature than adults," but instead focused on "whether the mitigating trait of immaturity justified a categorical exclusion of juveniles from the sentence of life without parole."²

In the second case, *Miller vs. Alabama*, the Supreme Court revisited the issue of life in prison for juveniles, but this time the focus was on a mandatory life sentence for those kids transferred to adult court and found guilty of murder.³ Again, the majority ruled that such a practice violated the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment. The Court ruled that immaturity, impetuosity, and failure to appreciate risks and consequences should be considered by the sentencing judge. Mandatory sentences prevent judges from taking into account the child's family and home environment no matter how brutal or dysfunctional. As a result of *Miller*, judges have to consider the defendant's youth and the nature of the crime before sentencing.

Life without parole for juveniles has long been a controversial issue in the annals of juvenile justice. Some scholars view it as a replacement for the death penalty for juveniles, which the Supreme Court abolished in 2005. In a provocatively titled article, "A Slower Form of Death: Implications of *Roper v. Simmons* for Juveniles Sentenced to Life Without Parole," legal scholar Barry Feld argues that the Supreme Court's diminished responsibility standard—used in their decision to end the juvenile death penalty—should also be applicable to cases in which juvenile offenders are receiving life sentences without the possibility of parole.⁴ The main reasons for this view center on the overly punitive nature of this sentence and the need to differentiate

¹ 560 U.S. ____ (2010).

² Elizabeth S. Scott and Laurence Steinberg, "The Young and the Reckless," *New York Times*, November 14, 2009.

³ *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. _____ (2012).

⁴ Barry C. Feld, "A Slower Form of Death: Implications of *Roper v. Simmons* for Juveniles Sentenced to Life Without Parole," *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics and Public Policy* 22:9–65 (2008).

between juvenile and adult culpability. To achieve this end, Feld proposes that “states formally recognize youthfulness as a mitigating factor by applying a ‘youth discount’ to adult sentence lengths.”⁵ This could have implications for thousands of juvenile offenders now and in the future.

The debate over the use of strict punishments for juvenile offenders who commit very serious crimes has become more focused in the aftermath of high-profile cases involving kids who engage in terrorist acts and/or mass murders, school-based shootings, and the like. Can even the most violent juveniles be successfully treated and rehabilitated? Or should they be tried as adults and given long prison sentences, even if it means life behind bars?

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: Theory, Practice, and Law

Issues such as the death penalty for juveniles or sentencing juveniles to life without parole for murder have sparked interest in the study of juvenile delinquency not only in the United States but also around the world. Inexplicable incidents of violence occur all too frequently in schools, homes, and public places. Teen gangs can be found in most major cities. Hundreds of thousands of youths are known to be the victims of serious neglect and sexual and physical abuse each year; many more cases may be unreported or hidden. It is not surprising, considering the concern with the problems of youth, that courses on juvenile delinquency have become popular offerings on the nation’s college campuses. We have written *Juvenile Delinquency: Theory, Practice, and Law* to help students understand the nature of juvenile delinquency, its cause and correlates, as well as the current strategies being used to control or eliminate its occurrence. Our book also reviews the legal rules that have been set down either to protect innocent minors or control adolescent misconduct: Can children be required to submit to drug testing in school? Can teachers legally search suspicious students or use corporal punishment as a method of discipline? Should children be allowed to testify on closed-circuit TV in child abuse cases?

Our primary goals in writing this 12th edition remain the same as in the previous editions:

1. To be as objective as possible, presenting the many diverse views and perspectives that characterize the study of juvenile delinquency and reflect its interdisciplinary nature. We take no single position nor espouse a particular viewpoint or philosophy.
2. To maintain a balance of research, theory, law, policy, and practice. It is essential that a textbook on delinquency not be solely a theory book without presenting the juvenile justice system or contain sections on current policies without examining legal issues and cases.
3. To be as thorough and up-to-date as possible. As always, we have attempted to include the most current data and information available.
4. To make the study of delinquency interesting as well as informative. We want to encourage readers’ interest in the study of delinquency so they will pursue it on an undergraduate or graduate level.

We have tried to provide a textbook that is both scholarly and informative, comprehensive yet interesting, well organized and objective yet provocative.

⁵ Ibid., p. 10.

Organization of the Text

The 12th edition of *Juvenile Delinquency: Theory, Practice, and Law* has 17 chapters:

- **Chapter 1, Childhood and Delinquency**, contains extensive material on the history of childhood and the legal concept of delinquency and status offending. This material enables the reader to understand how the concept of adolescence evolved over time and how that evolution influenced the development of the juvenile court and the special status of delinquency.
- **Chapter 2, The Nature and Extent of Delinquency**, covers the measurement of delinquent behavior, trends, and patterns in teen crime and victimization, and also discusses the correlates of delinquency, including race, gender, class, and age, and chronic offending.
- **Chapter 3, Individual Views of Delinquency**, covers individual-level views of the cause of delinquency, which include choice, biological, and psychological theories.
- **Chapter 4, Structure, Process, Culture, and Delinquency**, looks at theories that hold that culture and socialization control delinquent behavior.
- **Chapter 5, Social Reaction, Social Conflict, and Delinquency**, reviews theories that state that delinquency is a product of human interaction as well as the economic and political forces that control the way people interact.
- **Chapter 6, Developmental Theories of Delinquency: Life-Course, Propensity, and Trajectory**, covers developmental theories of delinquency, including such issues as the onset, continuity, paths, and termination of a delinquent career.
- **Chapter 7, Gender and Delinquency**, explores the sex-based differences that are thought to account for the gender patterns in the delinquency rate.
- **Chapter 8, The Family and Delinquency**, covers the influence of families on children and delinquency. The concept of child abuse is covered in detail, and the steps in the child protection system are reviewed.
- **Chapter 9, Peers and Delinquency: Juvenile Gangs and Groups**, reviews the effect peers have on delinquency and the topic of teen gangs.
- **Chapter 10, Schools and Delinquency**, looks at the influence of schools and the education process, delinquency within the school setting, and the efforts by schools to prevent delinquency.
- **Chapter 11, Drug Use and Delinquency**, reviews the influence drugs and substance abuse have on delinquent behavior and what is being done to reduce teenage drug use.
- **Chapter 12, Delinquency Prevention: Social and Developmental Perspectives**, covers delinquency prevention and efforts being made to help kids desist from criminal activities.
- **Chapter 13, Juvenile Justice: Then and Now**, gives extensive coverage to the emergence of state control over children in need and the development of the juvenile justice system. It also covers the contemporary juvenile justice system, the major stages in the justice process, the role of the federal government in the juvenile justice system, an analysis of the differences between the adult and juvenile justice systems, and extensive coverage of the legal rights of children.
- **Chapter 14, Police Work with Juveniles**, discusses the role of police in delinquency prevention. It covers legal issues such as major court decisions on searches and *Miranda* rights of juveniles. It also contains material on how race and gender affect police discretion as well as efforts by police departments to control delinquent behavior.

