

# Risk factor data

Juvenile delinquency at the local or county level may be more easily addressed with an understanding of associated **risk factors**. Risk factors that increase the likelihood that youth will engage in serious delinquency have been identified.

Pro-social factors and concepts that encourage positive attitudes and behavior also can guide policymakers and practitioners. Studies have shown that numerous youth and community factors can act as protective assets. For example, youth who are involved in their communities have a non-parental positive adult role model, and a peer group that engages in constructive activities are less likely to be involved in criminal behaviors.<sup>2</sup>

This section begins with a general review of the literature examining juvenile delinquency risk factors. Rolf Loeber and David Farrington, members of the **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's** (OJJDP's) Study Group on Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders compiled the following research on risk factors.<sup>3</sup>

## Types of risk factors

Delinquency research has focused on individual, situational, and environment risk factors.

### Individual risk factors

Individual risk factors include individual traits or qualities, including various types of mental and physical health problems. Studies examining the effects of individual risk factors on juvenile delinquency have found that aggressive behavior, anti-social attitudes or beliefs, hyperactivity, impulsiveness, attention deficits, and risk-taking behaviors are strongly linked to juvenile delinquency. Several studies have also found evidence of links between medical or physical conditions impacting development, general problem behavior, and negative internalizing behaviors, such as nervousness, worrying, and anxiety, to juvenile delinquency. IQ, low resting heart rate, depression, substance abuse, and obsessive-compulsive behavior also have been identified as potential risk factors.

### Situational risk factors

Situational risk factors are related to the circumstances that magnify the likelihood of a delinquent act occurring. Examples of potential situational risk factors include the presence of a weapon and behavior of the victim at the time of the incident. Situational risk factors act as triggers for minors who exhibit one or more of the other three types of risk factors.

Although a number of potential situational risk factors have been identified, researchers have not determined which situational factors exacerbate the likelihood that a minor will commit a delinquent act. Thus, situational factors are not addressed in this report.

### **Environmental risk factors**

Environmental risk factors include community, social, and school risk factor subsets. *Table 2* lists the data examined in this section of the report, the data source, and the years on which the data were reported. The raw data can be found in the data tables section in Appendix H.

While county-level data on the environmental risk factors that Illinois youth are exposed to are available, the nature of these data places limits upon their ability to describe the environments in which specific youth live. While these data do show the level at which certain factors are present in a county, they are not indicative of any individual's exposure to risk factors.

#### Community risk factors

Community risk factors are related to the broader social environment in which minors reside. Studies examining the impact of environmental factors on juvenile delinquency have found evidence that communities with high levels of poverty or that are socially disorganized also tend to have high levels of juvenile delinquency. Research also has revealed that juvenile delinquency is correlated with drug availability, high levels of adult criminality, exposure to violence, and exposure to racial prejudice in the community.

#### Social risk factors

Social risk factors are circumstances that are present in a minor's immediate environments and typically include family relationships and peer relationships. Strong evidence suggests weak parent-child relationships including poor parental discipline style and lack of parental involvement, as well as relationships with antisocial or delinquent peers, are related to juvenile delinquency.

Researchers Mark Lipsey and James Derzon reported results of a statistical review of longitudinal research examining juvenile delinquency risk factors.<sup>4</sup> They found that certain family-related risk factors, such as antisocial parents and parent criminality, were more predictive of serious and violent juvenile delinquency for six to 11 year olds than for 12 to 14 year olds. Peer-related risk factors including antisocial peers or peer criminality were more predictive of serious and violent juvenile delinquency among 12 to 14 year olds.

Family and/or marital conflict, separation from family, and sibling delinquency also are proven risk factors for juvenile delinquency. In addition, abusive parents, low family bonding, high family stress, weak social ties including unpopularity with peers and low levels of social activity, and high family residential mobility may be linked to juvenile delinquency. Additional research to further explore and support these findings is needed before conclusions regarding these potential risk factors can be made.

**Table 2**  
**Available Illinois youth environment risk factor data and data sources**

Data element	Source	Years
<i>Community context</i>		
Number of youth (age 10-16) served by race	Div. of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse	FY04
Number of youth (age 10-16) served by service type	Div. of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse	FY04
Estimated educational attainment (age 25+)	U.S. Census Bureau	CY00
Number of unemployed (labor force)	Illinois Dept. of Employment Security	FY00, 05
Estimated median household income (families)	U.S. Census Bureau	CY05
Estimated number of youth (age 0-17) living in poverty	U.S. Census Bureau	CY05
Monthly average Illinois youth (age 0-18) receive TANF	Illinois Dept. of Human Services	FY00, 05
Youth population by race (age 10-16)	U.S. Census Bureau	CY00, 05
<i>Social context</i>		
Number of reported domestic offense incidents	Illinois State Police	CY00, 05
Number of reported cases of child abuse and neglect	IL Dept. of Children and Family Services	FY00, 05
Number of indicated cases of child abuse and neglect	IL Dept. of Children and Family Services	FY00, 05
Number of reported cases of child sex abuse	IL Dept. of Children and Family Services	FY00, 05
Number of indicated cases of child sex abuse	IL Dept. of Children and Family Services	FY00, 05
Number of reported crimes against youth offenses	Illinois State Police	CY00, 05
Number of adults admitted to IDOC with children	Illinois Dept. of Corrections	FY00, 04
<i>School context</i>		
Number of students (K-12) reported truant	Illinois State Board of Education	AY99-00 & 04-05
Number of students (K-12) reported chronically truant	Illinois State Board of Education	AY99-00 & 04-05
Number of students (K-12) suspended	Illinois State Board of Education	AY99-00 & 04-05
Number of students (K-12) suspended more than once	Illinois State Board of Education	AY99-00 & 04-05
Number of students (K-12) expelled	Illinois State Board of Education	AY99-00 & 04-05
Number of high school dropouts	Illinois State Board of Education	AY99-00 & 04-05
Number of truant minors in need of supervision (TMINS)	Illinois State Board of Education	AY99-00 & 04-05
Number of reported crimes against school personnel	Illinois State Police	CY00, 05

#### School risk factors

Research on predictors of serious and violent juvenile delinquency has revealed that truancy, dropping out of school, and poor academic performance are related to juvenile delinquency. Some evidence also suggests that school delinquency, such as truancy, occupational expectations, and new school transitions are also related to juvenile delinquency.

