

April 1998

Trends in At-Risk Behaviors of Youth in Washington — 1998 Update —

Purpose In 1994, the Washington State Legislature passed legislation intended to decrease juvenile violence and certain "at-risk" behaviors of youth in Washington.¹ The Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to evaluate the costs and benefits of the programs developed as a result of this act. The goal of the 1994 legislation was to achieve measurable, cost-effective reductions in eight specific outcomes:

1. Violent crime
2. Teen substance abuse
3. Teen pregnancy
4. Teen suicide
5. Dropping out of school
6. Child abuse or neglect
7. Domestic violence
8. State-funded out-of-home placements

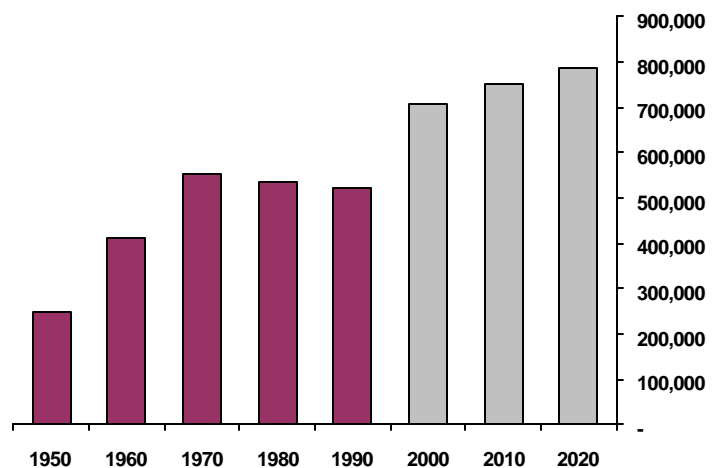
This report updates trends in statewide statistical indicators for these outcomes.² These data establish a baseline to assess statewide progress in achieving the goals of the legislation. Tables on pages 7 and 8 provide statewide data for each year. The Institute will also issue updates that provide county-level data necessary for comparing local variations in the indicators of at-risk behavior. For more information, contact the Institute for Public Policy at (360) 866-6000, extension 6380.

Historical and Expected Growth in Washington's Juvenile Population

This report examines risk behaviors of youth between the ages of 10 and 17. Before examining these risk factors, it is important to understand the expected change in the *total* population of this age group in Washington State. Figure 1 shows the large growth in the juvenile population that occurred between 1950 and 1970, referred to as the "Baby Boom."

In its latest forecast, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) expects the next period of growth in the juvenile population (the "Baby Boom Echo") to continue through the year 2020. In the next 12 years, the 10- to 17-year-old population is expected to increase from **673,606** in 1998 to **751,370** in 2010.

Figure 1
Washington's 10- to 17-Year-Old Population



Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

¹ RCW 70.190.050.

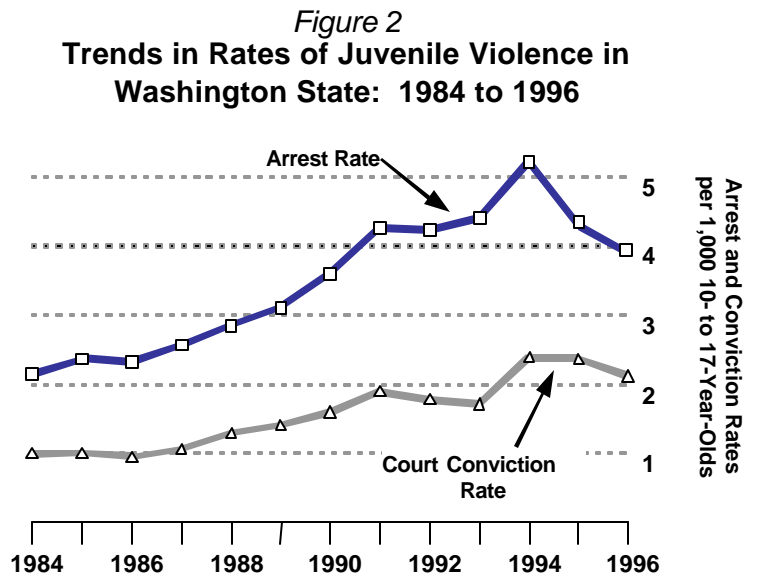
² The Institute has published two reports which describe the 1994 legislation and statewide trends in the rate of at-risk youth. See *Trends in At-Risk Behaviors of Youth in Washington*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, January 1996 and March 1997 (Update).