- **Chapter 15, Juvenile Court Process: Pretrial, Trial, and Sentencing**, contains information on plea bargaining in juvenile court, the use of detention, and transfer to adult jails. It contains an analysis of the critical factors that influence the waiver decision, the juvenile trial, and sentencing.
- **Chapter 16, Juvenile Corrections: Probation, Community Treatment, and Institutionalization**, covers material on probation and other community dispositions, including restorative justice programs and secure juvenile corrections, with emphasis on legal issues such as right to treatment and unusual programs such as boot camps.
- **Chapter 17, Delinquency and Juvenile Justice Abroad**, looks at delinquency around the world and examines efforts to control antisocial youth in other nations.

What's New in This Edition

Because the study of juvenile delinquency is a dynamic, ever-changing field of scientific inquiry and because the theories, concepts, and processes of this area of study are constantly evolving, we have updated *Juvenile Delinquency: Theory, Practice, and Law* to reflect the changes that have taken place in the study of delinquent behavior during the past few years.

Two new changes stand out. We have created a new feature called **Cyber Delinquency**, which offers in-depth analyses showing how the Internet has influenced juvenile behavior and is now used to prevent or facilitate youthful misbehavior. Another new feature describes careers of people working in the field of juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice. These **Professional Spotlights** provide students with a “here-and-now glimpse” of what professional opportunities are available in the areas of delinquency treatment, prevention, and intervention.

Like its predecessors, the 12th edition includes a review of recent legal cases, research studies, and policy initiatives. It aims to provide a groundwork for the study of juvenile delinquency by analyzing and describing the nature and extent of delinquency, the suspected causes of delinquent behavior, and the environmental influences on youthful misbehavior. It also covers what most experts believe are the critical issues in juvenile delinquency and analyzes crucial policy issues, including the use of pretrial detention, waiver to adult court, and restorative justice programs. While these principles remain the backbone of the text, we have also incorporated into the 12th edition the following:

- **Chapter 1** opens with a new vignette on Keaira Brown, who was just 13 years old when she was found guilty of first-degree murder and attempted aggravated robbery and sentenced to serve 20 years before being eligible for parole. There is a new Exhibit 1.1 which sets out the six generations of current Americans and their problems and issues. There are new data on the teen suicide rate that show suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24, averaging about 4,500 per year. We have a new section on health and mortality problems that discusses how adequate health care is another significant concern for American youth. Another new section on self-image problems relates that adolescents are particularly vulnerable to stress caused by a poor self-image. A section on problems in cyberspace shows that while the Internet and other technological advances have opened a new world of information gathering and sharing for today's youth, these technologies have brought with them a basketful of new problems ranging from sexting to cyberstalking. A Cyber Delinquency feature covers “catfishing,” the practice of setting up a fictitious online profile, in order to lure another into a fraudulent romantic relationship. And a new Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice feature looks at the Family Key programs, designed to provide highly effective case management services

that prevent at-risk youth from repeat violations that could result in juvenile probation or detention.

- **Chapter 2** begins with a vignette on Leonel Contreras and William Steven Rodriguez, two California boys who kidnapped and sexually assaulted two girls and were sentenced to at least 50 years in prison, though they were both 16 years old when they committed the crime. A new Focus on Delinquency box looks at juvenile sex offenders. The sections on race and delinquency have been revised and revamped. And all data on juvenile offending patterns and victim patterns have been updated.
- **Chapter 3** begins with a new vignette on Adam Lanza, a boy with sensory processing disorder (SPD), which made him over-respond to stimuli, who later committed the Newtown, Connecticut, massacre. We review James Densley's research on gangs in London, finding that they evolved from nonviolent, noncriminal adolescent peer groups and into organized criminal enterprises. A new section called "Creating Scripts" looks at how some kids will create scripts that guide their interactions with victims. If they follow the script, they can commit their crimes and avoid detection. A new section on perception and deterrence looks at how the perception that punishment will be forthcoming influences criminal behavior. Another new section explores actual deterrence and delinquency: the more likely cops are to make arrests, the courts to convict, and the correctional system to punish, the less likely it is that kids will engage in delinquency. A new Case Profile, "Timothy's Story," looks at the life of a 13-year-old biracial male residing with his mother and younger sister.
- **Chapter 4** begins with a new story that made headlines around the world when a young woman in Delhi, India, was raped and killed by a group of five men, including a teen. We update the data on economic disadvantage and poverty showing that nearly 15 million children in the United States—21 percent of all children—live in families with incomes below the poverty line. An Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice feature looks at Communities That Care, a comprehensive community-based delinquency prevention program. A Youth Stories feature tells the story of Rebecca Falcon, a young troubled girl who was placed in prison for life. A new Focus on Delinquency box, "Too Good to Be True: Do Overachievers Neutralize?" looks at the neutralizing efforts of people who engage in positive behaviors that rise above the norm. A new Case Profile, "Steph's Story," looks at the life of a young woman whose family hit hard times during the economic downturn, forcing them to move out of their home after a foreclosure.
- **Chapter 5** begins with an analysis of the Steubenville rape case in which two members of the champion football team were found to be delinquent in an incident involving the rape of a drunk 16-year-old girl after a night of partying and drinking. A Cyber Delinquency feature entitled "Trying Cases on the Net" looks at the phenomenon of how information that is tweeted, texted, emailed, or posted on YouTube can influence the justice process. Research by Tammy Rinehart and her associates, finding that minority suspects stopped by police are significantly more likely to be arrested than white suspects, is reviewed. A new Cyber Delinquency feature entitled "*N.N. v. Tunkhannock School District*" reviews a controversial sexting case in which a high school student won a lawsuit against school and county officials for violating her rights to privacy and free expression.
- **Chapter 6** now begins with the story of 17-year-old T. J. Lane, who shot and killed three students at a local school and showed no remorse. There is a new section on cumulative disadvantage, which holds that some kids not only fail to accumulate social capital but experience social problems that weigh down their life chances. People who acquire this cumulative disadvantage are more likely to commit delinquent acts and become crime victims. There is a new Youth Stories feature on juvenile serial killer Craig Price. And we have added new material on a subgroup of delinquents called *escalators* whose severity of violence increases over time.