## Data summary

### *Community context*

The data elements examined in this report that describe the community in which youth live include:

- The number of youth receiving drug or alcohol treatment.
- Adult educational levels
- Unemployment rates
- Estimated median household income
- The number of minors living in poverty
- The average monthly number of children in families receiving temporary assistance to needy families

### *Substance abuse treatment*

According to substance abuse treatment provider data received by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), 19,114 youth received substance abuse services during FY04. More than half of these services were provided to white youth (54 percent), 29 percent were provided to black youth, and 15 percent were provided to Hispanic youth. Forty-one percent of those served received intervention service, 32 percent received **outpatient** services, 11 percent received **case management** services, and 11 percent received **residential treatment** services. The remaining 5 percent received intensive **outpatient, home recovery, or detoxification** services.

### *Education*

The most recent education data available from the U.S. Census Bureau was collected in 2000. About 6.5 million people over 25 years of age in Illinois had at least a high-school diploma. A total of 3.1 million males and 3.4 million females were high school graduates or beyond. Overall, Illinois had a rate of 81,391 persons with at least a high school diploma for every 100,000 people 25 years of age or older. When comparing education data with estimated income data, the more high school graduates there were in a county, the higher the estimated median household income was for that county.

### *Unemployment*

In FY00, 290,862 people in the labor force were unemployed in Illinois. By FY05, that number had increased 27 percent to 370,819. The unemployment rate in FY05 was 5,719 for every 100,000 in the labor force, also a 27 percent increase from FY00. In FY05, almost 6 percent of the labor force was unemployed.

### *Income*

The most recent income data available from the U.S. Census Bureau were collected in 2005. The estimated median household income in Illinois that year was \$50,270, an 8 percent increase from 2000, when the median household income was \$46,372.

### *Poverty*

In 2005, 524,897 youth ages 17 years old and younger were living in poverty in Illinois, a rate of 16,275 for every 100,000 people under the age of 18. This is a 12 percent increase from 2000.

To calculate the definition of poverty, the U.S. Census Bureau uses a set monetary income threshold for families that changes according to family size. This threshold does not change geographically, but is adjusted for inflation. For example, in calendar year 2004, a family of four with two adults and two children, had a threshold of \$19,157. A family of three with one adult and two children had a threshold of \$15,219.<sup>5</sup>

### *Temporary assistance to needy families*

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) grants states federal funds to implement the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program. In Illinois, these funds are distributed locally by IDHS. Citizens apply for assistance at their local TANF agency and, if they meet the requirements, are offered temporary financial assistance to help pay for food, shelter, utilities, and other expenses. In Illinois, the average monthly TANF cash grant is \$239.<sup>6</sup>

From FY00 to FY05, a significant reduction was seen in the average monthly number of families with children ages 10 to 18 in Illinois receiving TANF. In FY00, an average of 190,782 youth were living in families that received TANF monthly, while in FY05, an average of 81,991 youth received TANF monthly, a reduction of 57 percent.

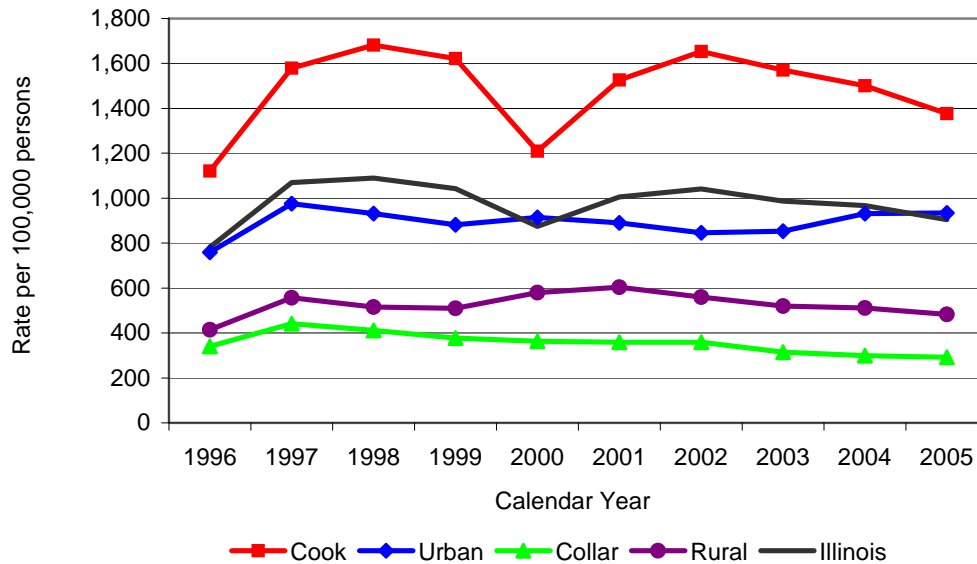
A reduction also was seen nationally in youth recipients of TANF funding. This drastic reduction is largely attributed to the five-year time limitations placed on TANF recipients in the 1996 welfare reforms. (See Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-193, 110 STAT. 2105) In October 2002, six TANF offices in Illinois were closed and counties started combining services. In February 2005, three more TANF offices were closed and TANF services were combined with other counties.

