Youth Crimes

Crimes Committed By Youth
There's A Big Problem—Though It's Not As Bad "In My Community"

**Question:** In most of the country, would you say teenage violence is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem at all?

- Somewhat of a problem: 1%
- Not a problem at all: 18%
- Big problem: 81%

**Question:** How about the community you live in—would you say teenage violence is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem at all?

- Not a problem at all: 18%
- Somewhat of a problem: 48%
- Big problem: 33%

**Question:** Would you say that in the last year, crimes committed by teenagers in the country have increased, decreased or stayed about the same?

- Stayed the same: 86%
- Decreased: 2%
- Increased: 12%

**Question:** What about your community—in the last year would you say crimes committed by teenagers have increased, decreased or stayed about the same?

- Increased: 60%
- Stayed the same: 35%
- Decreased: 5%

**Source:** Survey by CBS News/New York Times, May 31-June 3, 1996.

We Need More Emphasis On Punishment, Including Treating Young People Who Commit Serious Crimes As Adults

**Question:** ...In most places, there are criminal justice programs that treat juveniles differently than adults who commit the same crimes. These programs emphasize protecting and rehabilitating juveniles rather than punishing them. How successful would you say these programs have been at controlling juvenile crime...?

- Very/moderately successful: 25%
- Not very successful: 49%
- Not successful at all: 23%

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization for CNN/USA Today, September 6-7, 1994.

**Question:** ...How do you think society should deal with juveniles (those under 18) who commit crimes: Should society place less emphasis on punishing juvenile offenders and more on trying to rehabilitate them, or should society give juvenile offenders the same punishment as adults?

- Less emphasis on punishing and more on trying to rehabilitate: 31%
- Same punishment as adults: 52%
- Depends on the circumstances (vol.)/other: 15%

**Question:** ...For each [proposed action to combat violent crime], please tell me if you think it will make a major difference in reducing violent crime, a minor difference, or no difference at all against violent crime...Toughen penalties for juvenile offenders so young people know there are severe consequences to crime.

- Major difference: 73%
- Minor difference: 20%
- No difference: 6%

**Source:** Survey by NBC News/Wall Street Journal, January 15-18, 1994.

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Support for the Death Penalty for Teens Convicted of Murder Has Risen, Reflecting the General Sense that Tougher Measures are Needed

1936
Question: Are you in favor of the death penalty for persons under 21 (for murder)?

![Bar chart showing support for the death penalty in 1936]

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, December 1-6, 1936.

1953
Question: Are you in favor of the death penalty for persons under 21 convicted of murder?

![Bar chart showing support for the death penalty in 1953]

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, November 1-5, 1953.

1957
Question: When a teenager commits a murder, and is found guilty by a jury, do you think he should get the death penalty or should he be spared because of his youth?

![Bar chart showing support for the death penalty in 1957]

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, August 29-September 4, 1957.

1965
Question: Are you in favor of the death penalty for persons under 21?

![Bar chart showing support for the death penalty in 1965]

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, January 7-12, 1965.

1991
Question: If a teenager commits a crime that could carry the death penalty for an adult, do you think he or she should receive a death sentence or not?

![Bar chart showing support for the death penalty in 1991]


1994
Question: When a teenager commits a murder and is found guilty by a jury, do you think he should get the death penalty or should he be spared because of his youth?

![Bar chart showing support for the death penalty in 1994]