Juvenile Crime and Victimization

The National Crime Victimization Survey reported that the average annual rate of violent crime continues to be highest among youth between the ages of 16 and 19 who were victimized at a rate of 55.6 per 1,000 persons in the 2002-2003 time period.
(Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2004. *Criminal Victimization, 2003*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

The rate of violent crime against youth between the ages of 16 and 19 fell 7.4 percent in 2002-2003, compared to the 2000-2001 average annual rate. The rate of violent crime against youth between the ages of 12 and 15 fell 16.6 percent. (Ibid.)

Children age 12 to 17 living in single-parent families have an overall risk for violent victimization that is about three times higher than the average American age 12 or older.
(Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2003. *How Families and Communities Influence Youth Victimization*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

The 10 percent of youth who live in the most disadvantaged communities experience the highest risks of neighborhood violence in the country. Nearly 58 of every 1,000 youth surveyed reported at least one incident of violence during a six-month period – a level that is twice as high as that for adults living in the same areas and six times greater than the risk for neighborhood violence for all Americans. (Ibid.)

About half of serious violent incidents involving juvenile victimization are not reported to the police or other officials. (Ibid.)

Most violent crimes involving youth are simple assaults (approximately 72 percent), aggravated assault (17 percent), robberies (eight percent), and sexual assault and rapes (three percent). About 68 percent are attempted rather than completed incidents of violence. (Ibid.)

A 2002 survey found youth gangs to be active in more than 2,300 cities with populations of 2,500 or more in the United States.
(Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2004. *Highlights of the 2002 National Youth Gang Survey*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

All respondent cities with a population of 250,000 or more reported youth gang problems in 2002, as did 87 percent of cities with a population between 100,000 and 249,999.
(Ibid.)

The more violent behavior a youth between 12 and 17 exhibits, the more likely it is that the youth has used alcohol or illicit drugs in the prior year. A 2001 national survey found that 39.1 percent who drank became violent and 52 percent who drank became violent at least twice.
(Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2002. *NHSDA Report, Youth Violence and Substance Use: 2001 Update*. Rockville, MD.)

In 2001, more than four million youth participated in a serious fight at school or work, over three million took part in a group-against-group fight, and almost two million attacked others with the intent of seriously hurting them.
(Ibid.)

An analysis of data on measured non-fatal violent crime committed by juveniles in 1997 and 1998 shows that about two-thirds of the victims were themselves juveniles: 95 percent of the victims of sexual assault, 43 percent of the victims of robberies, 53 percent of the victims of aggravated assault, and 61 percent of the victims of simple assaults were younger than age 18.
(Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2004. *Victims of Violent Juvenile Crime*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

About one in five non-fatal violent victimizations involves an offender perceived to be between the ages of 12-17, acting either alone or with others – adult or juvenile. (Ibid.)

Fifty-four percent of the reported sexual assaults committed by juveniles in 1997 and 1998 were crimes against acquaintances or family members younger than 12 years of age. Of the family victims of sexual assault, 36 percent were younger than age six and 84 percent were younger than age 12. The majority of the victims of sexual assault committed by juvenile acquaintances and strangers were 12 years of age or older. (Ibid.)

In 1998, 75 percent of homicides involving juvenile victims and 69 percent of homicides committed by juveniles involved a firearm.
(Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. 2004. *Youth Violence Research Bulletin: Juvenile Suicides, 1991-1998*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.)

In the United States between 1981 and 1998, the second leading cause of death for juveniles age seven to 17 was homicide. Juvenile death caused by homicide was less common than death caused by unintentional injury and more common than death caused by cancer or suicide. (Ibid.)

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