### *Social context*

The data elements examined in this section describe the social setting in which youth live, including numbers of reported domestic offense incidents, reported and indicated cases of child abuse and neglect, reported and indicated cases of sexual abuse, reported crimes against children, and the number of Illinois Department of Corrections inmates with children

## Domestic violence

**Figure 2**  
**Rate of reported domestic offense incidents per 100,000 persons**  
**in the general population by county classification, 1996 – 2005**



Source: Illinois State Police

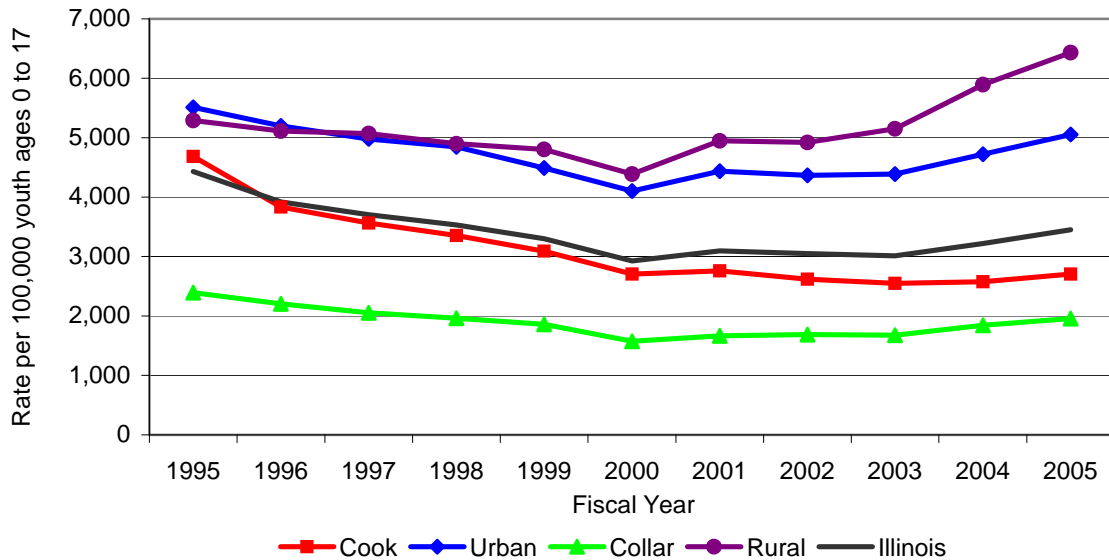
Domestic offense incidents are reported by local police departments to the Illinois State Police (ISP) as a part of the **Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting (I-UCR) supplemental reporting program**. In 2005, 115,411 domestic offense incidents were reported to the I-UCR supplemental reporting program, an increase of 6 percent from the 108,792 incidents reported in 2000. However, a steady decrease has occurred in the number of incidents reported since 2002. *Figure 2* depicts the rate of reported domestic offense incidents by county classification from 1996 through 2005. Data prior to 1996 were unavailable.

In 2005, the state rate of reported domestic violence incidents was 905 reports per 100,000 persons in the general population. Rates of domestic incidents were much higher in certain counties than in Illinois as a whole. This might be explained by under-reporting of domestic offense incidents. The high rates may be due to some jurisdictions being more likely than others to report domestic offenses to ISP.

In 2000, a dip is seen in the rate of reported domestic violence offenses in Cook County. This is due to software issues at the Chicago Police Department.

## Abuse and neglect

**Figure 3**  
**Rate of reported cases of child abuse and neglect per 100,000 youth**  
**ages 0 to 17 by county classification, FY95- FY05**



Source: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

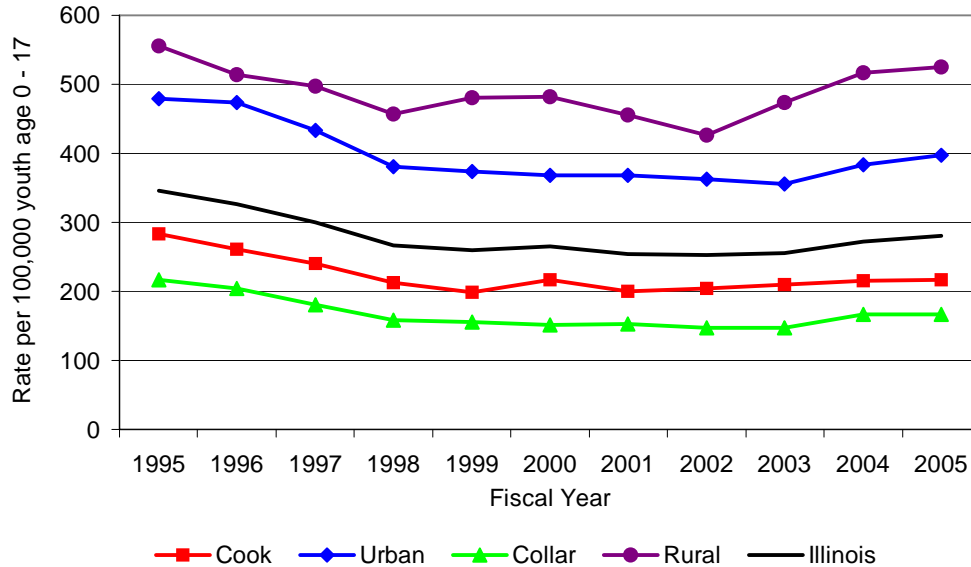
Research has determined that **abused** and **neglected children** have delinquency rates 47 percent higher than children who are not abused or neglected.<sup>12</sup> In FY05, there were 111,830 **child abuse and neglect reports** to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), an increase of 18 percent from the 95,958 cases reported in FY00.

An 18 percent increase was seen in the rate of child abuse and neglect reports, from 2,924 per 100,000 youth ages 10 to 17 in FY00 to 3,453 per 100,000 youth ages 10 to 17 in FY05. *Figure 3* shows the rate of reports of child abuse and neglect by county classification from FY95 to FY05.

