

Danger Signs: What Happens When the Social Fabric Unravels

The amount of parental time available to children fell considerably in the 1970s and 1980s; white children lost ten hours a week of parental time, while black children lost 12 hours.

Between 1992-1995 the use of inhalants such as glues, aerosols, and solvents by eighth graders increased 28%.

In 1993, 160,000 children stayed home on any given day for fear of being bullied (a very conservative number compared to today).

During 1997 36.5% of children were in a physical fight and 32% had property stolen. 10% were injured or threatened with a weapon in school.

135,000 juveniles carry guns to school daily; more than 10% carried a weapon to school during a one-month sample of time in 1997.

The rate of suicide among black teenagers went up 240% between 1980 and 1995. About one third of all adolescents report they have contemplated suicide.

3 million felony and misdemeanor crimes are committed at schools each year, with the severity increasing each year.

5,000 teachers are attacked or assaulted at schools each month, 1,000 serious enough to require medical attention.

Over the last decade, there has been a 70% increase in the number of children tried as adults in state courts.

In 1994, 2,700,000 juveniles were arrested, more than a third under the age of 15. 37,130 children under ten were arrested (some as young as six or seven), and charged with serious crimes.

In 1986, a majority of cases in New York's family court were misdemeanors; in more recent times, more than 90% are felonies.

The homicide rate for children aged 14-17 has risen 172%, and for other violent crimes like rape, robbery, and aggravated assault by 46% between 1985-1994.

Juveniles currently commit about 33% of all homicides against strangers.

The cost of yearly incarceration of a juvenile is \$100,000 and rising. 75% are arrested within a few years after release.

Allowing one youth to drop out of school for a life of crime and drug abuse costs society as much as \$2 million.

References

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- Karr-Morse, R. & Wiley, M. S. (1997). *Ghosts from the nursery: Tracing the roots of violence*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Visit their website at <http://www.ojjdp.org> for a complete list of their free publications.