- **Chapter 7's** new opening vignette tells the story of Amber Wright, a 16-year-old girl convicted of first-degree murder for her role in the killing of 15-year-old Florida boy in a revenge murder plot that sent her to prison for life. A new Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice box looks at the Friendly PEERsuasion Program, designed to give at-risk girls a healthful environment. A new section, "Police and the Gender Gap," looks at how police are changing the manner in which they handle cases involving adolescent females, showing them less favoritism, resulting in a greater likelihood of girls getting arrested. A new Youth Stories feature tells of Rehtaeh Parsons, a 17-year-old Canadian girl who committed suicide 18 months after she was sexually assaulted by four boys, who posted photos of the assault on the Internet. A new Case Profile, "Rain's Story," is about a girl whose troubled life led her to feel depressed and isolated, culminating in a suicide attempt. Another new section, "Trauma, Victimization, and Delinquent Paths," looks at the research showing that young girls are more likely to be the target of victimization and abuse than any other group.
- **Chapter 8** now begins with the story of Nehemiah Griego, a young man who shot and killed his father, mother, and three young siblings because he had "anger issues" and "was annoyed with" his mother. A new section called "Teen Moms/Single Moms" explores whether living in a single-parent home, especially one headed by an unmarried teenage mother, is associated with delinquency. A new Focus on Delinquency feature looks at economic stress and delinquency. The sections on the effect of family breakup have been revised to include material showing that the effects of divorce seem gender-specific. There is new material on the long-term effects of divorce. Another new section, "Parental Involvement in the Justice System," looks at the effect of having parents who suffer arrest, conviction, and incarceration. We updated the sections on child abuse and neglect with the latest data available. There is a Case Profile on Ayden, a 15-year-old male referred to the county juvenile justice system for disorderly conduct in his family home and possession of marijuana.
- **Chapter 9** has a new chapter opening vignette about MS-13 gang members Heriberto Martinez, also known as "Boxer," and Carlos Ortega, also known as "Silent" or "Silencio," who were convicted in New York on charges of murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, firearms offenses, and conspiracy. We have a new section on whether crime-prone kids hang out together, and an accompanying Focus on Delinquency feature entitled "Birds of a Feather?" We updated data on the globalization of gangs and show that the gang migration problem is not unique to the United States and that homegrown gangs and migrating transnational gangs have developed around the world. A new Cyber Delinquency feature entitled "Gangs in Cyberspace" shows how gang communications have entered the cyber age and gang members use cell phones and the Internet to communicate and promote their illicit activities. We have a new section on African and Caribbean gangs. A Case Profile called "Luis's Story" concerns a 16-year-old Latino male who identified himself as gang-involved. We cover another recent phenomenon, hybrid gangs that recruit from different racial/ethnic groups. They may even have openly gay members, something that would rarely be seen in traditional gangs. A Youth Stories feature entitled "Jason: Strengthening Family Bonds" tells the story of an 18-year-old gang member who was referred to gang intervention services by juvenile probation when he was 15 years old. A new Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice feature, "Cure Violence," discusses a program that has proven to be an effective broad community approach to preventing and reducing gang violence.
- **Chapter 10** opens with the case of Chelsea Chaney, a Georgia high school student who filed a lawsuit against a school administrator who, without her knowledge or permission, showed an image of her in a bikini to hundreds of local parents and students at a seminar addressing the dangers of social media. There is a new Focus on Delinquency feature, "School Discipline, School Opportunities, and

Minority Youth,” that discusses racial disparity in school disciplinary practices. We have the latest data on both trends in school achievement and victimizations at school. A Professional Spotlight discusses Kevin Quinn, a school resource officer in the Chandler, Arizona, Police Department. There is a detailed discussion of the landmark case *J.D.B. v. North Carolina*, which concerns police interrogation in the school setting. A new Cyber Delinquency box looks at free speech on the Net, examining how far school officials can go to limit control of Twitter messages, texts, and emails that are quickly spread among the student body.

- **Chapter 11** opens with the death of a Florida teen, Helen Marie Witty, caused by another teen who was driving while under the influence of alcohol and other drugs. As part of her sentence, the driver is required to speak to high school students about the dangers of drinking and driving. The chapter updates recent trends and patterns in juvenile drug use with data based on three national surveys, including the large-scale Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey. We have expanded coverage of the major explanations for why youths take drugs and added new material reviewing the most up-to-date research on what works to reduce juvenile drug use. Also new to the chapter is a Professional Spotlight feature profiling the career of a juvenile substance abuse counselor.
- **Chapter 12** opens with a milestone program by the British government to provide home visitation services to new young mothers and their babies, modeled after the Nurse-Family Partnership program in the United States. The chapter substantially updates material on what works in delinquency prevention, with new evaluations and reviews on the effectiveness of programs that take place in early childhood and the teenage years. New studies have been added on the financial costs of delinquency, as the high costs of juvenile crime are sometimes used to justify more spending on prevention programs. An Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice feature has been updated to present the latest research findings on the Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development initiative.
- **Chapter 13** opens with the case of Florida teen Michael Hernandez, who took the life of his classmate Jaime Gough and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Owing in part to the recent Supreme Court ruling that struck down life sentences for all juvenile offenders, Hernandez was granted a new sentencing hearing. The chapter updates the section on a comprehensive juvenile justice strategy, which combines elements of delinquency prevention and intervention and justice approaches. The latest research findings on teen courts and juvenile drug courts are presented. Also new to this chapter is a Professional Spotlight feature that discusses the career of a juvenile probation officer.
- **Chapter 14** begins with a story about the intersection of inner-city gang violence, a gunshot injury to 7-year-old Tajahnique Lee, and the growing concern of the police about witness intimidation. The chapter presents new research on juveniles’ attitudes toward police and the discretionary powers of police. It updates statistics on the handling of juvenile offenders by police, which show that two-thirds of all juveniles who are arrested are referred to juvenile court. It brings together the latest findings on what works when it comes to police efforts to prevent juvenile crime, including an updated Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice feature on “pulling levers” policing and the national evaluation of the G.R.E.A.T. program. The chapter also includes a new Cyber Delinquency feature that discusses “SafetyNet: Smart Cyber Choices” in San Diego.
- **Chapter 15** opens with a violent case involving a group of teens who beat to death a homeless man, drawing attention to the debate on transfers of juveniles to adult court. The chapter includes up-to-date statistics on juvenile court case flow, from the decision to release or detain, to waivers to adult court, to juvenile court dispositions. The chapter covers a new Supreme Court ruling that put an end to life without parole for *all* juvenile offenders. The chapter also includes a new Professional Spotlight feature that discusses the career of a juvenile court judge.

- **Chapter 16** begins with long-standing concerns about the safety of juvenile offenders and their need for treatment while in correctional facilities, profiling the case of Joseph Daniel Maldonado in California. The chapter reports on the latest trends in juvenile probation and incarceration. The latest research findings on what works in treating juvenile offenders are reviewed, along with an updated Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice feature on an innovative foster care program for serious and violent juvenile offenders known as Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC). The chapter also includes a new Professional Spotlight feature on the career of a teacher who works in a juvenile correctional facility, and updates material on juvenile aftercare and reentry services.
- **Chapter 17** begins with some of the growing crime problems facing China, a product of social and economic shifts that are also impacting other countries. The chapter presents new material on delinquency and juvenile justice systems around the world. It updates international statistics on juvenile crime and drug use, along with profiles on juvenile violence in Japan, youth justice reforms in Canada, and the youth justice system in England. A new Cyber Delinquency feature profiles some experiences of cybercrimes committed by youths in Europe and Asia.

Learning Tools

To access additional course materials, including CourseMate, please visit www.cengagebrain.com. At the CengageBrain.com home page, search for the ISBN of your title (from the back cover of your book) using the search box at the top of the page. This will take you to the product page where these resources can be found.