In FY05, DCFS **indicated** 25 percent of the reported cases of child abuse and neglect in the state. Indicated cases are those that DCFS has confirmed credible evidence of child abuse and neglect. That year, 27,575 cases of abuse and neglect were indicated, an increase of 1.4 percent from the 27,189 cases indicated in FY00. In FY05, DCFS indicated a rate of 852 cases of abuse and neglect per 100,000 youth ages 0 to 17.

Sexual abuse

**Figure 4**  
**Rate of reported cases of child sex abuse per 100,000 youth**  
**ages 0 to 17 by county classification, FY95- FY05**



Source: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

In FY05, 9,100 cases of sexual abuse of children in Illinois were reported to DCFS, a 6 percent increase from the 8,593 cases reported in 2000. From FY95 to FY05 a decrease was seen in the statewide rate of reports of child sexual abuse to DCFS, but there was a 6 percent increase in the rate of child sexual abuse reports between FY00 and FY05, from 265 per 100,000 youth ages 10 to 17 in FY00 to 281 per 100,000 youth ages 10 to 17 in FY05. The greatest increase in the rate of reports was from 253 per 100,000 youth ages 10 to 17 in FY02 to 281 in FY05. *Figure 4* shows the rate of reported sexual abuse of children by county classification from FY95 through FY05.

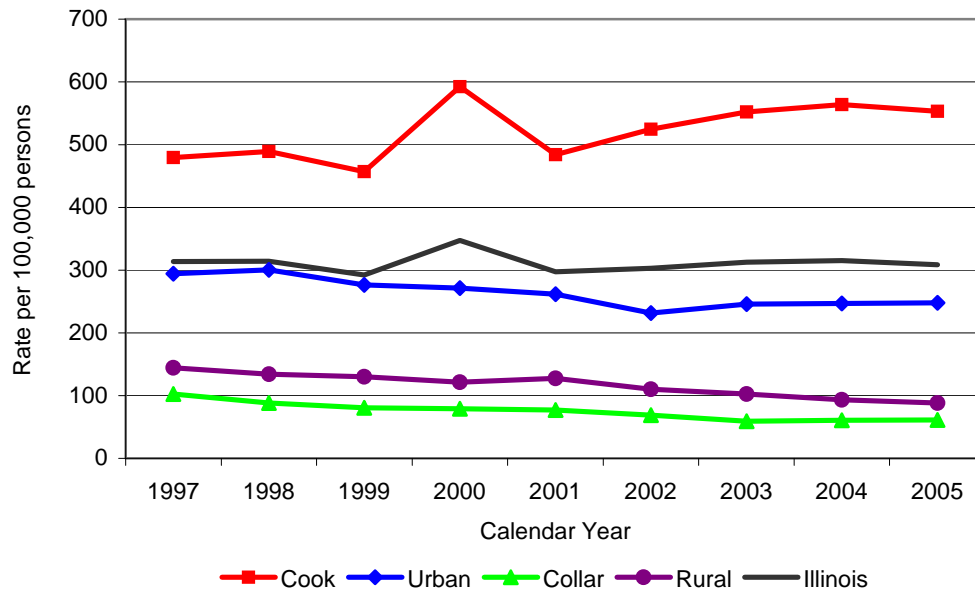
In FY05, 2,618 indicated cases of child sex abuse were recorded, a decrease of 23 percent from the 3,412 cases indicated in 2000. In FY05, DCFS indicated 29 percent of reported cases of child sex abuse. DCFS indicated child sexual abuse reports at a rate of 81 cases of child sex abuse per 100,000 youth ages 0 to 17 in FY05.



*Crimes against youth*

Reporting of criminal offenses against youth to ISP is voluntary. These numbers may therefore be an undercount of the frequency of crimes against youth. In 2005, 39,400 offenses against youth were reported to the I-UCR supplemental reporting program, a decrease of 9 percent from the 43,221 offenses reported in 2000.

**Figure 5**  
**Rate of reported crimes against youth per 100,000 persons by county classification, 1997-2005**



Source: Illinois State Police

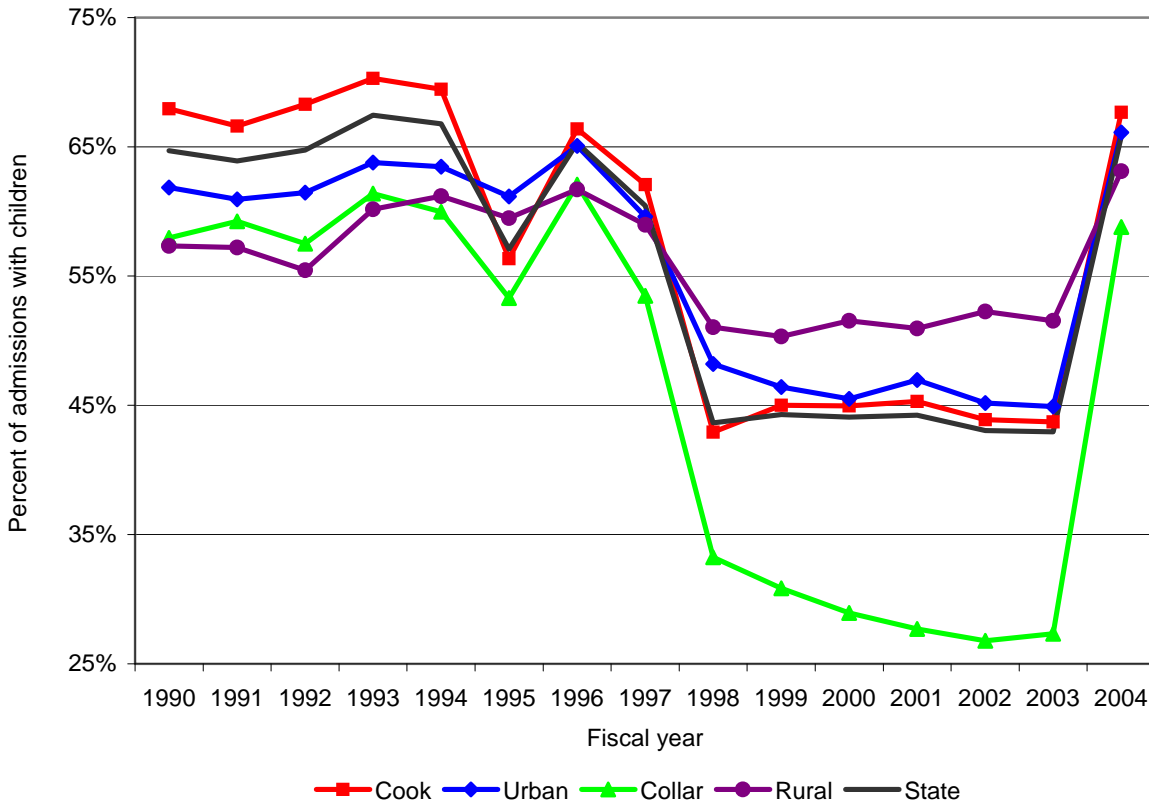
In 2005, there was a rate of 309 reported crimes against youth per 100,000 persons in the general population. This represents an 11 percent decrease in the rate of reported crimes against youth from 2000, when the rate was 347 per 100,000 persons. Sangamon County had a rate of reported offenses against youth that was more than two times the rate of the state as a whole. This may be a reflection of reporting practices in that county.