Juvenile Violent Crime Rates Decline for Second Straight Year

Although juvenile crime remains high by historical standards, the rate of juvenile violence declined again in 1996, according to data from Washington State's court system and police agencies. Figure 2 displays arrest and conviction rates for juvenile violent crime in Washington between 1984 and 1996, the most recent year for which data are available.

In 1996, 2,524 *arrests* were made for juvenile violent crime in Washington.³ This corresponds to a rate of 3.91 arrests per thousand youths ages 10 to 17. This rate remains high compared to the 1984 arrest rate of 2.16 violent arrests per thousand juveniles.

The *conviction* rate for juvenile violent crimes also fell in 1996 to 2.12 convictions per thousand juveniles ages 10 to 17 years old.



Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Office of the Administrator for the Courts, and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

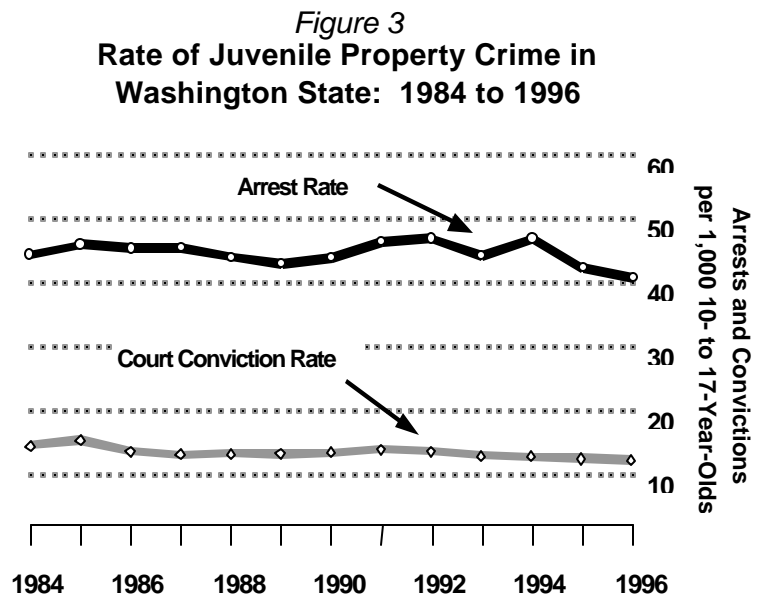
Violent offenses include those defined by the FBI: murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

Juvenile Property Crime Arrest Rate Shows Little Trend

As Figure 3 indicates, the rate of property crimes committed by juveniles in Washington has not changed significantly since 1984. Property crimes include felony arrests for burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson. In 1996, there were 26,370 juvenile arrests for property crimes in Washington State, an average of 72 arrests per day.

Although the trend in the arrest rate for juvenile property crime remains quite stable, 1996 marks the lowest arrest rate for property crimes since 1984. In 1996, the property crime arrest rate decreased to 40.8 arrests per thousand juveniles (ages 10 to 17 years old).

The court conviction rate for juvenile property crimes has also changed little. Approximately one in three juvenile property crime arrests result in a conviction in Washington.



Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Office of the Administrator for the Courts, and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

Property crime includes burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

³ Arrest totals are adjusted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to account for under-reporting in some jurisdictions.

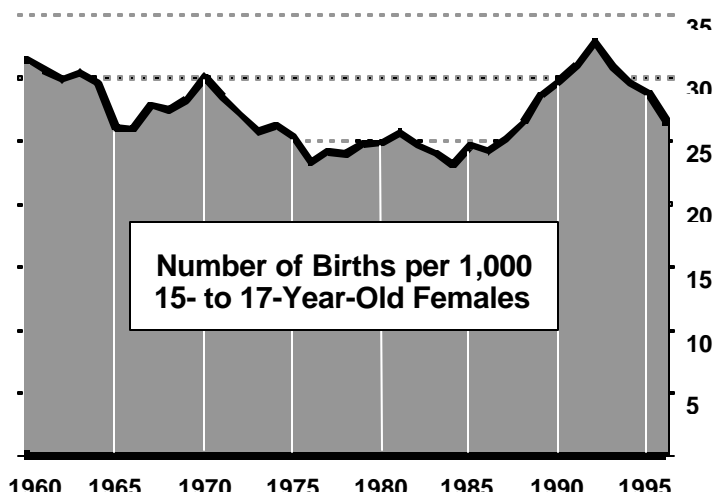
Teen Birthrates Falling, But the Percentage of Births to Non-married Females Remains High

The birthrate for teenage women (ages 15 to 17) in Washington State has decreased steadily since reaching a peak in 1992. Figure 4 gives the long-term trend in the annual number of births per thousand 15- to 17-year-old females.