The text contains the following features designed to help students learn and comprehend the material:

- **Chapter Outline and Learning Objectives** Each chapter begins with an outline and a list of chapter objectives. The summary is keyed to and corresponds with the learning objectives.
- **Concept Summary** This feature is used throughout the text to help students review material in an organized fashion.
- **Professional Spotlights** New to this edition, these boxed features provide students with a look at what professional career opportunities are available in the area of delinquency treatment, prevention, and intervention. For example, Chapter 13 spotlights juvenile probation officer Carla Stalnakier.
- **Cyber Delinquency** This is a new feature highlighting contemporary problems faced by today's youth: delinquency and victimization in the cyber age. Chapter 14, for example, discusses policing juveniles in cyberspace.
- **Focus on Delinquency** As in previous editions, these boxed inserts focus attention on topics of special importance and concern. For example, in Chapter 16, "Mental Health Needs of Juvenile Inmates," discusses that as many as two out of three incarcerated juveniles suffer from mental health problems, but many states are cutting back on funding for mental health programs.
- **Case Profile** This feature discusses real-life situations in which at-risk youths worked their way out of delinquency. These stories are then tied to the material in the chapter with thought-provoking critical thinking boxes.
- **Youth Stories** This interesting feature focuses on current cases and incidents that have made the news and illustrate the trials and tribulations of youths in contemporary society.
- **Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice** These thought-provoking boxes discuss major initiatives and programs. For example, in Chapter 17, "Precourt Diversion Programs around the World" tells how keeping youths, who have become involved in minor delinquent acts from being formally processed through the juvenile justice system, has become a top priority of many countries.

- **Weblinks** In the margins of every chapter are links to websites that can be used to help students enrich their understanding of important issues and concepts found in the text.
- **Viewpoint and Doing Research on the Web** Each chapter ends with a feature called Viewpoint that presents a hypothetical case for the student to analyze. The Doing Research on the Web feature presents material found in articles on the Web to lead students to research ideas contained in the chapter.
- **Key Terms** Key terms are defined throughout the text when they appear in a chapter.
- **Questions for Discussion** Each chapter includes thought-provoking discussion questions.
- **Running Glossary** A glossary sets out and defines key terms used in the text. The definitions appear in the text margin where the concept is introduced, as well as in the comprehensive glossary at the end of the book.

Ancillary Materials

A number of supplements are provided by Cengage Learning to help instructors use *Juvenile Delinquency: Theory, Practice, and Law* in their courses and to help students prepare for exams. Supplements are available to qualified adopters. Please consult your local sales representative for details.

Instructor's Resource Manual with Test Bank Updated by Babette Protz of University of South Carolina, Lancaster and Wesley Jennings of University of South Florida, the manual includes learning objectives, key terms, a detailed chapter outline, a chapter summary, lesson plans, discussion topics, student activities, "What If" scenarios, media tools, a sample syllabus and an expanded test bank with 30 percent more questions than the prior edition. The learning objectives are correlated with the discussion topics, student activities, and media tools. Each chapter's test bank contains questions in multiple-choice, true/false, completion, essay, and new critical thinking formats, with a full answer key. The test bank is coded to the learning objectives that appear in the main text as well as to Bloom's Taxonomy levels and includes the section in the main text where the answers can be found. Finally, each question in the test bank has been carefully reviewed by experienced criminal justice instructors for quality, accuracy, and content coverage—so you can be assured that you are working with an assessment and grading resource of the highest caliber. The manual is available for download on the password-protected website and can also be obtained by emailing your local Cengage Learning representative.

PowerPoint Slides Helping you make your lectures more engaging while effectively reaching your visually oriented students, these handy Microsoft PowerPoint® slides outline the chapters of the main text in a classroom-ready presentation. Updated by Wesley Jennings of University of South Florida, the PowerPoint slides reflect the content and organization of the new edition of the text and feature some additional examples and real-world cases for application and discussion. Available for download on the password-protected instructor book companion website, the presentations can also be obtained by emailing your local Cengage Learning representative.

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero, the accompanying assessment tool is a flexible, online system that allows you to:

- Import, edit, and manipulate test bank content from the Siegel/Welsh test bank or elsewhere, including your own favorite test questions
- Create ideal assessments with your choice of 15 question types (including true/false, multiple choice, opinion scale/Likert, and essay)

- Create multiple test versions in an instant using drop-down menus and familiar, intuitive tools that take you through content creation and management with ease
- Deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom, or wherever you want, and import and export content into other systems as needed

Cengage Learning Video Program (Courtesy BBC, CNN, and more) CNN videos feature short, high-interest clips from current news events as well as historic raw footage going back 30 years. CBS and BBC clips feature footage from nightly news broadcasts and specials to *CBS News Special Reports*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, *60 Minutes*, and more. Taken together, the brief videos offer the perfect discussion-starters for your classes, enriching lectures and providing students with a new lens through which to view the past and present, one that will greatly enhance their knowledge and understanding of significant events and open up to them new dimensions in learning.

CourseMate Companion Website Cengage Learning’s Criminal Justice CourseMate brings course concepts to life with interactive learning, study, and exam preparation tools that support the printed textbook. CourseMate includes an integrated eBook as well as critical chapter review tools such as pretests students can use to quiz themselves in advance of reading the assignment so they are focused on issues that present a particular challenge to them personally. Also included are quizzes mapped to chapter learning objectives, flashcards, and videos, plus EngagementTracker, a first-of-its-kind tool that monitors student engagement in the course. The accompanying instructor website offers access to password-protected resources such as an electronic version of the instructor’s manual and PowerPoint slides.

Careers in Criminal Justice Website *Available bundled with this text at no additional charge.* Featuring plenty of self-exploration and profiling activities, the interactive Careers in Criminal Justice Website helps students investigate and focus on the criminal justice career choices that are right for them. Includes interest assessment, video testimonials from career professionals, résumé and interview tips, links for reference, and a wealth of information on “soft skills” such as health and fitness, stress management, and effective communication. Ask your representative about the state-specific Careers in Criminal Justice Website, which features information that only pertains to an individual state.

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Brandon Welsh

part one

The Concept of Delinquency

Chapter 1 Childhood and Delinquency

Chapter 2 The Nature and Extent of Delinquency

the field of juvenile delinquency has been an important area of study since the turn of the twentieth century. Academicians, practitioners, policy makers, and legal scholars have devoted their attention to basic questions about the nature of youth crime: How should the concept of juvenile delinquency be defined? Who commits delinquent acts? How much delinquency occurs each year? Is the rate of delinquent activity increasing or decreasing? What can we do to prevent delinquency?

Part One reviews these basic questions in detail. Chapter 1 discusses the current state of American youth and the challenges they face. It covers the origins of society's concern for children and the development of the concept of delinquency. It shows how the definition of delinquency was developed and how the legal definition has evolved. While society has chosen to treat adult and juvenile law violators separately, it has also expanded the definition of youthful misbehaviors eligible for social control; these are referred to as *status offenses*. Status offenses include such behaviors as truancy, running away, and incorrigibility. Critics suggest that juveniles' noncriminal behavior is probably not a proper area of concern for law enforcement agencies.