*Figure 5* shows the reported crimes against youth rate by county classification for 1997 through 2005. Data prior to 1997 were unavailable.

*Correctional inmates with children*

In FY04, 24,951 adult inmates admitted to the Illinois Department of Corrections had children. This number represented 66 percent of the total inmate admission population. In FY00, there were 12,351 admitted inmates with children or 44 percent of the total inmate population. This represents an increase of more than 100 percent in the number of adult inmates with children from FY00 to FY04. Data for FY05 were unavailable.

**Figure 6**  
**Percent of inmates admitted to IDOC with children, FY90 - FY04**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

As reported by IDOC, in FY98 about a 30 percent decrease was seen in the percentage of inmates with children, from 62 percent in FY97 to 43 percent in FY98. This decrease continued until FY04, when the percentages of correctional inmates with children increased to 68 percent. Collar counties experienced the greatest decreases, from 62 percent in FY96 to 33 percent in FY98, but the figures increased to 59 percent in FY04 (*Figure 6*). The increase may be attributed to changes in data collection and reporting practices at IDOC.

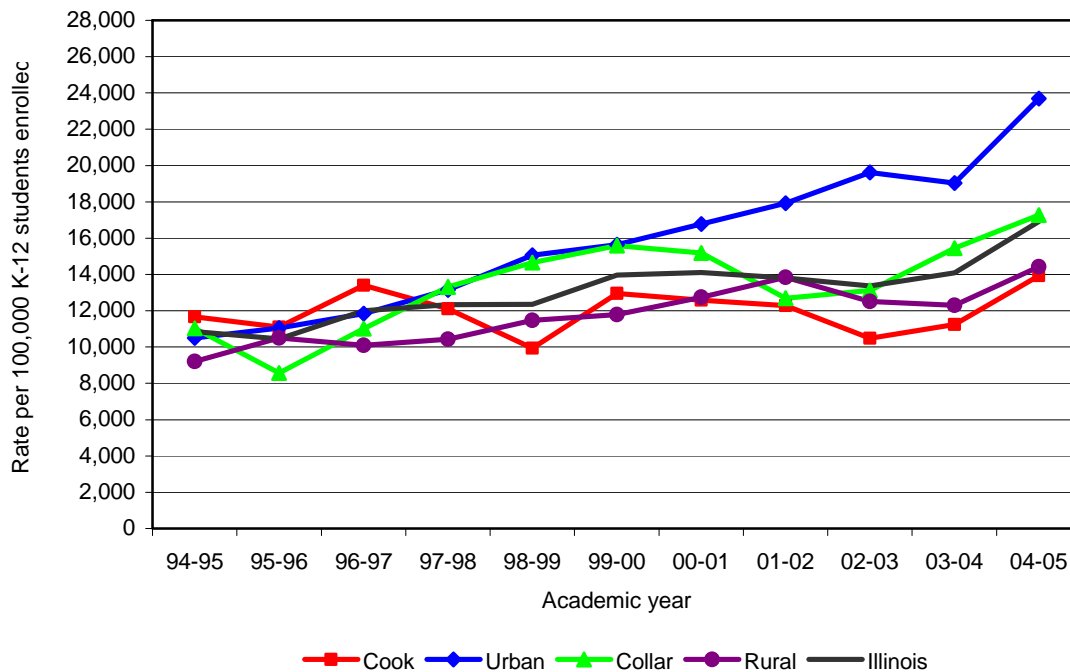
*School context*

Data elements used to determine school environment included the number of students who were truant, chronically truant, suspended, suspended more than once, expelled, dropouts, and truant minors in need of supervision. Also included were reported crimes against school personnel. All data were collected on youth enrolled in public schools in Illinois, with the exception of reported crimes against school personnel.

*Truancy*

In Illinois, students are considered **truant** if they have been absent from school without valid cause for one or more days during the academic year (AY). In Illinois, 341,792 youth were considered truant during AY04-05, a 22 percent increase from the 279,755 students who were truant during AY99-00.

