



May 2026

Overview of selected youth criminal justice statistics, 2024

This fact sheet brings together select youth criminal justice system statistics pertaining to topics such as:

- youth crime measures, including crime rates and severity;
- diversion, specifically extrajudicial measures at the policing stage;
- sentencing;
- overrepresentation; and,
- recidivism.

All statistics are from Statistics Canada's Canadian Center for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) criminal justice-related micro-surveys: the [Uniform Crime Reporting survey](#) (UCR; police-reported information); the [Integrated Criminal Courts Survey](#) (ICCS; court-reported information); and, the [Canadian Correctional Services Survey](#) (CCSS; correctional services-reported information). For more information, see each referenced sources, as well as Justice Canada's [State of the Criminal Justice System](#).

Section 1. Youth crime measures

1.1 Crime rates¹

Youth crime rates are based on the number of youth, aged 12 to 17, who came in contact with the police as a result of a reported criminal incident, and were either charged (or recommended for a charge), or were cleared by other means which includes being diverted from the formal criminal justice system through the use of extrajudicial measures.

The police-reported youth crime rate measures the volume of crime per 100,000 youth population. It combines the per capita rate of youth charged with a criminal offence by police (or recommended for a charge) and the rate of youth cleared by other means (i.e., not charged).

¹ Total *Criminal Code* offences excluding traffic. For more information, see Statistics Canada's [Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Canadian Forces Military Police](#).

- From 2014 to 2024, the overall youth crime rate decreased 31%. While the police-reported youth crime rate generally decreased year-over-year during this time period, an increase from the previous year was observed in 2017 (less than 1%), in 2022 (+19%) and in 2023 (+13%). Despite the 13% increase in police-reported youth crime rate from 2022 to 2023, the latest data (2024) show a 4% decrease from 2023, and the 2024 rate remains lower (13% lower) than that in 2019.
- While there was an overall decrease in the police-reported youth crime rate over the past decade, the youth violent crime rate increased by 10%.
 - For example, homicide,² the most severe offence in Canada, increased among youth from 2014 to 2024, from a rate of 1 per 100,000 youth population to 2 per 100,000. However, it's important to consider the relatively small number of homicides in interpreting changes over time; homicide continues to represent less than 1% of all police-reported youth crimes.
 - Between 2014 and 2024, other notable increases in violent crimes include: total sexual violations against children, total firearms, use of, discharge, pointing, and sexual assault, level 2 (weapon or bodily harm).
- **Youth charged:** The crime rate includes both youth charged and youth not charged and in recent years, youth not charged have declined more sharply while youth charged have been steadily increasing since 2022 (Annex I).
 - In 2024, the overall youth crime rate decreased by 4%, but the number and rate of youth charged increased by 4% and 1%, respectively. In contrast, the number and rate of youth not charged decreased by 6% and 8%, respectively. See [Sub-Section 1.3](#) [Diversion: Use of extrajudicial measures](#).

1.2 Youth Crime Severity Index³

The Youth Crime Severity Index (CSI) provides a measure that considers both the volume and severity of crime, and has a base index value that has been adjusted to equal 100 in the base year (2006). Similar to the youth police-reported crime rate, the Youth CSI is based on the number of youth who come into contact with the police. The Youth CSI is based on *Criminal Code* incidents, including traffic offences, as well as other federal statute violations.⁴

- Between 2014 and 2024, the Youth CSI decreased 13%, driven by the 46% decrease in the Youth Non-Violent CSI. Meanwhile, the Youth Violent CSI increased 28% during this period,

² It is important to note that as homicide is the most severe offence in Canada, and any changes in its prevalence will have the largest impact on the Crime Severity Index. It's also important to consider various mass casualty events in understanding trends in the number of homicide victims reported over time.

³ For more information, see Statistics Canada's [Table 35-10-0026-01 Crime severity index and weighted clearance rates, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas](#).

⁴ This differs from the police-reported crime rate, which is typically based on *Criminal Code* incidents excluding traffic offences.

driven by increases in assault levels 2⁵ and 3,⁶ sexual assault,⁷ sexual violation against children,⁸ firearm offences⁹ and robbery¹⁰ to name a few examples.

- In more recent years, the Youth CSI increased 32% from an index of 41.18 in 2021 to 54.21 in 2023. More specifically, the Youth Violent CSI increased 35% from an index of 64.32 in 2021 to 86.82 in 2023, and the Youth Non-Violent CSI increased 26% from an index of 25.02 in 2021 to 31.44 in 2023.
- However, following these two consecutive yearly increases, the latest available data show a 3% decrease in 2024 from 2023; the Youth Violent CSI decreased 4% and the Youth Non-Violent CSI decreased 2%.
- Further, the 2024 overall Youth CSI remains 5% lower to the pre-pandemic year (2019).