In 1996, 3,033 children were born to mothers between the ages of 15 and 17 in Washington State (an average of 8.3 births per day).

The teenage birthrate in 1996 remains comparable to the teen birthrate 30 years ago. In 1965, 26.1 per thousand females ages 15 to 17 gave birth in Washington. In 1996, the teen birthrate was slightly higher (26.6 births per thousand females age 15 to 17).

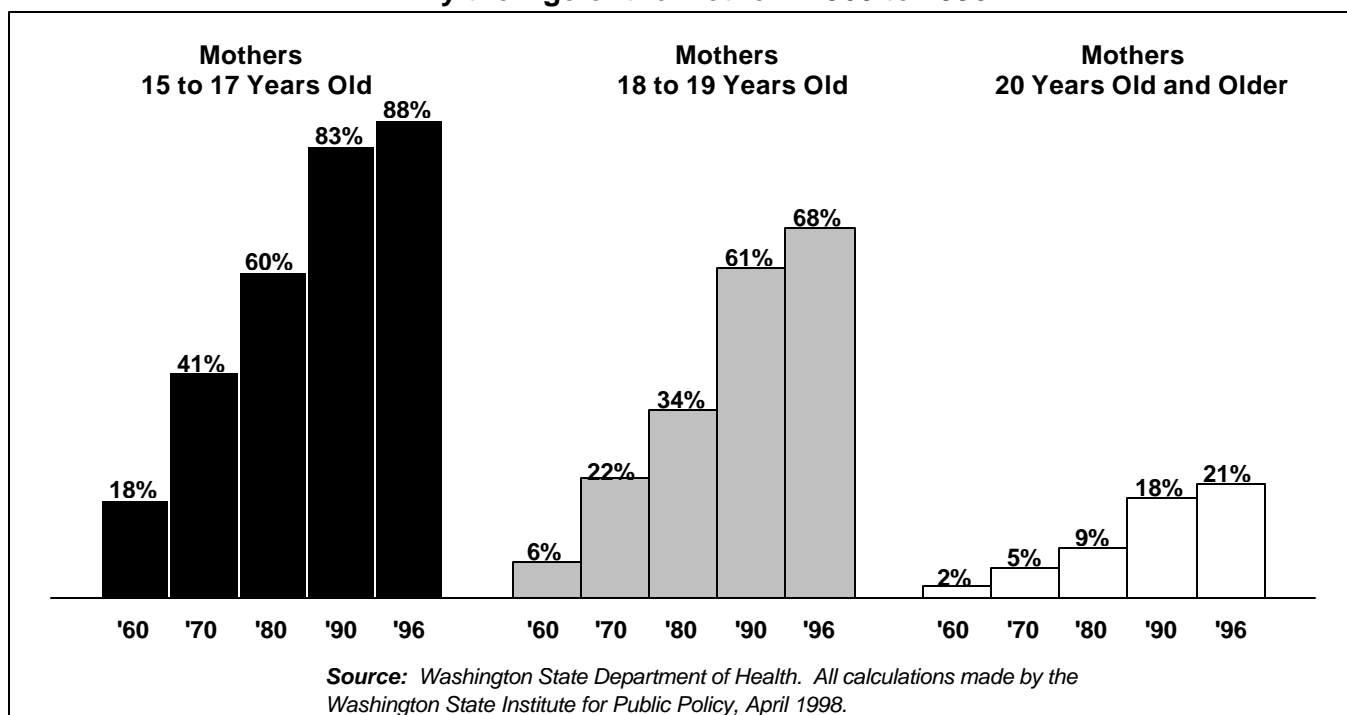
Figure 4
Teen Birthrates in Washington:
1960 to 1996



Source: Washington State Department of Health and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

Since 1960, the percentage of females who were not married at the time of giving birth has increased significantly for all ages. Figure 5 presents the long-term trend in the marital status of females giving birth in Washington State. In 1960, 18 percent of 15- to 17-year-old females were not married at the time they gave birth; in 1996, this ratio increased to 88 percent. The percentage of non-married mothers has increased for other age groups as well. In 1996, over two-thirds (68 percent) of females ages 18 to 19 were not married at the time they gave birth.