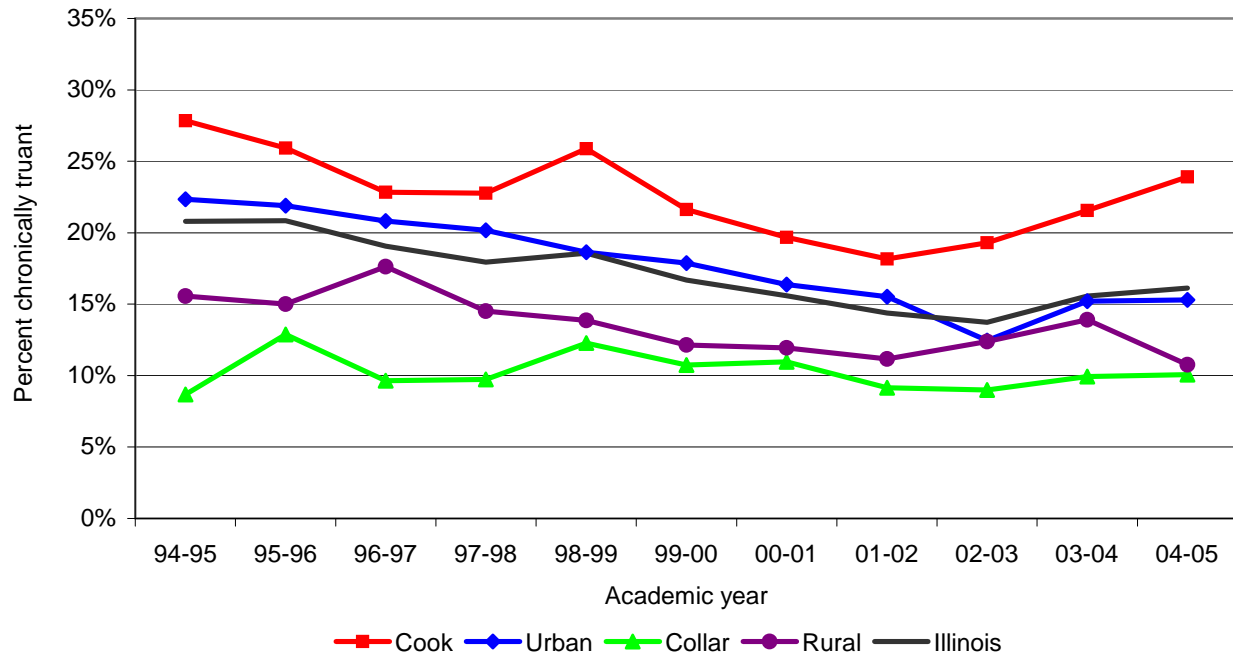
**Figure 7**  
**Rate of youth reported truant per 100,000 K-12 students enrolled,**  
**by county classification, AY94-95 to AY04-05**



Source: Illinois State Board of Education

Figure 7 depicts the rate of truancy by county classification for AY94-95 through AY04-05. **Truancy programs** are often made available to these students. The statewide truancy rate for academic year 2004-05 was 16,909 per 100,000 enrolled students. This represents a 21 percent increase in the statewide truancy rate from 13,961 in AY99-00.

**Figure 8**  
**Percent of K-12 truant students chronically truant, by county classification,**  
**AY94-95 to AY04-05**



Source: Illinois State Board of Education

**Chronic truants** are students who habitually violate compulsory school attendance law by being absent from school without valid cause for 18 or more school days. **Chronic truant programs** are often made available to these students, which may include mentoring, crisis intervention, family counseling, and academic counseling. Of those truant during AY04-05, 55,113 were chronically truant (16 percent).

An 18 percent increase was seen in the number of chronic truants from AY94-95 to AY04-05 (*Figure 8*). However, this increase is more recent. The statewide percentage of chronic truants declined steadily from AY98-99 through AY02-03. A 50 percent increase in the number of chronic truants was seen from AY02-03 to AY04-05.

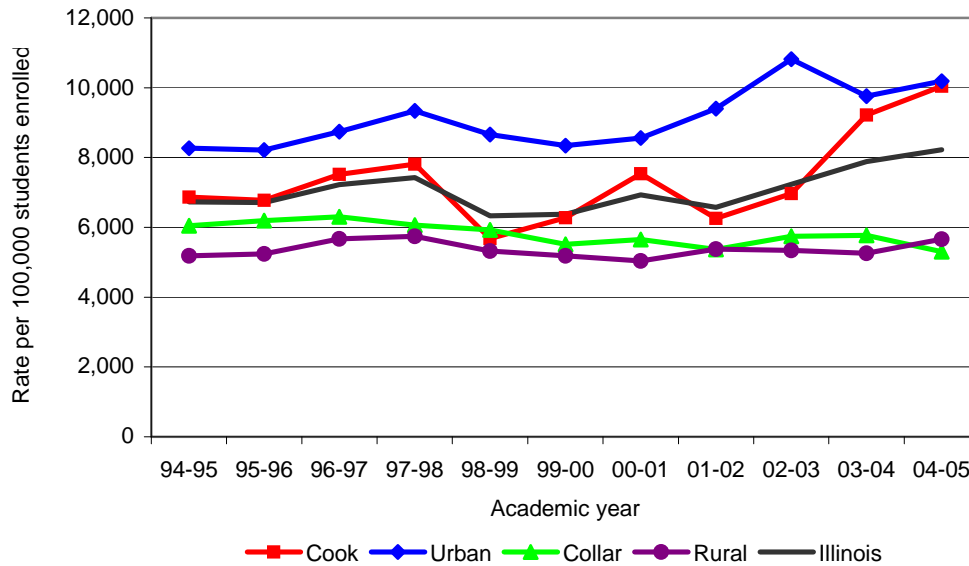
#### *Truant minors in need of supervision*

**Truant minors in need of supervision** are students ages seven to 17 attending grades K-12 who are reported by a regional superintendent of schools, or by the Office of Chronic Truant Adjudication in cities of more than 500,000 inhabitants, as chronic truants (705 ILCS 405/3-33). In Illinois, there were 22,599 truant minors in need of supervision during AY04-05, representing a 1 percent decrease from the 22,940 recorded during AY99-00. The statewide rate of truant minors in need of supervision during the 2004-05 academic year was 1,118 per 100,000 enrolled students, a 2 percent rate decrease from AY99-00.

Suspensions

During AY04-05, 166,240 students were suspended from school, a 30 percent increase from 127,771 AY99-00.

