

Examining Racial and Ethnic Disparities in a Sample of Youth in the Kent County Juvenile Justice System

March 2021

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the individuals at Kent County Juvenile Court and Kent County Juvenile Detention Center who shared their time, experience, and knowledge for the purposes of this study. This report would not have been possible without their support and participation.

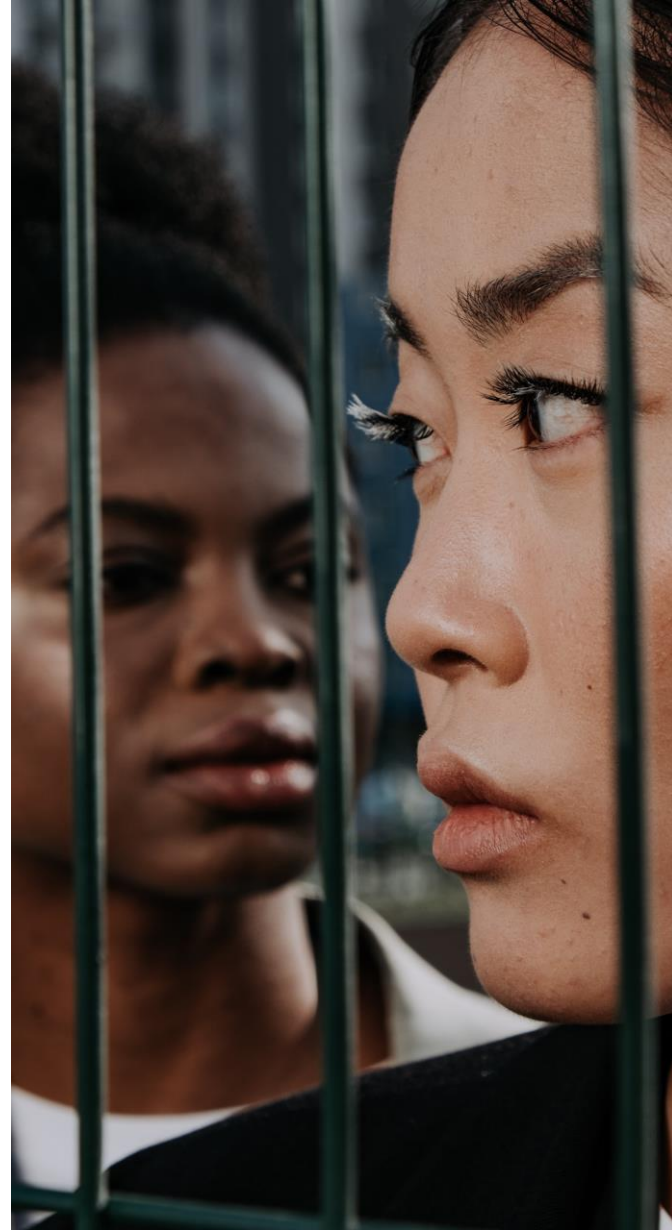
We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Katie Mauter, the special project coordinator for this study. Katie assisted with report formatting, creative design, and administrative support. We would also like to acknowledge support staff at the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) who contributed to this work.

Finally, we would like to thank the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) for providing funding for the current study. This would not have been possible without their support.

Executive Summary

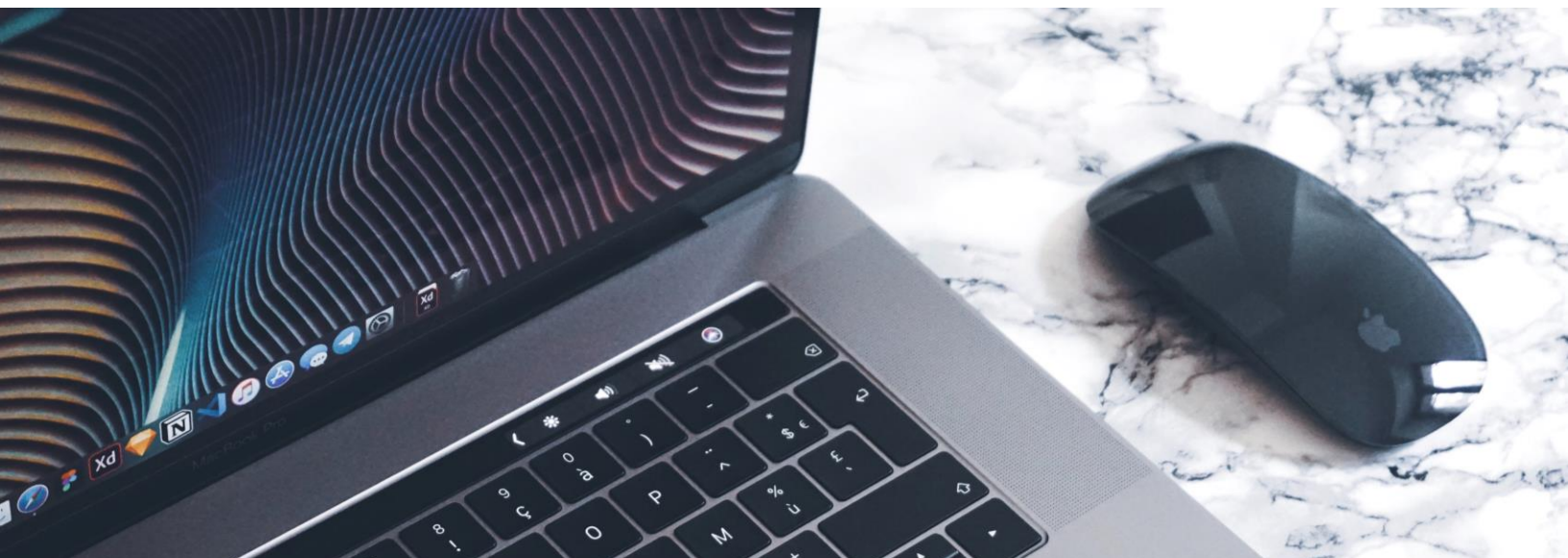
Disproportion minority contact (DMC) refers to the overrepresentation of youth of color in the U.S. juvenile justice system. Disproportionate minority involvement in the juvenile justice system has been an explicit federal policy priority for over 20 years. Despite federal efforts, disparities still remain with youth of color being more likely to be arrested, less likely to be diverted, and more likely to be detained (Puzzancher & Hockenberry, 2013). In Michigan, African American youth are approximately 2.5x more likely to be arrested and 1.6x more likely to receive secure detention (Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice, 2019).