Figure 5
Births to Non-Married Females, as a Percentage of All Births,
By the Age of the Mother: 1960 to 1996



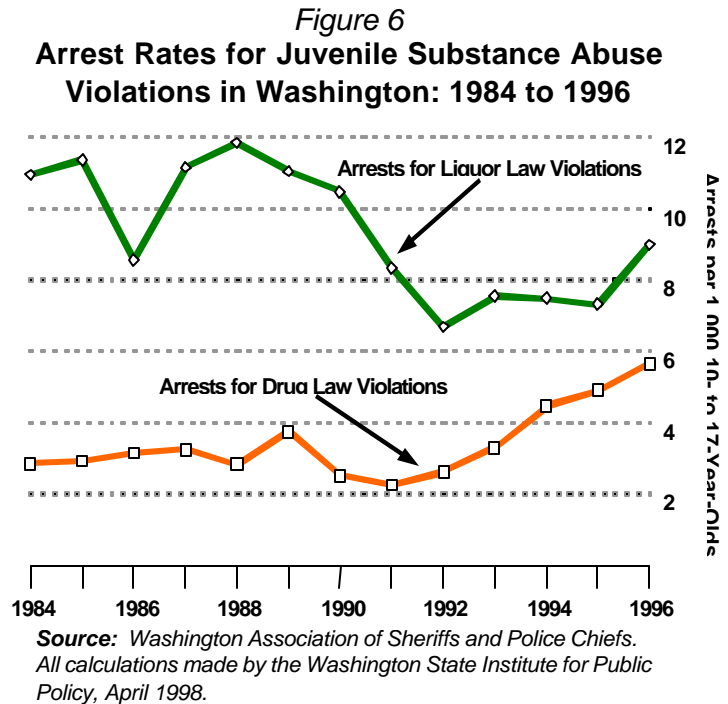
Source: Washington State Department of Health. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

Juvenile Substance Abuse: Drug and Liquor Law Arrest Rates Increasing

Figure 6 shows the juvenile arrest rate for drug and alcohol violations in Washington State between 1984 and 1996.

The juvenile arrest rate for liquor law violations increased sharply in 1996 to 9.0 arrests per thousand juveniles ages 10 to 17. Although this rate remains lower than the 1984 level of arrests, the number of liquor law violations has increased since the low reached in 1992.

The rate of juvenile drug arrests has also increased in recent years. In 1996, there were 3,662 arrests for drug law violations in Washington State, a rate of 5.7 arrests per thousand youths ages 10 to 17.

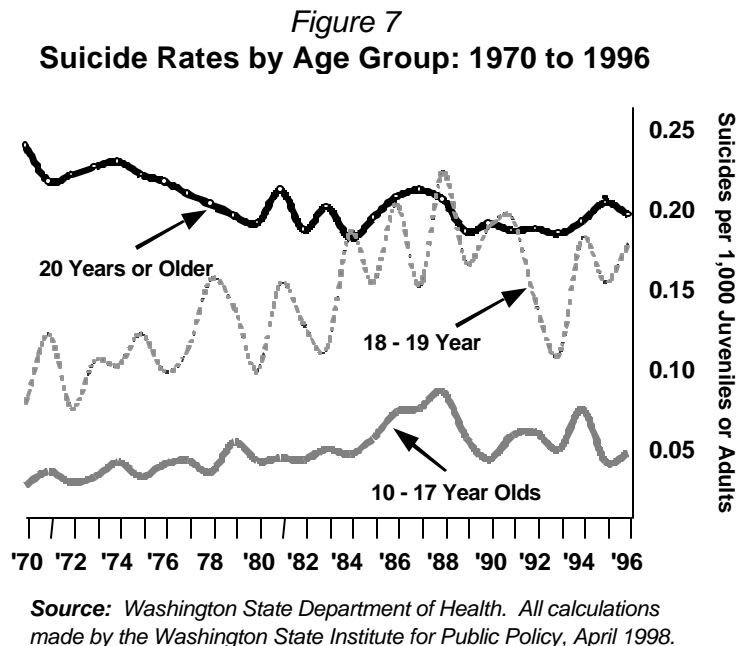


Juvenile Suicide Rates Not Changing

In 1996, 26 juvenile deaths were recorded as suicides in Washington State. The deaths of 24 young adults (ages 18 to 19) were also classified as suicides in 1996. The relatively small *number* of juvenile suicides results in more erratic year-to-year suicide *rates*. Figure 7 summarizes suicide *rates* for three age groups in Washington State.