**Figure 9**  
**Rate of youth suspended per 100,000 K-12 students enrolled by county classification, AY94-95 to AY04-05**



Source: Illinois State Board of Education

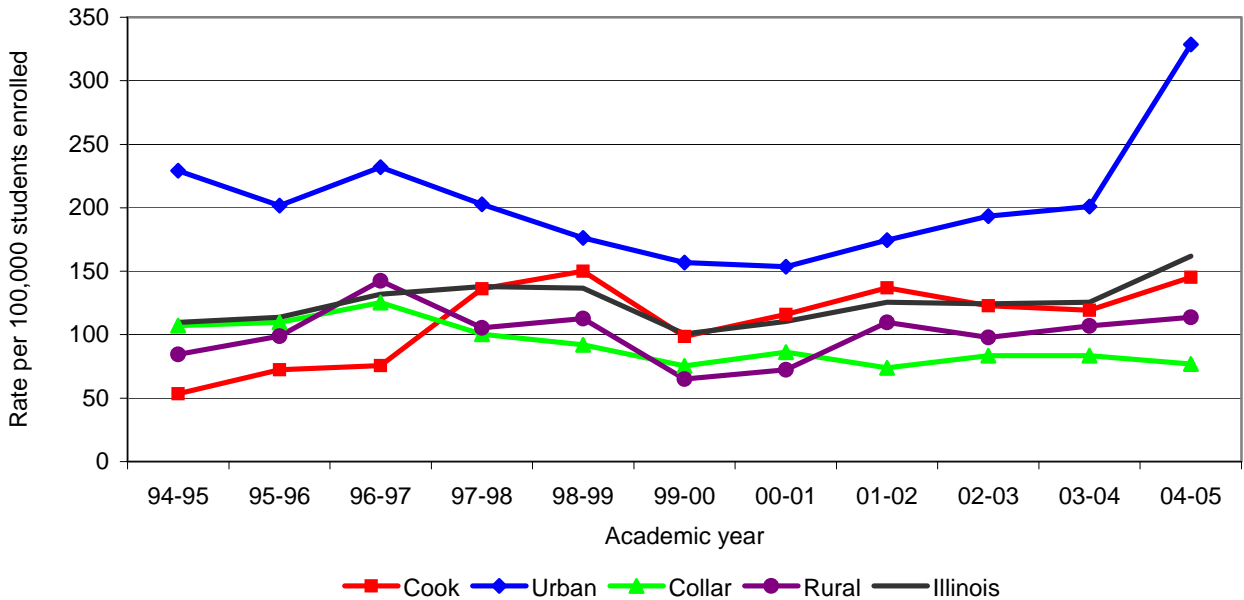
Suspension rates of students increased from AY94-95 to AY04-05. In AY04-05, the rate of suspensions was 8,224 per 100,000 enrolled students. *Figure 9* shows the suspension rate for students enrolled in kindergarten through high school by county classification for AY95-05 through AY04-05.

The statewide suspension rate for AY04-05 was 8,224 per 100,000 enrolled students. Of those suspended during AY04-05, 67,960 were suspended more than once (41 percent). Alexander County had a suspension rate that was almost three times the statewide rate.

Expulsions

During AY04-05, 3,271 students were expelled from school, a 62 percent increase from the 2,017 expelled in AY99-00.

**Figure 10**  
**Rate of youth expelled per 100,000 K-12 students enrolled, by county classification, AY94-95 to AY04-05**



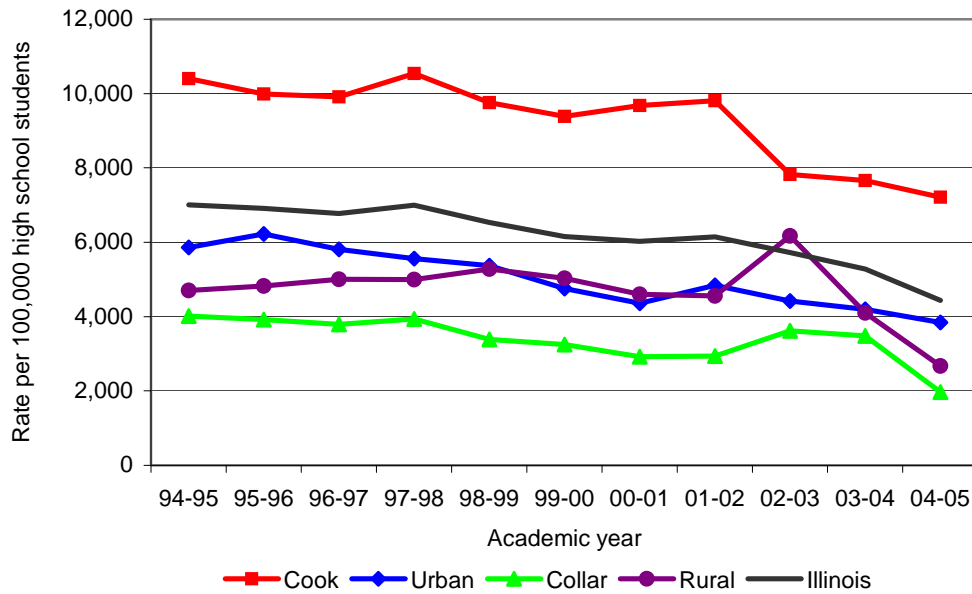
Source: Illinois State Board of Education

Rate increases were seen in students expelled and students who dropped out of school from AY94-95 to AY04-05 (*Figure 10*). The statewide expulsion rate for AY04-05 was 162 per 100,000 enrolled students. This represents a 48 percent increase in the statewide rate of expulsions, from 110 per 100,000 enrolled students in AY94-95. Urban counties experienced a 64 percent rate increase in their rates of expulsions from 201 in AY03-04 to 329 in AY04-05. During the 2004-05 school year, Peoria County had an expulsion rate that was five times the statewide rate.