This report presents results in assessing racial/ethnic inequalities among youth involved in the Kent County Juvenile Justice System. The study focuses on two subsets of youth: 1) youth who were processed in the Kent County Juvenile Justice System and referred to placement outside of the Kent County Residential Placement program from January 2017 – July 2020 and 2) youth in secure detention between January 2017 – October 2020. The following points summarize key findings from the analysis of case-level data for youth referred to residential placement ($n = 389$) and youth in secure detention ($n = 3,370$). Additional details related to these and other findings are provided in the section that follow.



Key Findings:

- The data are quite complete, with little to no missing information on youth.
- The majority of youth referred to out of home placement during this time period were youth of color (73%).
- The average length of stay among youth referred to out of home placement was approximately 170 days, ranging from 3 days to 938 days.
- On average, White youth were in residential placement for 188 days, African American youth 168 days, and Latinx youth 145 days. There were no statistical differences in length of stay across racial/ethnic groups.
- There is an over representation of youth of color in secure detention when compared to the general population.
- Overall, there has been a decline in the number of youths in secure detention. From 2017 – October 2020 there was a 65% decrease in the number of youths in secure detention. From 2017-2019 there was a 23% decrease in the number of youths in secure detention.
- There were statistical differences in average lengths of stay in secure detention across racial/ethnic groups, with youth of color having longer average lengths of stay.
- Approximately 3% of youths in secure detention had a stay of 101 days or more ($n = 85$). The majority of these youths were youth of color (93%).
- There were differences in what charge brings youth to detention based on race/ethnicity. African American youth have a higher frequency of property, status, technical violation, and public order offenses compared to White youth.



Section 1: Residential Placement Outside of Kent County

This section of the report includes information on youth in residential placement for youth who were processed in the Kent County Juvenile Justice system but referred to placement outside of the Kent County Residential Placement program from January 1, 2017 – July 20, 2020. This includes youth demographics, presiding judge information, program, and length of stay information. There was a total of 269 unique youth referred to residential placement during this time, some of which were referred multiple times during the identified time period. Therefore, there were a total of 389 referrals.

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive information for youth in residential placement during this timeframe. On average, youth were 15.6 years of age, ranging from 11 to 19 years of age. The majority of youth were African American (60%), followed by White youth (29%), then Latinx youth (9%). Approximately 2% of youth had an unknown race/ethnicity. The sample was majority male (70%).

Table 1. Descriptives of Youth in Residential Placement Outside of Kent County ($n = 269$)

Variable	Frequency or Mean (%)
Age (mean)	15.57
Range	11-19
Race	
African American	160 (59.5%)
White	79 (29.4%)
Latinx	25 (9.3%)
Unknown	5 (1.9%)
Gender	
Male	187 (69.5%)
Female	82 (30.5%)

Note: Age is calculated based on their start date of the program.

Table 2 presents information based on number of referrals, therefore this includes youth who were referred to residential placement multiple times during the time period. Number of referrals ranged from 1 to 6 referrals. That is, 269 youth had 1 referral, 88 had 2 referrals, 22 had 3 referrals, 6 had 4 referrals, 3 had 5 referrals, and 1 had 6 referrals. As seen in Table 2, the length of stay ranged from 3-938 days with an average length of stay of 170 days ($SD = 129.6$).¹ Judge “KAF” referred the most youth during this time period (27%) followed by Judge “PDG” referring about 22% of youth. There was a total of 27 programs youth were referred to; number of referrals by program ranged from 1 to 89 youths. Muskegon River Youth Home received the majority of referrals (23%), followed by Highfields (18%).

Table 2. Descriptives on Number of Referrals to Residential Placements ($n = 384$)^a

Variable	Frequency or Mean (%)
Average length of stay in days (SD) ^b	170.4 (129.6)
Range (days)	3-938
Youth still in placement	51 (13.1%)
Judge	
KAF	103 (26.7%)
PDG	86 (22.4%)
GPH	55 (14.3%)
PJD	43 (10.9%)
DLM	42 (10.9%)
TJA	32 (8.3%)
CME	15 (3.9%)
DVZ	5 (1.3%)
None	4 (1.0%)

¹The distribution of length of stay was further examined given the maximum stay (i.e., 938 days). Approximately 95% of youth were in residential placement for 421 days or less. Average length of stay was analyzed excluding the top 5% of cases with the longest stay (i.e., 422 days or more). When excluding these 5% of cases ($n = 16$), the average length of stay was 152 days ($SD = 95.83$). Based on ANOVA tests there were no statistical differences in length of stay across race/ethnicity ($F = 0.90$, $p = 0.40$).