1.3 Diversion: Use of extrajudicial measures¹¹

The Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA)—the federal legislation that governs the youth criminal justice system for youth aged 12 to 17 years old— was implemented in 2003 in an effort to reduce the overreliance on courts and incarceration by increasing the use of out-of-court responses, also known as diversion. To this end, the Act encourages police officers to exercise their discretion in using extrajudicial measures (EJMs) as an alternative to charging youth with a criminal offence. EJMs include actions such as verbal warnings, written cautions, referrals to a community program and referrals to an extrajudicial sanctions program.¹²

- In 2024, half (51%) of all youth who came in contact with the police were not charged, meaning they were either diverted by EJMs (26%) or cleared via other means (25%) (which includes taking no further action, among other things).¹³

⁵ Assault level 2 (weapon or bodily harm) offences for youth increased 49%, from a rate of 163 per 100,000 youth population in 2014 to 243 in 2024.

⁶ Assault level 3 (aggravated) offences for youth increased 63%, from a rate of 10 per 100,000 youth population in 2014 to 17 in 2024.

⁷ For example, sexual assault level 1 offences for youth increased 14%, from a rate of 78 per 100,000 youth population in 2014 to 88 in 2024.

⁸ Sexual violation against children offences for youth increased 133%, from a rate of 20 per 100,000 youth population in 2014 to 46 in 2024.

⁹ Total firearms, use of, discharge, and pointing offences for youth increased 128%, from a rate of 8 per 100,000 youth population in 2014 to 17 in 2024.

¹⁰ Robbery offences for youth increased 11%, from a rate of 104 per 100,000 youth population in 2014 to 115 in 2024.

¹¹ Statistics Canada. (n.d.) Special request.

¹² An extrajudicial sanction is a more formal type of EJM and can be applied in accordance with an approved program. Extrajudicial sanctions may be used when a young person cannot be adequately dealt with by other types of EJMs because of the seriousness of the offence, the nature and extent of previous committed offences, or any other aggravating circumstances. Extrajudicial sanctions consist of conditions that a young person must fulfill outside of the court process. These sanctions may take different forms such as attending specialized programs, making restitution to the victim, and completing community service.

¹³ See [Exploring the Use of Extrajudicial Measures for Youth Who Come in Contact with the Police](#).

Section 2. Youth in pre-trial detention and sentenced custody¹⁴

Pre-trial detention includes young persons detained in custody who are awaiting a further court appearance, and are not presently serving any type of sentence, unless stated otherwise. It is a measure of last resort, emphasizing that the young person should remain in the community whenever possible and appropriate to do so. While pre-trial detention plays a critical role in the protection of society and the administration of justice, it can also present deeper systemic issues related to legal rights (e.g., presumption of innocence), human rights, access to justice, a culture of inefficiency and delays, and disproportionate impact on certain people.

- In 2013/2014, there were 1,019 total actual-in count young persons held in custody, whether that be under sentence, pre-trial detention, provincial director remand and other temporary detention at the time the count is taken; by 2023/2024, the number of young persons held in custody decreased by 40% to 614. While the total number of actual-in count young persons decreased over that time period, it began rising in 2022/2023 (increased by 9% from 459 in 2021/2022 to 499 in 2022/2023), with 2023/2024 showing a 34% (614) increase compared to the year prior, mostly due to increases in pre-trial detention.
- Looking specifically at those in custody due to pre-trial detention, the proportion of young people held in pre-trial detention increased from 50% in 2013/2014 (509) to 67% in 2023/2024 (413).¹⁵

Section 3. Youth sentencing¹⁶

The YCJA focuses on rehabilitation, accountability and reintegration. It puts an emphasis on non-custodial sentences, with incarceration reserved for violent or serious offences.

- In 2023/2024, 9% (546) of guilty cases were given a custodial sentence (including intensive rehabilitation custody and supervision) as the most serious sentence in the case (MSS)¹⁷; 5% of guilty cases received deferred custody and supervision orders; and, the remaining guilty cases received non-custodial sentences (includes sentences such as intensive support and supervision, probation, attending a non-residential program, fines, community service, etc.).
- In comparison, in 2013/2014, 15% (3,405) of guilty cases were given a custodial sentence as the MSS.

Section 4. Overrepresentation of Indigenous and Black youth

In 2025/2026, Statistics Canada introduced a new measure called the Overrepresentation Index. For the first time, correctional data from the federal and provincial/territorial levels are combined to provide data on the entire correctional system, for an overview of correctional involvement among Indigenous

¹⁴ For more information, see Statistics Canada's [Table 35-10-0003-01 Average counts of young persons in provincial and territorial correctional services](#).