Chapter 2 examines the nature and extent of delinquent behavior. It discusses how social scientists gather information on juvenile delinquency and provides an overview of some major trends in juvenile crime. Chapter 2 also discusses some of the critical factors related to delinquency, such as race, gender, class, and age. It discusses the chronic delinquent, those who continually commit delinquent acts in their youth and continue to offend as adults.



Childhood and Delinquency

Chapter Outline

The Adolescent Dilemma

Adolescent Problems
Problems in Cyberspace
Are Things Improving?

The Study of Juvenile Delinquency

The Development of Childhood

Childhood in the Middle Ages
Development of Concern for Children
Childhood in America

The Concept of Delinquency

Delinquency and *Parens Patriae*
The Legal Status of Delinquency
Legal Responsibility of Youth

Status Offenders

The History of Status Offenses
The Status Offender in the Juvenile Justice System
Reforming Status Offense Laws
Increasing Social Control
A Final Word

Learning Objectives

- 1 Become familiar with the problems of youth in American culture
- 2 Distinguish between ego identity and role diffusion
- 3 Discuss the specific issues facing American youth
- 4 Understand the concept of being “at risk” and discuss why so many kids take risks
- 5 Be familiar with the recent social improvements enjoyed by American youth
- 6 Discuss why the study of delinquency is so important and what this study entails
- 7 Describe the life of children during feudal times
- 8 Discuss the treatment of children in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries
- 9 Discuss childhood in the American colonies
- 10 Know about the child savers and the creation of delinquency
- 11 Discuss the elements of juvenile delinquency today
- 12 Know what is meant by the term *status offender*

chapter features

cyber Delinquency: Catfishing

Case profile: Aaliyah's Story

Evidence-Based Juvenile Justice—intervention: Family Key Programs

KEAIRA BROWN WAS JUST 13 YEARS OLD when she was charged with murder and became the youngest person in Wyandotte County, Kansas, ever to be tried as an adult. Her family life was close but troubled. Her mother, Cheryl Brown, had three other children, two enrolled in local colleges. Keaira was involved in after-school activities, including playing the violin. But when her mom went to prison on a drug charge, things began to spiral downhill for Keaira, and when she was only 10 she attempted suicide. On July 23, 2008, at about 4:00 PM, Keaira was supposed to be at a summer program at the Boys and Girls Club in Kansas City. Instead, she was involved in the carjacking of Scott Sappington, Jr., a junior at Sumner Academy, who had just dropped his siblings off at their grandmother's house. When he returned to his car, neighbors heard him yell, "Hey, hey," then there was a struggle inside the car, and he was shot in the head. An investigation led to a 6-year-old who told police that a young girl told a group of children to get rid of her bloody clothes. Police distributed pictures of the bloody clothes to the media, and soon after, the clothes were traced back to Keaira Brown.

Prosecutors thought the murder was a result of a carjacking that went wrong, while Keaira's family claimed she was an innocent pawn for area gang members who thought she would not be prosecuted because of her age. They were incorrect. In



April, almost a year after the crime, a Wyandotte County judge ruled that Keaira should face trial as an adult. On November 9, 2010, Keaira Brown was found guilty of first-degree murder and attempted aggravated robbery. She will have to serve 20 years before being eligible for parole.

Stories such as that of Keaira Brown are certainly not unique. While the Supreme Court ruled in *Roper v. Simmons* that juveniles cannot be sentenced to the death penalty, it is quite legal to incarcerate them in adult prison for life if they commit a capital crime, as long as the judge takes age into account before sentencing takes place (*Miller v. Alabama*).¹ So Keaira, who was 13 years old at the time she committed her crime, may spend the rest of her life behind bars.

The problems of youth in contemporary society can be staggering. Because of trouble and conflict occurring in their families, schools, and communities, adolescents experience stress, confusion, and depression. There are approximately 75 million children in the United States, a number that is projected to increase to about 85 million by 2025.² Since the mid-1960s, children have been decreasing as a proportion of the total US population, so today 24 percent of the population are 18 and under, down from a 1964 peak of 36 percent at the end of the so-called baby boom. Children are projected to remain a fairly stable percentage, about 23 percent, of the total population through 2050. Though the number of children is projected to remain stable, racial and ethnic diversity is growing, so that the population is projected to

Roper v. Simmons

A juvenile under 18 years of age who commits a capital crime cannot face the death penalty.

Miller v. Alabama

In this case, the Supreme Court held that mandatory life sentences, without the possibility of parole, are unconstitutional for juvenile offenders.

exhibit 1.1

Six Generations of Americans

The Greatest Generation: Born after World War I and raised during the Depression, they overcame hardships, fought in World War II, and went on to build America into the world's greatest superpower. They were willing to put off personal gain for the common good.

Baby Boomers: Born between the end of World War II and the Kennedy-Johnson years, and now approaching retirement age, "boomers" are considered a generation who have benefited the most from the American Dream and post-war leadership. Their parents, who grew up during the Great Depression, made sure their children had the best of everything. Baby boomers benefited from affordable college and post-graduate education, relatively low housing costs, and plentiful job opportunities. Though they experienced some significant setbacks, such as the war in Viet Nam, they were a privileged generation that has been accused of being self-absorbed and materialistic.

Generation X: Born between 1963 and 1980 and now approaching 50, Gen-Xers are often accused of being unfocused and uncommitted—the "why me?" generation. Coming of age between 1980 and 1990, when divorce was rampant and greed was good, they are not attached to careers or families. They lived through the 1990s, a time with significant social problems, including teen suicide, homelessness, the AIDS epidemic, a downsizing of the workforce, and overseas conflict. Generation X is described as pessimistic, suspicious, and frustrated slackers who wear grunge clothing while listening to alternative music after they move back home with their parents. They do not want to change the world, just make their way in it and through it without complications.

Generation Y: Born between 1981 and 1994, Gen Y kids were deeply influenced by the 9/11 attacks and as a result are more patriotic than their older peers. They were weaned on reality TV and are sometimes called the *MTV generation*. Compared to their elders, Gen Y kids are incredibly sophisticated technologically. Gen Y members live in a world that is much more racially and ethnically diverse than their parents, and most are willing to accept diversity. Their worldview is aided by the rapid expansion in cable TV channels, satellite radio, the Internet, e-zines, etc. They may have lived in families with either a single caretaker or two working parents. Members of Generation Y are often accused of being self-centered, irresponsible, and having a lack of understanding of how the work world functions.

Generation Z: Born between 1995 and 2009, they are the first generation to have grown up in a world dominated by the Internet and instant communication; iPads, group video games, texting, and tweeting are their milieu. Will this next generation have the same opportunities as their grandparents in a global economy in which the United States is competing with other powerful nations for dominance?

Generation Alpha: Born after 2012, it's just too early to tell.