Table 2 - Continued

Variable	Frequency or Mean (%)
Placement Agency	
Muskegon River Youth Home	89 (23.2%)
Highfields	67 (17.5%)
Lighthouse Residential Placement Program	49 (12.8%)
Wedgwood Christian Youth and Family	24 (6.3%)
Starr Commonwealth	23 (6.0%)
Lakeside Treatment and Learning Center	22 (5.7%)
Glen Mills Schools	16 (4.2%)
Wolverine Secure Treatment Center	13 (3.4%)
Shawano Center	9 (2.3%)
Pineview Homes	8 (2.1%)
Bethany Christian Services	7 (1.8%)
Clarinda Academy	7 (1.8%)
Rite of Passage - Canyon State Academy	6 (1.6%)
Bay Pines Treatment Center	5 (1.3%)
Recovery High	5 (1.3%)
Wolverine Human Services Care Program	5 (1.3%)
Wolverine Growth and Recovery	4 (1.0%)
Mountain Home Academy	4 (1.0%)
Pathway of Hope	4 (1.0%)
Woodward Academy	3 (0.8%)
Mingus Mountain Academy	3 (0.8%)
Pioneer Work and Learn Center	3 (0.8%)
Summit Academy	3 (0.8%)
Eagle Village	2 (0.5%)
Forest Ridge Youth Services	1 (0.3%)
Vassar House: Passages Behavioral Health	1 (0.3%)
Vista Maria	1 (0.3%)

^aThis number differs from that in Table 1 because some youth were referred multiple times during this timeframe.

^bSD = Standard deviation.

Note: If youth did not have an end date for placement it is recorded as still being in placement.

Table 3 presents information regarding length of stay by race/ethnicity of youth overall, by placement and by judge. Differences in length of stay across racial/ethnic groups was assessed using ANOVA and t-tests statistics. There were no statistical differences in length of stay across youth race/ethnicity. This was also examined comparing length of stay between White youth and youth of color; no statistical differences were found. Length of stay is displayed for programs that received at least 20 youth. Among youth at Muskegon River Youth Home, the average length of stay among White youth was 158 days, 160 for African American youth, and 171 for Latinx youth.

Table 3. Length of Stay Comparisons Among Youth in Residential Placement

	Youth Race/Ethnicity			Statistic
	White (n = 90)	African American (n = 201)	Latinx (n = 37) ^a	
Average length of stay	188.0	168.3	144.7	$F = 1.58$ ($p = 0.21$)
Average length of stay by Placement Agency				Total Average
Muskegon River Youth Home	158.3	160.3	171.0	163.5
Highfields	121.6	123.6	136.9	125.0
Lighthouse Residential Placement Program ^b	118.8	128.7	137.7	126.6
Wedgwood Christian Youth and Family	212.9	52.0	46.0	98.9
Starr Commonwealth	169.0	190.7	203.1	191.3
Lakeside Treatment and Learning Center ^c	265.6	223.5	--	238.8
Average length of stay by Judge				
CME	309.0	226.4	119.0	233.6
DLM	196.3	221.7	--	217.0
DVZ	93.0	197.0	51.0	126.2
GPH	136.6	155.1	186.0	153.0
KAF	208.0	163.2	87.8	163.1
PDG	176.7	159.7	230.5	168.7
PJD	229.8	173.6	192.9	189.6
TJA	139.6	140.6	160.7	145.0
None	97.0	87.5	--	90.7

^aGiven the relatively small number of Latinx youths, it is recommended that these statistics be interpreted with caution and might not be generalizable to other youth.

^bThis program is for female youth placement only.

^cThis program was closed June 2020.

Note: The difference between length of stay for White youth vs. youth of color was not statistically significant. This was tested with a two-tail t-test ($p = 0.21$)

Table 4 presents information on presiding judge by race/ethnicity of youth. Percentages represent the percentage among racial/ethnic groups. That is, among African American youth approximately 24% of referrals came from Judge KAF, followed by Judge PDG (22%). Among White youth, approximately 29% of refers came from Judge KAF and among Latinx youth 37% of referrals came from Judge KAF.

Table 4. Presiding Judge by Race/Ethnicity of Youth with Column Percentages ($n = 389$)

Judge	Race of Youth			
	African American	White	Latinx	Unknown
CME	11 (4.7%)	3 (2.9%)	1 (2.4%)	--
DLM	25 (10.8%)	14 (13.6%)	--	3 (42.9%)
DVZ	2 (0.9%)	2 (1.9%)	1 (2.4%)	--
GPH	43 (18.5%)	10 (9.7%)	2 (4.8%)	--
KAF	56 (24.1%)	30 (29.1%)	17 (40.5%)	--
PDG	49 (21.1%)	26 (25.2%)	8 (19.1%)	3 (42.9%)
PJD	24 (10.3%)	11 (10.7%)	6 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)
TJA	19 (8.2%)	6 (5.8%)	7 (16.7%)	--
None	3 (1.3%)	1 (1.0%)	--	--
Total:	232 (100%)	103 (100%)	42 (100%)	7 (100%)

Overall, the data are quite complete, there was little to no missing case information. A large proportion of youth referred to residential placement outside of the Kent County Residential Placement program were youth of color (73%). There were no statistical differences in average length of stay across African American, White, and Latinx youth. The average length of stay was 170 days. Among White youth the average length of stay was 188 days, among African American youth 168 days, and among Latinx youth 145 days. This does not control for charge/offense or criminal history data which were not available at the time of the current study.



Section 2: Youth in Secure Detention

This section of the report examines youth in Kent County secure detention between January 2017 – October 2020. This includes examining trends across the 4-year period and differences across race/ethnicity within three key areas of interest: 1) youth demographics, 2) length of stay, and 3) charge information. There was a total of 3,375 admissions to secure detention during this time.

Demographics

Table 5 illustrates the descriptive information for youth in secure detention by year. Across the 4-year period the majority of youth were African American (51%), 23% were White, 12% were Latinx, 13% were Bi-Racial, and 2% were considered “Other”. The proportion of male and female youth was relatively consistent across the 4 years with male youth consisting of 68%-70% of youth in secure detention and females representing between 30%-32% of youth.