Dropouts

During AY04-05, there were 27,066 high school student dropouts, which was a decrease of 19 percent from the 33,328 high school students who dropped out during AY99-00.

**Figure 11**  
**Rate of high school student dropouts per 100,000 high school students enrolled, by county classification, AY94-95 to AY04-05**



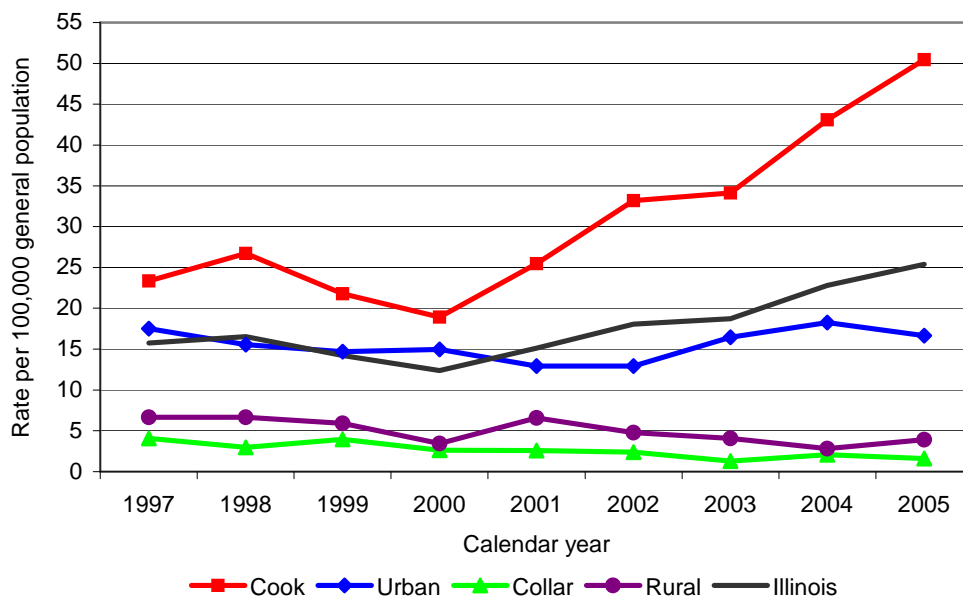
Source: Illinois State Board of Education

There was a statewide decrease in the rate of high school **dropouts** from AY99-00 to AY04-05 (*Figure 11*). In academic year 2004-05, the rate of dropouts was 4,435 per 100,000 high school students. The statewide dropout rate for AY04-05 was 4,435 per 100,000 students enrolled in high school.

*Crimes against school personnel*

Crimes against school personnel are defined as crimes committed against teachers, administrative personnel, or educational and other support personnel who are employed by a school. The reporting of crimes against school personnel to the Illinois State Police became mandatory for police departments in Illinois beginning in April 1996. Reported crimes against school personnel rose significantly from 2000 to 2005. In 2005, 3,242 crimes against school personnel were reported to the I-UCR supplemental data-reporting program, a 110 percent increase from the 1,541 crimes reported in 2000.

**Figure 12**  
**Rate of reported crimes against school personnel per 100,000 persons in the general population by county classification, 1997 – 2005**



Source: Illinois State Police

The rate of crimes against school personnel in 2005 was 26 crimes per 100,000 persons in the general population (*Figure 12*. Data prior to 1997 were unavailable.).

Cook County experienced a 167 percent increase in its rate, from 19 crimes per 100,000 persons in the general population in 2000, to 50 in 2005. These findings might be indicative of a change in reporting practices and may not necessarily be reflective of a higher rate of crimes against school personnel alone. However, in 2005, 67 counties reported no crimes against school personnel to the Illinois State Police.



## Conclusion

Many factors influence the community, social, and school environments in which Illinois youth live. Although state and county-level data cannot reveal the degree to which any single youth is differentially exposed to factors that increase his or her risk for delinquency, they can be useful to policymakers and juvenile justice practitioners as indicators of potential challenges to successful youth development. Knowledge of risk factors and the prevalence of these factors are useful in planning and implementing prevention activities. Policies and programs that support the development and enhancement of the many pro-social or protective factors of youth in Illinois may help curtail a youth's involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Policymakers and practitioners should be aware that many rural counties have community, social, or school environments that increase the risk of youth engaging in delinquency. Rural counties had risk factor rates greater than the statewide averages in several areas. It may be important to note, however, that because rural counties have smaller populations, change in rural rates can be sensitive to slight changes in numbers.

Research has shown that exposure to one or more risk factors increases the risk of delinquency significantly.<sup>7</sup> Officials should investigate more thoroughly the reasons behind high risk factor rates and seek out opportunities to reduce them.

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## Notes

<sup>2</sup> Aspy, Cheryl B., Roy F. Oman, Sara K. Vesely, Kenneth McLeroy, Sharon Rodine, and LaDonna Marshall, "Adolescent Violence: The protective effects of youth assets". *Journal of Counseling & Development* 82 (Summer 2004): 268-276.

<sup>3</sup> Loeber, R., and D. P. Farrington, eds., *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Lipsey, Mark W., and James H. Derzon, "Predictors of Violent or Serious Delinquency in Adolescence and Early Adulthood," in *Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Risk Factors and Successful Interventions*, ed. Rolf Loeber and David P. Farrington, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1998: 86-105.

<sup>5</sup> United States Census Bureau, "Poverty Thresholds, 2005," Retrieved February 13, 2008 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh05.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Human Services, "DHS Temporary Assistance for Needy Families," Retrieved December 18, 2007 on the World Wide Web: <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ts/fss/tanf.asp>.

<sup>7</sup> Oman, Roy F., Sara Vesely, Cheryl B. Aspy, Kenneth McLeroy, Sharon Rodine, and LaDonna Marshall, "The Potential Protective Effect of Youth Assets on Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Use". *American Journal of Public Health* (August 2004): 1425-1430.