The mission of the **Children's Defense Fund** (<http://www.childrensdefense.org/>) is to "leave no child behind" and to ensure every child "a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start, and a moral start in life," as well as a successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. The CDF tries to provide a strong, effective voice for kids who cannot vote, lobby, or speak for themselves. For more information about this topic, visit the Criminal Justice CourseMate at cengagebrain.com, then access the "Web Links" for this chapter.



become even more diverse in the decades to come. In 2023, less than half of all children are projected to be white, non-Hispanic; by 2050, 38 percent of children are projected to be white, non-Hispanic, down from 55 percent today.

During the baby boom (1946–1964), the number of children grew rapidly (see Exhibit 1.1). Now as the baby boomers enter their senior years, their needs for support and medical care will increase. At the same time, a significant number of kids who are poor and at risk for delinquency and antisocial behavior will need both private and public assistance and aid. While the number of poor kids and the elderly will be rising, the 30- to 50-year-old population who will be expected to care and pay for these groups will constitute a much smaller share of the population.

The Adolescent Dilemma

As they go through their tumultuous teenage years, the problems of American society and the daily stress of modern life have a significant effect on our nation's youth. Adolescence is unquestionably a time of transition. During this period, the self, or basic personality, is still undergoing a metamorphosis and is vulnerable to

a host of external determinants as well as internal physiological changes. Many youths become extremely vulnerable to emotional turmoil and experience anxiety, humiliation, and mood swings. Adolescents also undergo a period of biological development that proceeds at a far faster pace than at any other time in their lives except infancy. Over a period of a few years, their height, weight, and sexual characteristics change dramatically. The average age at which girls reach puberty today is 12.5 years; 150 years ago, girls matured sexually at age 16. But although they may become biologically mature and capable of having children as early as 14, many youngsters remain emotionally and intellectually immature. By the time they reach 15, a significant number of teenagers are approaching adulthood but are unable to adequately meet the requirements and responsibilities of the workplace, family, and neighborhood. Many suffer from health problems, are educational underachievers, and are already skeptical about their ability to enter the American mainstream.

In later adolescence (ages 16 to 18), youths may experience a life crisis that famed psychologist Erik Erikson labeled the struggle between **ego identity** and **role diffusion**. Ego identity is formed when youths develop a full sense of the self, combining how they see themselves and how they fit in with others. Role diffusion occurs when they experience personal uncertainty, spread themselves too thin, and place themselves at the mercy of people who promise to give them a sense of identity they cannot mold for themselves.³ Psychologists also find that late adolescence is a period dominated by the yearning for independence from parental domination.⁴ Given this explosive mixture of biological change and desire for autonomy, it isn't surprising that the teenage years are a time of rebelliousness and conflict with authority at home, at school, and in the community.

Such feelings can overwhelm young people and lead them to consider suicide as a "solution." Though most kids do not take their own lives, millions are left troubled and disturbed and at risk for delinquency, drug use, and other forms of antisocial behavior. Acting out or externalized behavior that begins in early adolescence may then persist into adulthood.⁵ In the United States the teen suicide rate remains unacceptably high: suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people ages 15 to 24, averaging about 4,500 per year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the top three methods used in youth suicides are firearms (46 percent), suffocation (37 percent), and poisoning (8 percent).⁶

Adolescent Problems

The population trends take on greater meaning when the special problems of youth are considered. It may not be surprising to some that this latest generation of adolescents has been described as cynical and preoccupied with material acquisitions. By age 18, American youths have spent more time in front of a television set than in the classroom; each year they may see up to 1,000 rapes, murders, and assaults on TV. Today's teens are watching racy TV shows involving humans, from *Teen Mom* to *Californication*, and nonhumans (e.g., *True Blood*). They listen to rap music, such as the classic "Candy Shop," by 50 Cent, and "I Hit It First" by Ray J, whose sexually explicit lyrics routinely describe substance abuse and promiscuity. How will this exposure affect them? Should we be concerned? Maybe we should. Research shows that kids who listen to music with a sexual content are much more likely to engage in precocious sex than adolescents whose musical tastes run to Katy Perry or Adele.⁷

Troubles in the home, the school, and the neighborhood, coupled with health and developmental hazards, have placed a significant portion of American youth **at risk**. Youths considered at risk are those dabbling in various forms of dangerous conduct such as drug abuse, alcohol use, and precocious sexuality. They are living in families that, because of economic, health, or social problems, are unable to provide adequate care and discipline.⁸

ego identity

According to Erik Erikson, ego identity is formed when youths develop a full sense of the self, combining how they see themselves and how they fit in with others.

role diffusion

According to Erik Erikson, role diffusion occurs when people spread themselves too thin, experience personal uncertainty, and place themselves at the mercy of people who promise to give them a sense of identity they cannot develop for themselves.

at-risk youth

Young people who are extremely vulnerable to the negative consequences of school failure, substance abuse, and early sexuality.

Data on population characteristics

can be found at the website of the US Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/>). For more information about this topic, visit the Criminal Justice CourseMate at cengagebrain.com, then access the "Web Links" for this chapter.



Adolescent Poverty According to the US Census Bureau, 48 million people, or one in seven residents, live in poverty in the United States, the highest rate since 1994. And because the government defines poverty as \$23,000 a year for a family of four, a great many more Americans live just above the poverty line, the so-called working poor, struggling to make ends meet.⁹ Today, real incomes are falling, and poverty in the United States is more prevalent now than in the late 1960s and early 1970s—and has escalated rapidly since 2000. While poverty problems have risen for nearly every age, gender, and race-ethnic group, the increases in poverty have been most severe among the nation's youngest families (adults under 30), especially those with one or more children present in the home. Since 2007, the poverty rate has risen by 8 percent among young families with one or more children in the home, and now rests at about 37 percent; in 1967, it stood at only 14 percent. Among young families with children residing in the home, four of every nine are poor or near poor, and close to two out of three are low income.¹⁰

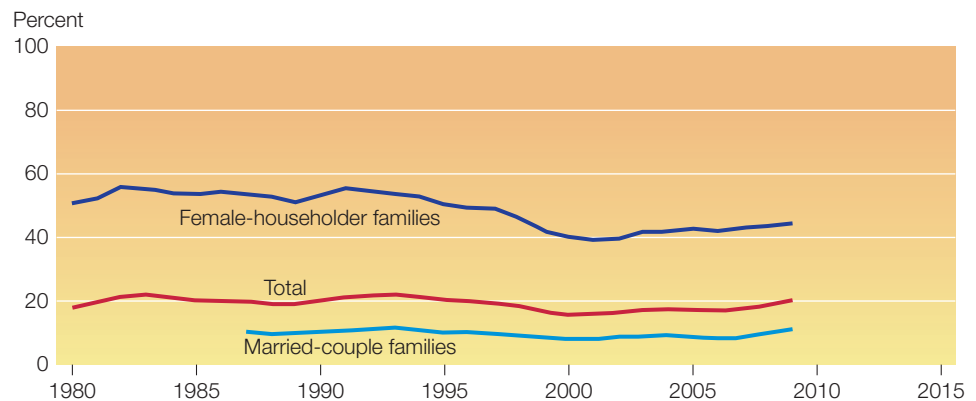
Working hard and playing by the rules is not enough to lift families out of poverty: even if parents work full-time at the federal minimum wage, the family still lives in poverty. Consequently, about 6 million children live in extreme poverty, which means less than \$10,000 for a family of four; the younger the child, the more likely they are to live in extreme poverty.¹¹

Which kids live in poverty? As Figure 1.1 shows, kids living in a single-parent, female-headed household are significantly more likely to suffer poverty than those in two-parent families.

figure 1.1

Percentage of Children Ages 0–17 Living in Poverty by Family Structure

SOURCE: US Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements*, <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/surveys2.asp?popup=true#cps> (accessed May 2013).