Table 5. Demographics of Youth in Detention January 1, 2017 – October 26, 2020 (*n* = 3,375)

Race/Ethnicity	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
White	260 (22.6%)	231 (24.6%)	197 (22.2%)	82 (20.6%)	770 (22.8%)
African American	618 (53.8%)	440 (46.9%)	438 (49.3%)	212 (53.3%)	1,708 (50.6%)
Latinx	117 (10.2%)	125 (13.3%)	117 (13.2%)	39 (9.8%)	398 (11.8%)
Bi-Racial	131 (11.4%)	120 (12.8%)	120 (13.5%)	61 (15.3%)	432 (12.8%)
Other ^a	23 (2.0%)	23 (2.4%)	17 (1.9%)	4 (1.0%)	67 (2.0%)
Sex					
Male	777 (67.6%)	660 (70.3%)	625 (70.3%)	278 (69.9%)	2,340 (69.3%)
Female	372 (32.4%)	279 (29.7%)	264 (29.7%)	120 (30.1%)	1,035 (30.7%)
Total:	1,149	939	889	398	3,375

^aOther race/ethnicity includes American Indian/Alaskan, Arab, Asian, Filipino, and Other

²Due to the COVID-19 pandemic Michigan juvenile justice agencies implemented measures to mitigate risk of exposure and transmission of the virus which directly impacted routine operations and the processing of youth.

As seen in Figure 1, the number of youths in secure detention decreased approximately 18% from 2017-2018. The decline continued from 2018-2019 with a 5% decrease. Finally, there was a 55% decrease in the number of youths in secure detention from 2019-2020. The total number of youth in secure detention in 2020 should be interpreted with caution given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, there has been a continuous decline in the number of youths in secure detention.

Figure 1. Trends in Secure Detention Population, 2017 – October 2020

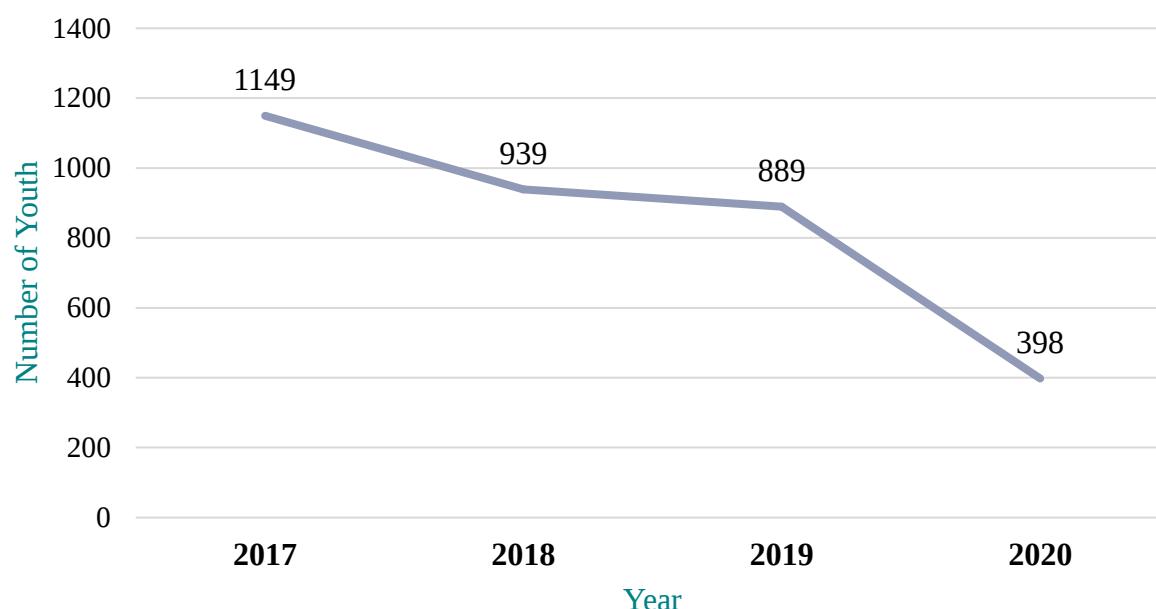
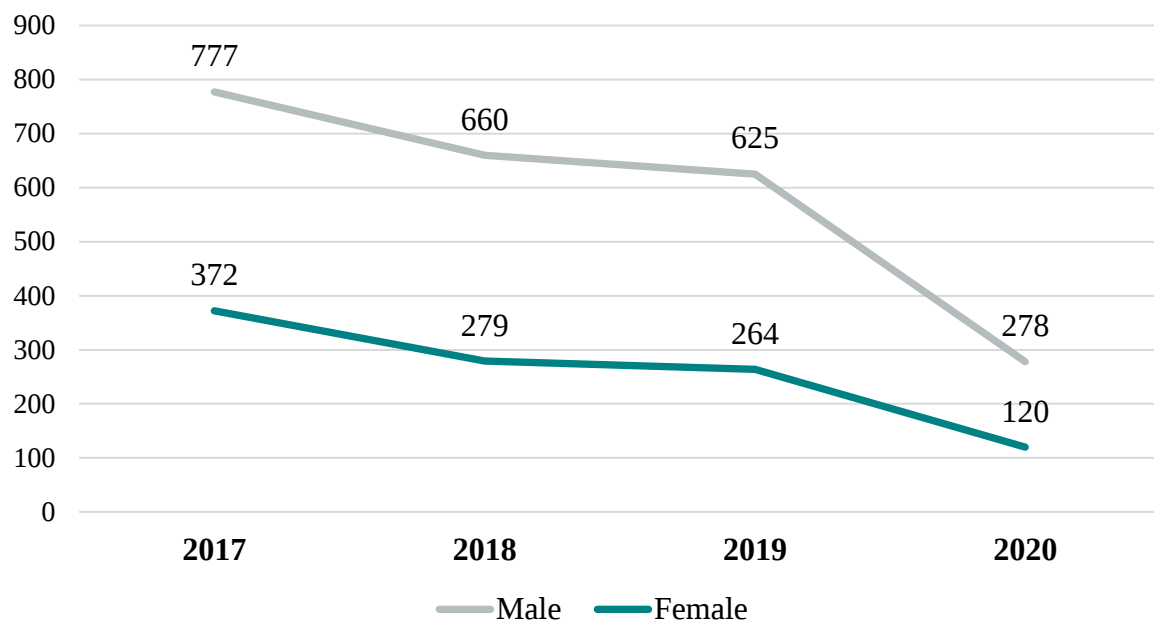


Figure 2. Trend in Secure Detention by Gender, 2017 – October 2020



As seen in Figure 2, the decrease of youth in secure detention varied depending on gender, from 2017 to 2018 males decreased by 15% whereas females decreased by 25%.