The rate of juvenile suicides has decreased slightly since reaching its highest level in 1988. In 1996, there were 0.04 suicides per thousand juveniles (ages 10 to 17) in Washington.⁴

The suicide rate for young adults (0.17 suicides per thousand 18- to 19-year-olds) was only slightly lower than the suicide rate for all other adults (ages 20 and over) in 1996.



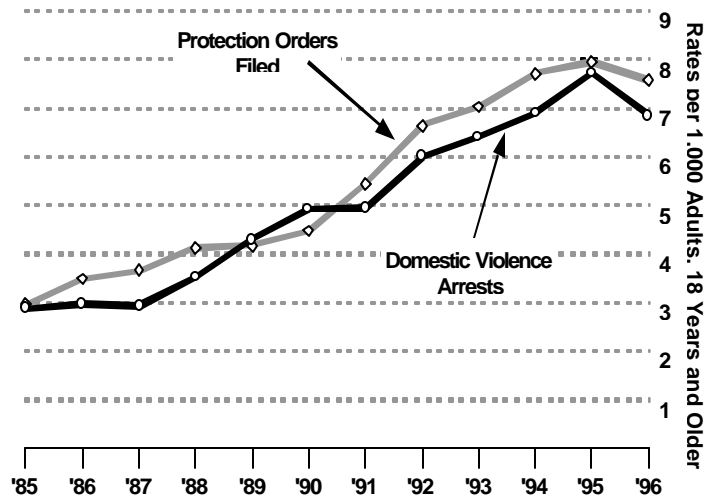
⁴ Suicide rates are commonly reported as number of suicides per 100,000 individuals. (For example, 4 per 100,000 juveniles committed suicide in Washington in 1996.) Suicide rates are expressed here as suicides per 1,000 individuals to maintain consistency with other rates presented in this report.

Domestic Violence: Court Filings and Police Arrests Fall in 1996

Figure 8 illustrates the rate of domestic violence arrests and protection orders filed in Washington since 1985. The Washington State Patrol reports 27,626 arrests for incidents of domestic violence in 1996 (6.86 arrests per thousand adults). This figure represents the first decrease in the rate of recorded domestic violence arrests in the state. The rate of domestic violence protection orders also decreased. In 1996, 30,528 domestic violence protection orders were filed in Washington's courts (7.58 per thousand adults).

Long-term trends in this data should be observed cautiously. During the time period reported, increased public awareness of domestic violence may have affected the willingness of individuals to report domestic violence incidents. Thus, it is difficult to gauge trends in the *actual* incidence of domestic violence offenses from these data.

Figure 8
Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Arrests in Washington: 1985 to 1995



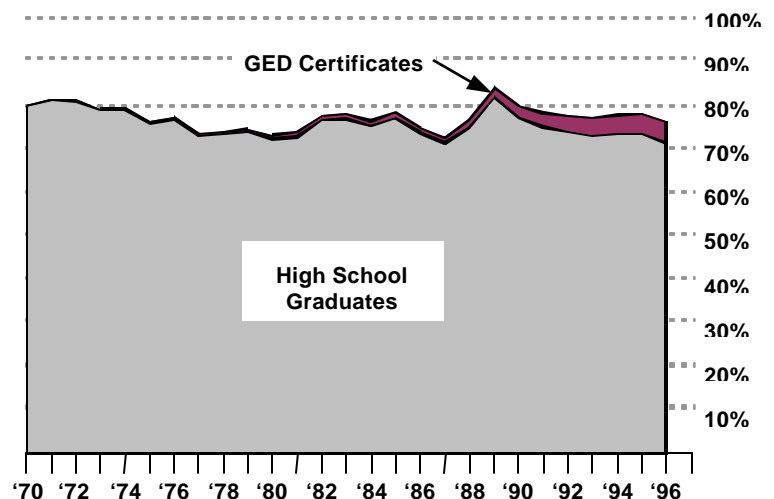
Source: Washington State Patrol, Office of the Administrator for the Courts. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