¹⁵ This increase does not necessarily indicate that more youth are being detained pre-trial. Rather, it may reflect a decrease in the number of youth being sentenced to custody.

¹⁶ *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, SC 2002, c 1

¹⁷ The most serious sentence refers to the most serious sentence in the case as it is possible to receive more than one sentence type in relation to a guilty charge in one case.

and Black adults in Canada. The Overrepresentation Index controls for demographic differences (e.g., in age and sex) between populations in the correctional system.¹⁸ In the absence of this index for youth, it's important to monitor their proportion amongst the correctional population, in comparison to their share in the general population.

Indigenous youth:

- The proportion of Indigenous youth in correctional supervision remained at around 40% from 2016/2017 to 2023/2024, 5 times higher than their share of the youth population in Canada (8%).¹⁹

Black youth:

- The proportion of Black youth in correctional supervision in NS, ON, AB, and BC remained at around 12-13% from 2019/2020 to 2023/2024, almost 2 times higher than their combined share of the youth population in the four provinces (7%).²⁰

Section 5. Youth recidivism

Recidivism is the act of committing another crime or coming into conflict with the criminal justice system (CJS) again, following an initial crime/contact. It is an important measure of the effectiveness of CJS efforts to promote rehabilitation, reintegration, and public safety. However, there are significant variations in how recidivism is defined and measured (e.g., re-contact, re-arrest, re-incarceration, or reconviction) across studies and in different jurisdictions. Over the last decade, Statistics Canada has conducted a few re-contact studies; for a more detailed overview, please see [Recidivism in the Criminal Justice System](#) (2020). Key youth-related findings include:

- **Nova Scotia:**²¹ Among 2,838 youth (aged 12–17) accused of a criminal incident in 2012/2013, half (50%) had at least one re-contact with Nova Scotia police within two years. Re-contact was highest among youth whose initial criminal incident went to court (77% had re-contact). The study also found that a small group of chronic offenders (12% of total youths, with five or more re-contacts) accounted for 45% of total youth contacts with police over two years.
- **Saskatchewan:**²² Re-contact with Saskatchewan police was most common among those whose first contact led to correctional supervision (73%), compared to those whose first contact only involved the police (64%) or ended in the court system (51%). Youth whose first contact took them through correctional services had particularly high re-contact (84% vs. 70% of

¹⁸ When using the white population instead of the non-Indigenous population as a comparison group, the result in the overrepresentation index score of Indigenous adults is lower overall (7.5 with white accused vs 10.2 with non-Indigenous accused), and in all reporting provinces.

¹⁹ For more information, see Statistics Canada's [Table: 35-10-0007-01 Youth admissions to correctional services, by Indigenous identity and sex](#).

²⁰ Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Canadian Correctional Services Survey (custom request).

²¹ Ibrahim, D. (2019). [Youth re-contact with the Nova Scotia justice system, 2012/2013 to 2014/2015](#) (Juristats Catalogue no. 85-002-X). Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada.

²² Brennan, S., & Matarazzo, Anthony. (2016). [Re-contact with the Saskatchewan justice system](#) (Juristats Catalogue no. 85-002-X). Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada.

adults)—even higher for Indigenous youth (90% vs. 79% of non-Indigenous youth). Similar to the Nova Scotia findings, a small group of chronic offenders (21%) accounted for 57% of justice contacts over three years.

- **Ontario:**²³ A 2019 study found that re-contact with the Ontario CJS was more common among youth than adults. Over half of youth (51%) whose first contact only involved the police had at least one re-contact with police, compared to 38% for adults. Among youth whose first pathway ended in the court system, 60% had at least one re-contact with police (vs. 34% for adults), and 77% for youth whose first contact took them through correctional services (vs. 60% for adults).

Since then, other studies have since been conducted on the topic. Notably:

Statistics Canada’s (2025) Patterns of re-offending among accused persons living in rural areas of the Canadian provinces, 2014 to 2023:

- With respect to youth aged 12 to 17 years, the study found almost six in ten youth (59%) had re-contact with police during the nine-year follow-up period from the initial contact with police. Of this proportion, 25% had one re-contact with police, 35% had between two and five re-contacts, 15% had between six and ten re-contacts, and the remaining one-quarter (25%) had more than ten re-contacts.²⁴ Of those who had re-contact with police, six in ten had re-contact within one year (59% regardless of if the youth accused was living in rural or urban areas).
- Crime severity was most often less serious between first and second contact. For example, among youth accused living in rural areas, 43% who had a re-contact were accused of a less serious offence for the second contact (i.e., first re-contact), 38% were accused of a more serious crime, and 20% committed a crime of the same level of severity.