The decline for both genders continued from 2018-2019, with the number of males and females decreasing by 5%.

Finally, there was a 55% decrease among males and a 54% decrease among females from 2019-2020.

Overall, there has been a continuous decline in the number of youths in secure detention across gender.



Figure 3. Trends in Secure Detention by Race/Ethnicity

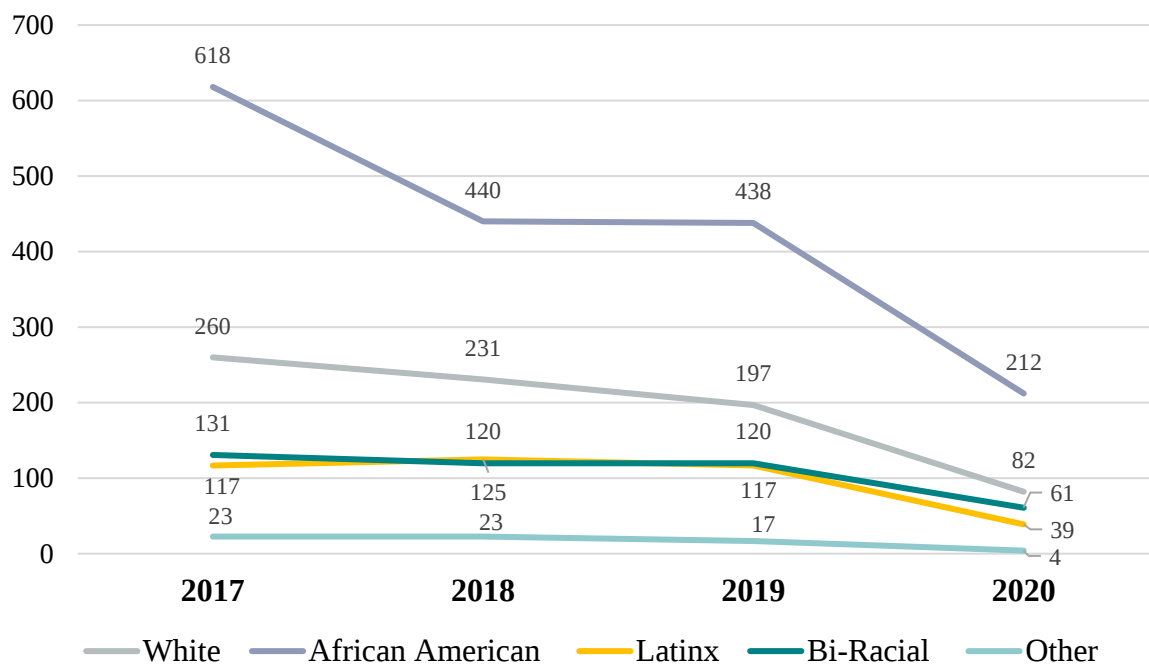


Figure 3 illustrates the trends in youth in secure detention by race/ethnicity.

Youths in Secured Detention changed by:

From 2017 to 2018 :

- White ▼ by 11%
- African American ▼ by 29%
- Latinx ▲ by 7%
- Bi-racial youths ▼ by 8%
- Other remained constant

From 2018-2019 by:

- White ▼ by 15%
- African American ▼ by 0.5%
- Latinx ▼ by 6%
- Bi-racial youths remained constant
- Other ▼ by 26%

Finally, from 2019-2020 by:

- White ▼ by 58%
- African American ▼ by 52%
- Latinx ▼ by 67%
- Bi-racial ▼ by 49%
- Other ▼ by 76%

Since 2017, the population of youths in secure detention has been decreasing. These decreases are seen for both genders, with females seeing a larger decrease from 2017-2018 than males. These decreases are also seen across racial/ethnic groups, with the exception of Latinx youth from 2017-2018 (i.e., a 7% increase was observed). The largest decrease from 2017-2018 was among African America youth, decreasing 29%.

Length of Stay

This section examines length of stay among youth in secure detention. Table 6 illustrates the number of days in detention by percentile ranking. Notably, youth in detention for “0” days were admitted and released from secure detention on the same day. For the entire sample, the average length of stay in detention was 21.2 days ($SD = 37.9$) and ranged from 0 to 523 days. As can be seen in Table 6, 95% of youth were in secure detention for 100 days or less.

Table 6. Percentile Rankings of Length of Stay in Secure Detention ($n = 3,327$)

Percentiles	Days in Detention
1%	0
5%	0
10%	1
25%	1
50%	6
75%	24
90%	57
95%	100
99%	179

Note: At the time of this study, 48 youth were still in secure detention and not included in length of stay analyses.

Given the small number of youths in secure detention for over 100 days ($n = 164$), this subgroup of youth (5% of all youth) was examined in comparison to youth in secure detention for 100 days or less. As seen in Table 7, the majority of youth who spent 101 days or more in secure detention are African American (62%), with only 13% of youth identifying as White. This is in comparison to youth in detention 100 days or less, which consists of 23% White youth and 50% African American youth.