"On-Time" High School Completion Rates Remain Stable

The most reliable, long-term measure of high school completion in Washington is the "on-time" graduation rate. Figure 9 plots the number of public and private high school graduates as a percentage of the number of 17-year-olds in Washington State from 1970 to 1996. This chart also shows the percentage of youth who received their General Educational Development (GED) certificate by age 18 as an alternative to a high school diploma.

In 1996, 70 percent of youth aged 17 in Washington State earned a high school diploma. An additional 5 percent obtained GEDs by the time they turned 18. In the past 25 years, the percentage of juveniles electing to obtain a GED certificate as an alternative to high school graduation has steadily increased.

Figure 9
High School Graduates and GED Certificates Issued
As a Percentage of the 17-Year-Old Population
in Washington: 1970 to 1996



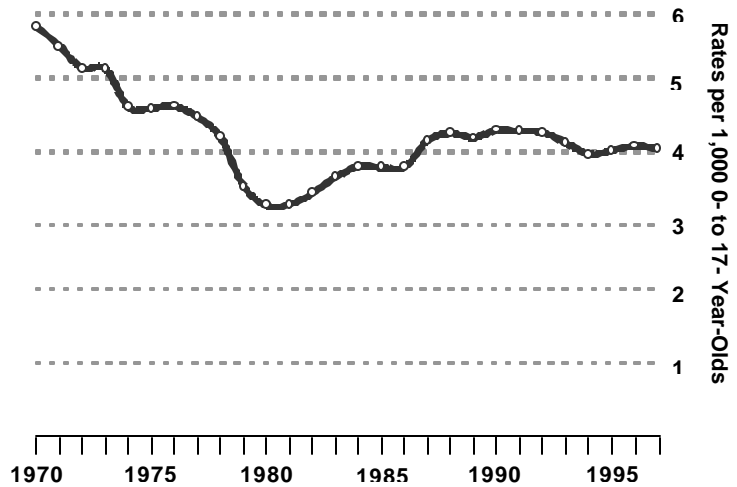
Source: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. Calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

Foster Care: Rate of Placements Steady Since 1990

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) oversees placements for the family foster care program. DSHS describes the foster care program as providing "services to children who need short-term or temporary protection because they are dependent, abused, neglected, and/or cannot live with their parents because of conditions which threaten their normal development." Figure 10 reports data on the rate of state and private foster care placements.

The average monthly number of foster care clients in 1997 was 6,113—a rate of 4.05 per thousand youth under the age of 18 in Washington State. This rate has changed little since 1987.

Figure 10
Rate of Foster Care Placements in Washington
 Average Number of Children Served in Foster Care Per Month:
 1970 to 1997



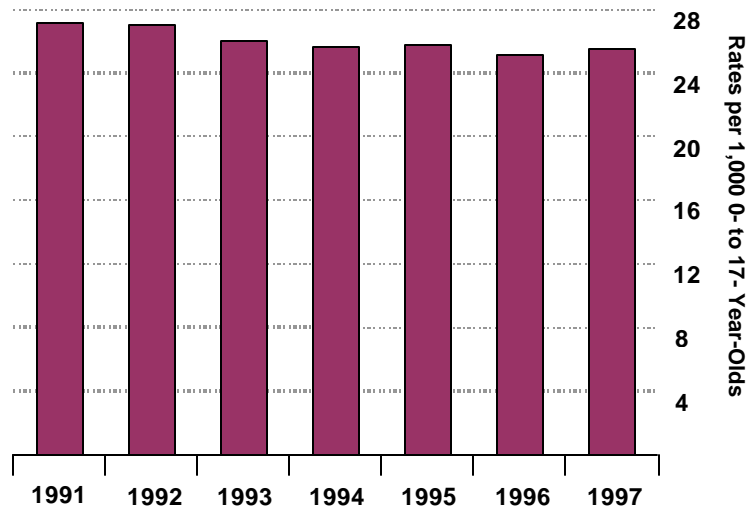
Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, "Income Assistance, Social Services, and Medical Assistance," and Washington State Office of Financial Management. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

Child Abuse: Moderate Decline in the Rate of Accepted Child Victims by CPS

Washington's Child Protective Services (CPS) provides emergency intervention and treatment for children found to be at risk of child abuse. DSHS records both the number of child abuse referrals to CPS and the number of accepted referrals (child-victims identified) after determining a need for services. Only a share of these allegations are substantiated as incidents of abuse. Figure 11 shows unduplicated counts of child abuse victims accepted by CPS per thousand children ages 17 and under.