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²³ Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Integrated Criminal Court Survey, Canadian Correctional Services Survey linked database 2008/2009 to 2012/2013.

²⁴ It is important to note that all youth who had contact with police as an accused person in 2014 would have reached adulthood, and therefore transitioned out of the youth criminal justice system, at some point during the follow-up period.

Annex I. Number and rate of youth charged and not charged per 100,000 youth population, Canada, 2014 to 2024

Total, all <i>Criminal Code</i> violations (excluding traffic)											
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Rate											
Total, youth crime rate (youth charged and not charged)	4,016	3,946	3,765	3,776	3,402	3,213	2,219	2,163	2,572	2,914	2,791
Rate, youth charged per 100,000 population aged 12 to 17 years	1,776	1,734	1,649	1,614	1,485	1,432	973	897	1,073	1,278	1,291
Rate, youth not charged per 100,000 population aged 12 to 17 years	2,240	2,212	2,116	2,162	1,916	1,781	1,246	1,266	1,498	1,636	1,500
Number											
Total, youth charged	41,911	40,768	39,022	38,127	35,230	34,513	23,947	22,390	27,402	33,529	34,895
Total, youth not charged	52,871	52,002	50,096	51,075	45,462	42,928	30,678	31,582	38,258	42,930	40,530

Source: Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Canadian Forces Military Police](#).

Annex II. Youth Admissions²⁵ to Correctional Services, by Indigenous Identity, 2016/2017 to 2023/2024

	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
	Number (Percentage)							
Total youth admissions	25,116 (100%)	22,961 (100%)	19,724 (100%)	17,528 (100%)	10,107 (100%)	9,654 (100%)	11,027 (100%)	13,546 (100%)
Indigenous youth admissions	10,736 (43%)	9,543 (42%)	8,193 (42%)	7,270 (41%)	4,312 (43%)	3,994 (41%)	4,382 (40%)	5,525 (41%)
Non-Indigenous youth admissions	13,034 (52%)	12,437 (54%)	10,965 (56%)	9,787 (56%)	5,504 (54%)	5,378 (56%)	6,288 (57%)	7,583 (56%)
Indigenous identity unknown	1,346 (5%)	981 (4%)	566 (3%)	471 (3%)	291 (3%)	282 (3%)	357 (3%)	438 (3%)

Source: Statistics Canada's [Table: 35-10-0007-01 Youth admissions to correctional services, by Indigenous identity and sex](#).

Note: The total does not necessarily represent all provinces and territories as there are variations in the availability of data for certain jurisdictions and years.

In 2022/2023, data for 2015/2016 to 2020/2021 were revised for Alberta, therefore figures may not correspond to data previously published. In 2023/2024, data for 2022/2023 were added for Prince Edward Island, therefore totals may not correspond to data previously published. Totals include all services in which young persons may be supervised. The sum of programs listed may not equal the total because the following types of programs are not listed in the data table, but are included in the total: custody and supervision (murder); custody and supervision (other presumptive); intensive rehabilitative custody and supervision. For British Columbia, custody and supervision includes the following: custody and supervision (murder); custody and supervision (other presumptive).

²⁵ Admissions are collected each time a person begins any type of custodial or community supervision, and describe and measure the case-flow in correctional agencies over time. The same person can be included several times in the admission counts where the individual moves from one type of legal status to another (e.g., from open to secure custody) or re-enters the system in the same year. As such, admissions represent the number of entries within a fiscal year to sentenced custody, to remand, and to community supervision regardless of the individual's preceding or following legal status.

Annex III. Youth Admissions to Correctional Services, by Black Identity, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, 2019/2020 to 2023/2024

	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Number (Percentage)					
Total youth admissions	11,450 (100%)	6,612 (100%)	6,581 (100%)	7,595 (100%)	9,350 (100%)
Black youth admissions	1,412 (12%)	870 (13%)	813 (12%)	957 (13%)	1,258 (13%)

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Canadian Correctional Services Survey (custom request).

Note: In 2022/2023, Alberta youth admissions data for 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 were revised due to minor changes in counts resulting from the integration of historical extracts including youth data.

The Canadian Correctional Services Survey (CCSS) collects information on whether individuals admitted to correctional services are members of population groups designated as visible minorities, according to the current "visible minority" standard. "Visible minority" refers to whether or not a person belongs to a visible minority group as defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". Currently, six jurisdictions report to the CCSS, with four provinces able to provide information on visible minorities for youth: Nova Scotia, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. This information is self-reported by persons supervised on intake to correctional services.