Table 7. Length of Stay for Youth 100 Days or Less vs Over 100 Days by Race/Ethnicity

	100 or Less ($n = 3,163$)	101 Days or More ($n = 164$)
White	741 (23.4%)	21 (12.8%)
African American	1,579 (49.9%)	102 (62.2%)
Latinx	380 (12.0%)	16 (9.8%)
Bi-Racial	403 (12.7%)	19 (11.6%)
Other	60 (1.9%)	6 (3.7%)

A further examination was conducted on the subset of youth in detention 101 days or more. This examination showed that 50% of the youth ($n = 82$) were in the residential placement program housed in the secure detention facility, contributing to their extended stay in secure detention. All subsequent length of stay analyses have been adjusted based on these newly determined secure detention stays. ANOVA tests were conducted to examine differences in average length of stay across racial and ethnic groups. Table 8 illustrates that, among the full sample of youth, the average length of stay was 15.4 days for White youth, 20.5 days for African American youth, 14.9 days for Latinx youth, 17.8 days for Bi-Racial youth, and 23.5 days for Other youth. Based on ANOVA tests, there were statistical differences in length of stay across racial/ethnic groups ($p = 0.002$).

Table 8. Average length of Stay in Days Among all Youth

Race/Ethnicity	Average length of stay Full sample ($n = 3,327$)	Average Length of Stay Youth in Detention <101 days ($n = 3,242$)
White	15.4	14.4
African American	20.5	15.7
Latinx	14.9	13.8
Bi-Racial	17.8	14.5
Other	23.5	13.6
Statistic:	$F = 5.57, p = 0.0002$	$F = 1.14, p = 0.37$

Note: A p -value of less than 0.05 is considered statistically significant.

ANOVA tests were also conducted to examine differences in average length of stay for youths in secure detention 100 days or less across racial and ethnic groups.

Table 7 illustrates that, among the sample of youth in detention 100 days or less, the average length of stay was 14.4 days for White youth, 15.7 days for African American youth, 13.8 days for Latinx youth, 14.5 days for Bi-Racial youth, and 13.6 days for Other youth.

Based on ANOVA tests, there were no statistical differences in length of stay across racial/ethnic groups ($p = 0.37$).



Table 9. Average Length of Stay in Days by Race/Ethnicity and Year ($n = 3,327$)

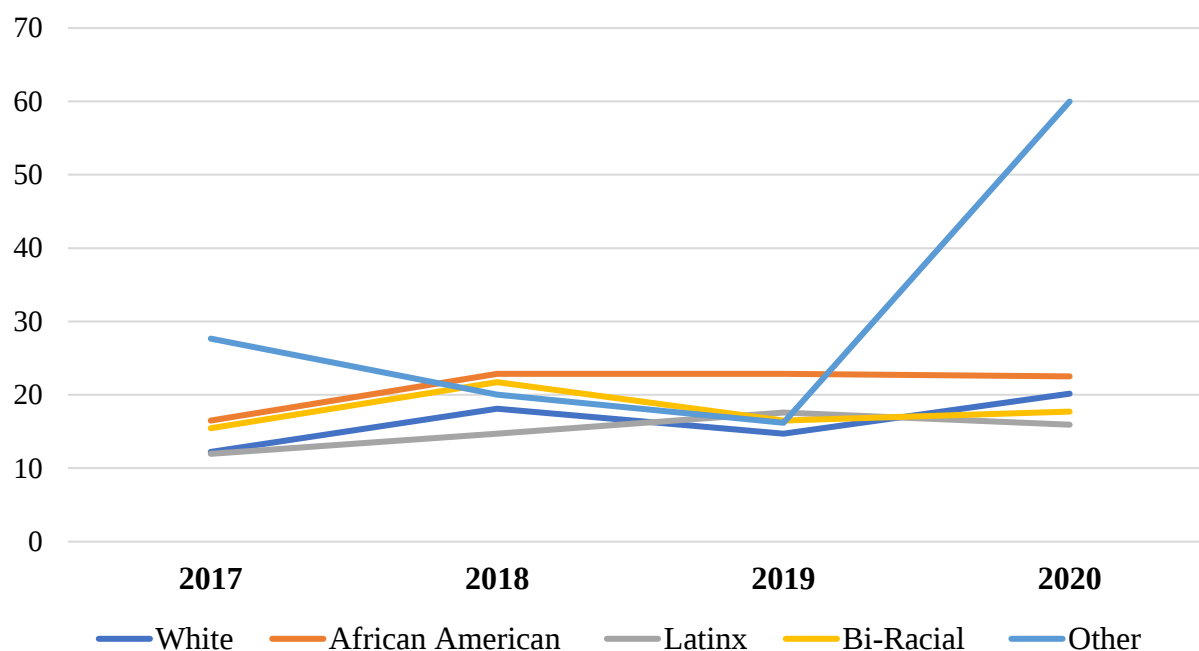
Race/Ethnicity	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
White	12.20	18.12	14.72	20.15	15.41
African American	16.50	22.85	22.88	22.52	20.49
Latinx	11.97	14.71	17.59	15.92	14.86
Bi-Racial	15.44	21.73	17.59	17.71	17.81
Other	27.65	20.04	16.18	60.00	23.52

As seen in Table 9, the average length of stay ranges from 12-20 days for White youth, 17-23 days for African American youth, 12-18 days for Latinx youth, 15-22 days for Bi-Racial youth, and 16-60 days for Other youth.

Notably, the average length of stay should be interpreted with caution for “Other” youth given the low number of youths per year (i.e., 4-23 youth).



Figure 4. Trends in Average Length of Stay by Race/Ethnicity



As seen in Figure 4, the changes of youth average length of stay varied depending on race/ethnicity. From 2017-2018, White youth length of stay increased by 49%, African American youth length of stay increased by 39%, Latinx youth length of stay increased by 23%, Bi-racial youth length of stay increased by 41%, and Other length of stay decreased by 28%. From 2018-2019, length of stay decreased by 19% for White youth, increased <1% for African American youth, increased 20% for Latinx youth, decreased 24% for Bi-racial youth, and decreased 19% for Other youth. Finally, from 2019-2020, youth length of stay increased by 37% for White youth, decreased by 2% for African American youth, decreased 10% for Latinx youth, increased 7% for Bi-racial youth, and increased 271% for Other youth. The increase in length of stay among Other youth from 2019-2020 should be interpreted with caution as there is a very small number of Other youth ($n = 4$).