Although the rate of accepted child abuse or neglect victims changed little in 1997, there was a moderate decline in accepted victims between 1991 and 1996.⁵

Figure 11
Child Abuse and Neglect
 Rate of CPS-Accepted Child Victims



Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, personal communications with DSHS staff. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

⁵ In 1991, DSHS implemented a new system for recording CPS referrals/cases called CAMIS (Case Management and Information System). Due to this change, data previously collected is not shown.

Table 1a: Washington State At-Risk Youth Statistical Indicators

Year	Population		Juvenile Violent Crime: Age 10-17				Birthrate: Age 15-17		
	Total ⁶	Age 10-17 ⁶	Total Arrests (adjusted) ⁷	Court Convictions ⁸	Arrests for Property Crime ⁷	Convictions for Property Crime ⁸	Female Population, Ages 15-17 ⁶	Total Births ⁹	Total Births, Single Women ⁹
1950	-	248,225	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1960	2,853,214	411,580	-	-	-	-	67,423	2,124	385
1970	3,413,244	551,996	-	-	-	-	98,925	2,975	1,227
1980	4,132,156	537,226	-	-	-	-	104,933	2,605	1,560
1981	4,229,278	538,878	-	-	-	-	101,440	2,603	1,623
1982	4,276,549	527,198	-	-	-	-	96,954	2,392	1,561
1983	4,307,247	514,829	-	-	-	-	93,750	2,254	1,588
1984	4,354,067	506,925	1,092	508	22,479	7,113	94,258	2,181	1,603
1985	4,415,785	504,233	1,194	505	23,216	7,449	97,145	2,394	1,765
1986	4,462,212	500,826	1,165	475	22,742	6,506	100,209	2,421	1,875
1987	4,527,098	498,628	1,284	529	22,664	6,213	98,318	2,476	1,987
1988	4,616,886	497,631	1,419	649	21,883	6,340	94,482	2,505	2,016
1989	4,728,077	500,575	1,558	707	21,513	6,307	89,254	2,562	2,105
1990	4,866,692	522,612	1,881	832	22,956	6,632	90,091	2,682	2,218
1991	5,000,400	545,411	2,329	1,037	25,284	7,263	91,569	2,838	2,355
1992	5,116,700	564,985	2,393	1,005	26,520	7,378	94,969	3,124	2,591
1993	5,240,900	588,526	2,590	1,007	26,054	7,256	98,787	3,048	2,616
1994	5,334,400	607,705	3,175	1,453	28,514	7,354	102,665	3,042	2,631
1995	5,429,900	627,255	2,693	1,486	26,551	7,467	108,303	3,121	2,699
1996	5,516,800	646,280	2,524	1,371	26,370	7,509	114,026	3,033	2,659
2000	5,896,517	708,864	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2010	6,756,242	751,370	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2020	7,653,590	784,849	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1b: Washington State At-Risk Youth Statistical Indicators