Child poverty can have long-lasting negative effects on the children's cognitive achievement, educational attainment, nutrition, physical and mental health, and social behavior. Educational achievement scores between children in affluent and low-income families have been widening over the years, and the incomes and wealth of families have become increasingly important determinants of adolescents' high school graduation, college attendance, and college persistence and graduation. The chances of an adolescent from a poor family with weak academic skills obtaining a bachelor degree by his or her mid-20s is now close to zero.¹²

Health and Mortality Problems Receiving adequate health care is another significant concern for American youth. There are some troubling signs. Recent national estimates indicate that only about 18 percent of adolescents meet current physical activity recommendations of one hour of physical activity a day and only about 22 percent eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.¹³

Kids with health problems may only be helped if they have insurance. And while most kids now have health care coverage of some sort, about 10 percent or 7.5 million youth do not.¹⁴ As might be expected, children who are not healthy, especially those who live in lower-income families and children from ethnic and minority backgrounds, are subject to illness and early mortality. Recently, the infant mortality rate

rose for the first time in more than 40 years, and is now 7 per 1,000 births. The United States currently ranks 25th in the world among industrialized nations in preventing infant mortality, and the percent of children born at low birth weight has increased.¹⁵ It remains to be seen whether the new national health care policy, created by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (aka Obamacare) will eventually reduce or eliminate inadequate health care for America's children.

While infant mortality remains a problem, so do violent adolescent deaths. More than 3,000 children and teens are killed by firearms each year, the equivalent of 120 public school classrooms of 25 students each. Another 16,000 children and teens suffer nonfatal firearm injuries. Today, more preschoolers are killed by firearms than law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.¹⁶

Racial Inequality Despite years of effort to reduce racial inequality, it still tragically exists. Minority kids are much more likely than white, non-Hispanic children to experience poverty; proportionately, Hispanic and black children are about three times as likely to be poor than their white peers.¹⁷ As Figure 1.2 shows, African American median income is significantly below that of white and Asian families.

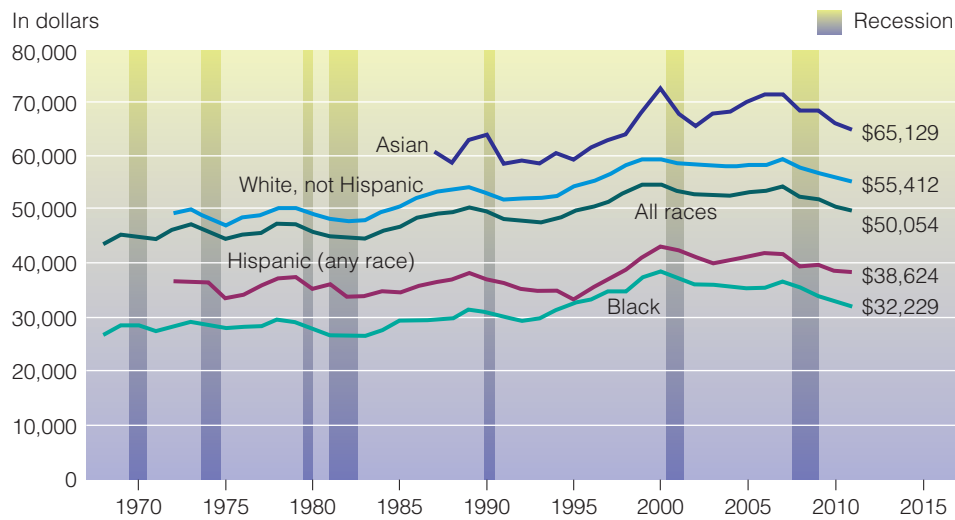


figure 1.2

Real Median Household Income by Race and Hispanic Origin

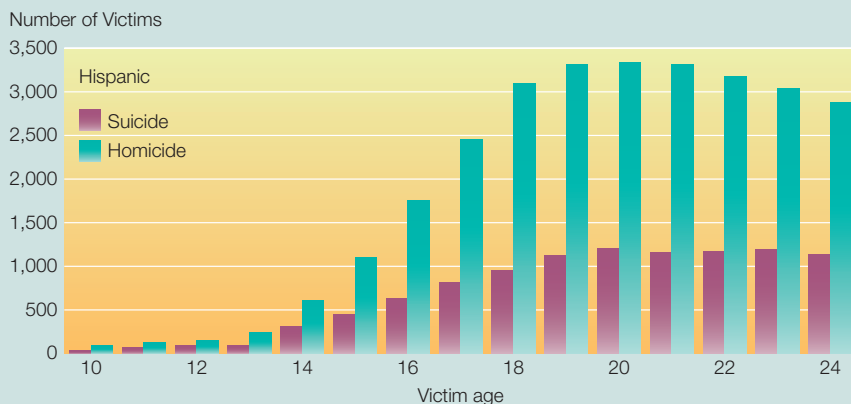
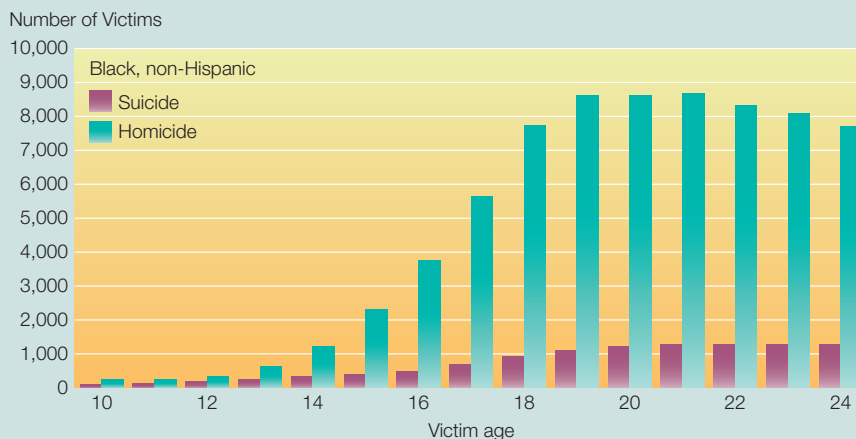
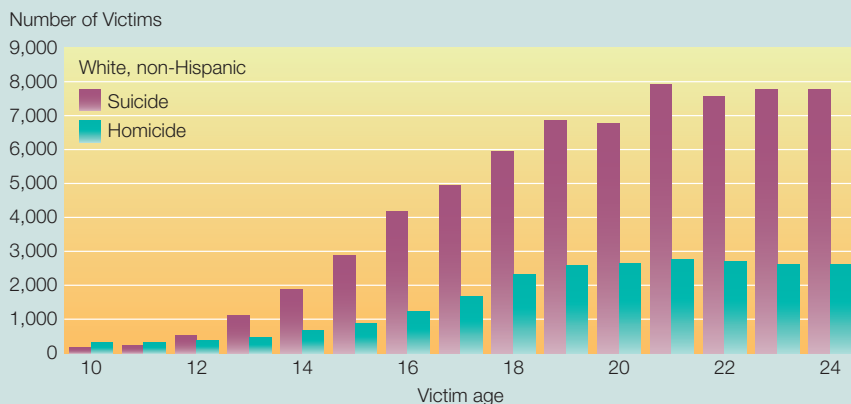
SOURCE: US Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey, 1968 to 2012, Annual Social and Economic Supplements*, <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/surveys2.asp?popup=true#cps> (accessed May 2013).