Regarding length of stay, the majority of youth (97%) are in detention for 100 days or less. While there was a statistical difference in length of stay across racial/ethnic groups, these differences disappeared when “outliers” were excluded from analyses (3% of youth). The majority of cases that were considered “outliers” were youth of color (97%). The average length of stay increased for all racial/ethnic groups from 2017-2018, except for “Other”. From 2018-2019, the average length of stay decreased for all youth except Latinx and African American youth.

Charge Information

This section examines the types of charges among youth in secure detention. As seen in Table 10, number of charges range from one to five charges. The majority of youth were admitted to secure detention with one charge (84%). Another 16% of youth have two or three charges and about 4% have four or five charges.

Table 10. Charge Frequencies of Youth in Secure Detention

Charge Information: Number of Charges	Frequency (%)
1	2,815 (83.5%)
2	421 (12.5%)
3	102 (3.0%)
4	32 (1.0%)
5	2 (0.1%)



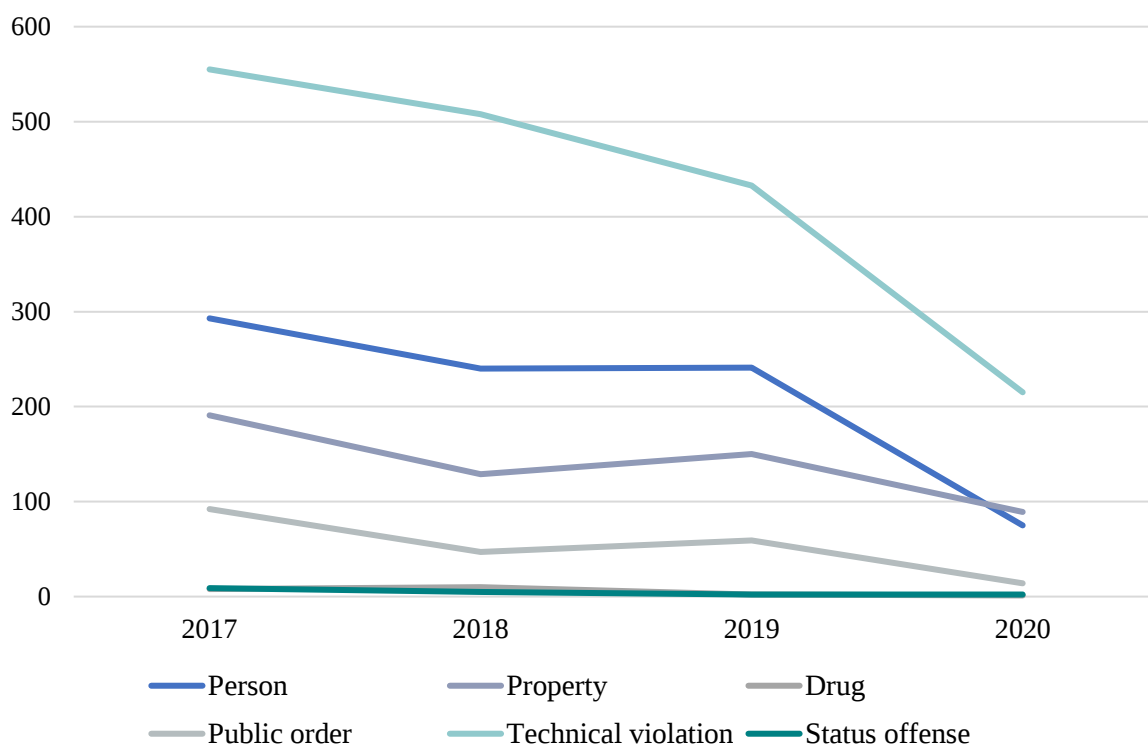
Table 11 illustrates the charge type for which youth are in secure detention. Offense categories are based on the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (2020) reporting. The two main charge categories are delinquency and status offenses, under delinquency charges are person, property, drug, public order, and technical violation charges. Overall, the most commonly occurring charge for youth in secure detention is a technical violation (51%), followed by person-related charges (25%). The proportion of offenses is relatively consistent across the years. Across the 4-year period, person-related charges are observed among 19%-27% of youth, property account for 14%-23% of charges, drug account to 0%-1%, public order 4%-8%, technical violations 48%-54%, and status offenses 0%-1%.

Table 11. Charge Type and Frequencies of Youth in Secure Detention ($n = 3,370$)