Year	Birthrate: Ages 18-19			Juvenile Substance Abuse Arrests, Ages 10-17		Number of Suicides			Domestic Violence Orders and Arrests	
	Female Population, Ages 18-19 ⁶	Total Births ⁹	Total Births, Single Women ⁹	Drug Law Violations ⁷	Liquor Law Violations ⁷	Total (All Ages) ⁹	Suicides, Ages 10-17 ⁹	Suicides, Ages 18-19 ⁹	Protection Orders Filed ¹⁰	Arrests ¹¹
1950	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1960	36,426	6,965	450	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1970	62,432	6,868	1,500	-	-	511	11	9	-	-
1980	74,758	5,779	1,982	-	-	554	19	14	-	-
1981	73,403	5,619	2,022	-	-	639	20	22	-	-
1982	72,559	5,277	1,974	-	-	570	19	18	-	-
1983	69,590	5,038	2,120	-	-	621	22	15	-	-
1984	65,923	4,883	2,206	1,449	5,551	577	20	24	-	-
1985	63,354	4,724	2,318	1,477	5,730	627	25	19	9,612	9,350
1986	62,556	4,725	2,478	1,579	4,290	690	33	25	11,475	9,771
1987	64,036	4,748	2,585	1,618	5,562	708	34	19	12,255	9,794
1988	67,349	5,058	2,992	1,407	5,894	718	39	30	14,119	12,058
1989	70,160	5,406	3,274	1,878	5,530	647	25	23	14,648	15,040
1990	67,359	5,732	3,468	1,315	5,477	678	19	25	16,120	17,751
1991	62,786	5,512	3,446	1,231	4,546	688	28	24	20,068	18,216
1992	61,445	5,377	3,456	1,483	3,775	700	30	17	24,957	22,578
1993	61,876	5,533	3,646	1,938	4,432	695	25	13	26,975	24,622
1994	63,841	5,419	3,575	2,708	4,542	760	41	23	30,099	26,927
1995	65,866	5,578	3,746	3,073	4,587	794	22	20	31,543	30,658
1996	68,460	5,561	3,768	3,662	5,802	785	26	24	30,528	27,626

Table 1c: Washington State At-Risk Youth Statistical Indicators

Year	Population	High School Graduation and Completion			Child Abuse and Neglect	Family Foster Care
	Ages 0-17 ⁶	Public School ¹²	Private School (Estimate) ¹²	GEDs Issued (Ages 16 to 18) ¹³	Accepted Victims, Unduplicated Count ¹⁴	Average Number of Children per Month on the Family Foster Care Caseload ¹⁵
1950	-	-	-	-	-	-
1960	-	-	-	-	-	-
1970	1,161,915	50,425	2,365	12	-	6,690
1980	1,139,360	50,402	2,390	752	-	3,693
1981	1,151,139	49,912	2,534	885	-	3,747
1982	1,149,400	49,971	2,566	912	-	3,925
1983	1,146,704	46,667	2,704	718	-	4,173 ¹⁶
1984	1,152,315	44,606	2,607	883	-	4,368 ¹⁶
1985	1,164,801	45,798	2,579	866	-	4,396 ¹⁶
1986	1,173,262	45,805	2,603	896	-	4,445 ¹⁶
1987	1,183,820	46,769	2,449	873	-	4,917
1988	1,200,545	49,858	2,546	1,080	-	5,109
1989	1,224,337	48,911	2,443	1,312	-	5,134
1990	1,267,608	45,203	2,239	1,592	-	5,457
1991	1,315,346	43,474	2,169	1,947	35,730 ¹⁷	5,642
1992	1,358,846	44,381	2,184	2,231	36,644 ¹⁷	5,799
1993	1,403,340	45,175	2,244	2,629	36,543 ¹⁷	5,782
1994	1,434,436	46,985	2,427	3,124	36,791	5,683
1995	1,463,627	48,566	2,572	3,222	37,675	5,875
1996	1,487,494	49,241	2,501	3,526	37,408	6,069
1997	1,510,965	-	-	3,912	38,574	6,113
2000	1,566,953	-	-	-	-	-
2010	1,641,733	-	-	-	-	-
2020	1,821,398	-	-	-	-	-

Washington State Institute for Public Policy, April 1998.

⁶ U.S. Bureau of Census, Washington State Office of Financial Management.

⁷ Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, adjusted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to correct reporting differences which occurred between 1984 and 1996. Violent offenses are defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crime includes burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

⁸ Office of the Administrator for the Courts. Violent offenses are those defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crime includes burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

⁹ Center for Health Statistics, Washington State Department of Health.

¹⁰ Office of the Administrator for the Courts.

¹¹ Washington State Patrol.

¹² Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State. Private school graduates estimated using OFM calculations based on private school enrollment.

¹³ Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges.

¹⁴ Annual CPS Reports, Department of Social and Health Services.

¹⁵ Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis, "Income Assistance, Social Services, and Medical Assistance," Table 3B.

¹⁶ Data for 1983 through 1986 was provided by staff at the Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis.

¹⁷ The Institute calculated values for 1991, 1992, and 1993 by multiplying the number of accepted referrals for those years by the average ratio of accepted unduplicated victims for 1994 to 1997.



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