Inequality can also be found in other elements of social life. Educational problems are more likely to hit minority kids the hardest. According to the nonprofit Children's Defense Fund, African American children are half as likely as white children to be placed in a gifted and talented class and more than one and a half times as likely to be placed in a class for students with emotional disturbances. They are also more likely to face disciplinary problems, including being two and a half times as likely to be held back or retained in school, almost three times as likely to be suspended from school, and more than four times as likely to be expelled.¹⁸

Ironically, despite suffering these social and economic handicaps, minority youth are less likely to take their own life than white youth. However, as Exhibit 1.2 shows, they are more likely to be victims of lethal violence.

Self-Image Problems Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to stress caused by a poor self-image. According to recent surveys by the American Psychological Association, citizens of all ages are likely to live stress-filled lives, but children and adults alike who are obese or overweight are more likely to feel stressed out; overweight children are more likely to report that their parents were often or always stressed. When asked, one-third (31 percent) of American children report being very or slightly overweight. These kids are more likely to report they worry a lot or a great deal about things in their lives than children who are normal weight (31 percent versus

Race, Ethnicity, Suicide, and Violence



Note: Between 1990 and 2009, suicide was more prevalent than homicide for non-Hispanic white juveniles, while the reverse was true for Hispanic juveniles and non-Hispanic black juveniles.

- At each age between 12 and 24, suicide was more common than murder for non-Hispanic whites, in sharp contrast to patterns for Hispanics and non-Hispanic blacks.
- For every 10 white homicide victims ages 7 to 17, there were 25 suicide victims (a ratio of 10:25); the corresponding ratio was 10:2 for black juveniles and 10:4 for Hispanic juveniles.
- Between 1990 and 2009, the juvenile suicide rate for white non-Hispanic youth (i.e., suicides per million for persons ages 7 to 17 in this race/ethnicity group) was 27.
- The suicide rates were substantially lower for Hispanic (17), black non-Hispanic (16), and Asian non-Hispanic (15) juveniles ages 7 to 17.
- In contrast, the suicide rate for American Indian juveniles (63) was more than double the white non-Hispanic rate and more than triple the rates for the other racial/ethnic groups.

SOURCE: OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book, March 5, 2012, <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/victims/qa02703.asp?qaDate=2009> (accessed May 2013).

14 percent). Overweight children are also significantly more likely than normal-weight children to report they worry about the way they look or about their weight (36 percent versus 11 percent). Children, regardless of weight or age, say they can tell that their parents are stressed when they argue and complain, which many children say makes them feel sad and worried.¹⁹

Family Problems Divorce strikes about half of all new marriages, and many intact families sacrifice time with each other to afford more affluent lifestyles. Today, about 70 percent of children under age 18 live with two married parents. Kids who live

with one parent only are much more likely to experience poverty than those living in two-parent families. Because of family problems, children are being polarized into two distinct economic groups: those in affluent, two-earner, married-couple households and those in poor, single-parent households.²⁰

Substandard Living Conditions Millions of children now live in substandard housing—high-rise, multiple-family dwellings—which can have a negative influence on their long-term psychological health.²¹ Adolescents living in deteriorated urban areas are prevented from having productive and happy lives. Many die from random bullets and drive-by shootings. Some are homeless and living on the street, where they are at risk of drug addiction and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including AIDS. Today about one-third of US households with children have one or more of the following three housing problems: physically inadequate housing, crowded housing, or housing that costs more than 30 percent of the household income.²² Despite the fact that the minimum wage has increased to more than \$6.50 per hour, the poor can barely afford to live in even the lowest-cost neighborhoods of metro areas such as Chicago, New York, and Washington, DC.²³

Inadequate Educational Opportunity Education shapes the personal growth and life chances of children. Early educational experiences of young children, such as being read to daily, encourage the development of essential skills and prepare children for success in school. Later aspects of academic performance, such as mastering academic subjects, completing high school, and enrolling in college, provide opportunities for further education and future employment. Youths who are neither enrolled in school nor working are a measure of the proportion of young people at risk of limiting their future prospects.²⁴ Although all young people face stress in the education system, the risks are greatest for the poor, members of racial and ethnic minorities, and recent immigrants. By the time they reach the fourth grade, students in poorer public schools have lower achievement scores in mathematics than those in more affluent districts.²⁵ According to the watchdog group Children’s Defense Fund:

- About 70 percent of fourth-graders in our public schools cannot read at grade level.
- Minority children are most seriously affected: almost 90 percent of black fourth-graders, 80 percent of Hispanic fourth-graders, and 80 percent of American Indian/Alaska native fourth-graders are not reading at grade level.²⁶

The problems faced by kids who drop out of school do not end in adolescence.²⁷ Adults 25 years of age and older without a high school diploma earn 30 percent less than those who have earned a diploma. High school graduation is the single most effective preventive strategy against adult poverty.

At home, poor children receive less academic support from their harried parents. Take for instance having parents who read to their children at home, a key to future academic success. Although about half of all children ages 3 to 5 who are not yet in kindergarten are read to daily by a family member, the likelihood of having heard a story at home is stratified by class. About two-thirds of children in families with incomes at or above 200 percent of the poverty level are read to daily; in contrast, less than half of children whose family falls 200 percent below the poverty level are read to at home.²⁸

Problems in Cyberspace

Kids today are forced to deal with problems and issues that their parents could not even dream about. While the Internet and other technological advances have opened a new world of information gathering and sharing, they have also brought a basketful of new problems ranging from sexting to cyberstalking.

Formed in 1985, the **Children’s Rights Council (CRC)** is a national nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, that works to assure children meaningful and continuing contact with both their parents and extended family regardless of the parents’ marital status. For more information about this topic, visit their website at <http://www.crckids.org> or go to the Criminal Justice CourseMate at cengagebrain.com, then access the “Web Links” for this chapter.