	Year				
	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Delinquency					
Person	293 (25.52%)	240 (25.56%)	241 (27.17%)	75 (18.9%)	849 (25.19%)
Criminal homicide	--	--	--	1 (0.25%)	1 (0.03%)
Sexual assault	8 (0.70%)	10 (1.06%)	8 (0.90%)	3 (0.76%)	29 (0.86%)
Robbery	27 (2.35%)	19 (2.02%)	26 (2.93%)	13 (3.28%)	85 (2.52%)
Aggravated assault	19 (1.66%)	15 (1.60%)	24 (2.71%)	11 (2.78%)	69 (2.05%)
Simple assault	25 (2.18%)	20 (2.13%)	14 (1.58%)	3 (0.76%)	62 (1.84%)
Domestic violence	178 (15.51%)	155 (16.51%)	144 (16.23%)	32 (8.08%)	509 (15.10%)
Other person	36 (3.14%)	21 (2.24%)	25 (2.82%)	12 (3.03%)	94 (2.79%)
Property	191 (16.64%)	129 (13.74%)	150 (16.91%)	89 (22.47%)	559 (16.59%)
Burglary	50 (4.36%)	26 (2.77%)	27 (3.04%)	22 (5.56%)	125 (3.71%)
Theft	14 (1.22%)	9 (0.96%)	16 (1.80%)	6 (1.52%)	45 (1.34%)
Auto theft	36 (3.14%)	16 (1.70%)	59 (6.65%)	19 (4.80%)	130 (3.86%)
Arson	3 (0.26%)	1 (0.11%)	1 (0.11%)	--	5 (0.15%)
Other property	88 (7.67%)	77 (8.20%)	47 (5.30%)	42 (10.61%)	254 (7.54%)
Drug	8 (0.70%)	10 (1.06%)	2 (0.23%)	1 (0.25%)	21 (0.62%)
Drug trafficking	--	--	--	--	--
Other drug	8 (0.70%)	10 (1.06%)	2 (0.23%)	1 (0.25%)	21 (0.62%)
Public order	92 (8.01%)	47 (5.01%)	59 (6.65%)	14 (3.54%)	212 (6.29%)
Weapons	12 (1.05%)	2 (0.21%)	7 (0.79%)	4 (1.01%)	25 (0.74%)
Other public order	80 (6.97%)	45 (4.76%)	52 (5.86%)	10 (2.53%)	187 (5.55%)
Technical violation	555 (48.34%)	508 (54.10%)	433 (48.82%)	215 (54.29%)	1,711 (50.77%)
Status offense	9 (0.78%)	5 (0.53%)	2 (0.23%)	2 (0.51%)	18 (0.53%)
Total:	1,148	939	887	396	3,370

Note: One adaptation was made to the OJJDP offense categories. That is, domestic violence was added as a separate category in the current study given the frequency of these charges in Kent County.

Figure 5. Trend of Major Charges of youth in Detention



As seen in Figure 5, decreases in all charge types were observed during the 4-year period, varying by charge type.

Increases and decreases of offences over time:

From 2017-2018

- person ▼ by 18%
- property ▼ by 32%
- drug ▲ by 25%
- public order ▼ by 49%
- technical violation ▼ by 8%
- status ▼ by 44%

From 2018-2019

- person ▲ by 0.4%
- property ▲ by 16%
- drug ▼ by 80%
- public order ▲ by 26%
- technical violation ▼ by 14%
- status ▼ by 60%

Finally, from 2019-2020

- person ▼ by 69%
- property ▼ by 41%
- drug ▼ by 50%
- public order ▼ by 76%
- technical violation ▼ by 50%
- status offenses remained constant

Table 12 displays the frequency of each charge type across race/ethnicity. As seen in Table 12, White (32%) and African American (38%) youth comprise the majority of person-related charges. African American youth make up the majority of youth charged with a property offense (70%), public order (72%), technical violation (48%), and status offense (50%) .

Table 12. Charge Type by Race/Ethnicity – Full Sample ($n = 3,370$)

	Race/Ethnicity				
Charge Type	White	African American	Latinx	Bi-Racial	Other
Person	275 (32.39%)	326 (38.40%)	11 (13.07%)	116 (13.66%)	21 (2.47%)
Property	55 (9.84%)	392 (70.13%)	42 (7.05%)	61 (10.91%)	9 (1.61%)
Drug	6 (28.57%)	5 (23.81%)	7 (33.33%)	2 (9.52%)	1 (4.76%)
Public order	21 (9.91%)	152 (71.70%)	23 (10.85%)	14 (6.60%)	2 (0.94%)
Technical violation	410 (23.96%)	821 (47.98%)	211 (12.33%)	235 (13.73%)	34 (1.99%)
Status offense	2 (11.11%)	9 (50.00%)	4 (22.22%)	3 (16.67%)	--
Total:	769	1,705	398	431	67

Note: Percentages are reported by offense type.

Overall, the majority of youth in secure detention had one charge (84%). Looking at the sample as a whole, technical violations was the most common charge among youth in secure detention (51%).

All offenses decreased from 2017-2018, except for a small increase in drug offenses.

From 2018-2019, there were decreases in drug, technical violations, and status offenses. There were increases in person, property, and public order offenses.

There were decreases in all offenses in 2020. African American youth had a higher frequency of property, status, technical violation, and public order offenses compared to all other racial/ethnic groups.

³The percentage of status offenses across race/ethnicity should be interrupted with caution given the small number of status offenses ($n = 18$).

Conclusion

The current study sought to examine DMC among two samples of youth in the Kent County Juvenile Justice system: youth in residential placement (outside of the Kent County Residential Placement program) and youth in secure detention. Case-level data were analyzed from 2017 – July 2020 and 2017 – October 2020, respectively. When examining disproportionate minority involvement in the Kent County Juvenile Justice system, findings suggest an overrepresentation of youth of color in secure detention and residential placement programs when compared to the general population. Among youth in residential placement, there was no statistical difference in average length of stay. This suggests that, while there is an overrepresentation of youth of color, their placement decisions do not significantly differ from White youth. Among youth in secure detention, youth of color had longer average stays in detention. However, this difference between White youth and youth of color was due to a small proportion of youth who are in detention more than 100 days (i.e., 5% of youth). Differences were observed in terms of why youth are admitted to secure detention. In comparison to White youth, African American youth were more likely to be admitted for a property, status, technical violation, and public order offenses.

This study is not without limitations. First, youth in secure detention could also have spent time in the Kent County Residential Placement program. Aside from the additional examination of the subgroup of youth with the longest stays in secure detention ($n = 164$), the current study could not separate how long youth were in secure detention versus the residential placement program.

Second, analyses among youth in secure detention did not include age, prior criminal history, or risk/protective factors. Finally, secure detention analyses could not separate out youth who were committed in comparison to being held for a hearing.

This report provides an initial examination of disproportionate minority involvement in the Kent County Juvenile Justice system. Future studies should focus on incorporating additional information associated with disproportionate minority involvement (e.g., criminal histories, social factors). Research should extend beyond the current study to examine the racial/ethnic disparities in earlier points of the juvenile justice system, such as arrest, adjudication, and disposition.



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