

THE Compiler

Illinois Criminal Justice

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Illinois making strides in quest for an integrated justice information system

By Karen S. Levy McCanna and Wil Nagel

If two people don't speak the same language, can they communicate effectively? Can they communicate at all?

What is true for people is also true for information systems. And, unfortunately, many computer systems designed to serve criminal justice and law enforcement agencies in Illinois lack a common language.

In the meantime, agencies across Illinois must share information to facilitate day-to-day operation of the justice system. Police share information with prosecutors and prosecutors file charges with the courts. When a defendant is convicted and sentenced, information must be sent from the courts to the Department of Corrections. These are just a few of the data exchanges necessary to the administration of justice in Illinois.

But state criminal justice and law enforcement officials foresee a time when vital information will be electronically shared among police departments, government agencies, courts, and other criminal justice entities in Illinois. Development of integrated computer systems is recognized as a priority issue by the criminal justice community and has been in planning since 2001.

The ability to share information is the main goal of the Illinois Integrated Jus-

Secretary of State Jesse White gives opening remarks at the Illinois Integrated Justice Information System Summit in June 2005. Public officials have joined criminal justice practitioners and the law enforcement community in pursuit of a single integrated system that would allow statewide information sharing.

(Photo by Deborah Trainor)



Information Systems (IJIS) Project, an outgrowth of the Authority's Criminal Justice Planning Summit convened in June 1999. An executive order created the IJIS initiative after the release of the June 2001 Criminal Justice Plan, a summit-prepared document that cited the lack of a coordinated criminal justice information-sharing system.

Illinois is not the only state with law enforcement communication problems. Nationwide, a variety of justice information systems have been designed to fill the specific needs of individual agencies. Users of these systems often resist

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Created in 1983, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is a state agency dedicated to improving the administration of criminal justice.

The Authority is governed by a 21-member board comprised of state and local leaders from the criminal justice system and members of the public.

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change, even when the systems are cumbersome and outdated.

ILJIS began with executive management support and user involvement. From the beginning, the project's leaders called for clear requirements, detailed planning, realistic expectations, and ongoing progress reports.

The Authority, in partnership with ILJIS staff and stakeholders, has undertaken several projects to help bring Illinois closer to the vision of integration set forth in the *Scenario for Information Sharing* (contained in the ILJIS Strategic Plan). The *Scenario* outlines the broad range of electronic data exchanges necessary to ensure that justice practitioners have the information they need to make sound decisions.

Coordinated systems desired statewide

Automatic data exchange eliminates redundancies in data entry, as well as the possibility for errors when information is submitted for compilation. When names, dates of birth, and other personal indicators do not match, conviction records cannot be combined, and criminal records are incomplete.

Complete and accurate criminal history information is particularly important to the law enforcement community. The Illinois State Police LEADS system contains both warrant information and caution files. Local and county law enforcement agencies enter warrant information into LEADS and officers with access to the database are able to determine whether they are dealing with someone who is potentially dangerous or wanted by the authorities.

The ILJIS project aims to integrate Illinois justice information systems, alleviating data redundancy and inaccuracies while

enhancing public safety. Project goals include:

- Bringing stakeholder organizations together to comprehensively and effectively plan justice information systems.
- Coordinating information system development activities.
- Expanding the range of effectiveness of information systems and sharing capabilities.
- Improving the effectiveness, timeliness, accuracy, and completeness of information.

A grant from the National Governor's Association and Authority-administered Anti-Drug Abuse Act funding provide support for ILJIS project activities. Former Gov. George H. Ryan issued Executive Order No. 12 in 2001, establishing the ILJIS Governing Board. Following development of a strategic plan, Gov. Rod Blagojevich created the ILJIS Implementation Board with Executive Order No. 16 in 2003.

Committees have been established to complete the work needed to meet project goals. They include:

Planning & Policy Committee. Responsible for developing policies to facilitate integrated information sharing, the Planning & Policy Committee also helps guide project activities through planning efforts.

Technical Committee. This committee identifies technical gaps and recommends ways to close them. The Technical Committee also is charged with recommending the adoption of electronic data sharing standards that will enable computer systems to work together within and between agencies.

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Outreach Committee. Primarily educational, the Outreach Committee's efforts aim to gather support from Illinois legislators, professionals, and the public regarding the benefits of electronic data sharing through an integrated justice system.

Funding Committee. The Funding Committee makes funding recommendations to the Authority that support integration projects.

Executive Steering Committee. Charged with overall administrative responsibilities necessary to support the work of the IJIS project, the Executive Steering Committee meets quarterly to determine project needs and guide committee efforts.

IJIS efforts

A number of planning efforts toward statewide integration have been under way since the project was initiated.

Privacy policy guidance

Illinois leads the nation in efforts to guide privacy policy in the area of criminal justice information sharing. A series of publications under development will guide state and local justice officials as they create information sharing policies that protect individual privacy rights.

The IJIS Privacy Policy Subcommittee identified several issues that have not found resolution in existing law, including secondary dissemination of criminal justice information by the private sector, data retention periods for electronic files, collection and maintenance of non-relevant information, and dissemination of justice information when community safety is at issue.

An IJIS report, *"Privacy Issues Confronting the Sharing of Justice Information in an Integrated Justice Environment,"* recorded these and other privacy concerns that should be addressed before designing an integrated justice information system. No other state has compiled a list of privacy challenges involved with the enhanced collection, analysis, and sharing of justice information made possible by advancements in computer integration technologies. The U.S. Department of Justice Global Advisory Committee in its Privacy Policy Development Guide holds out the IJIS Privacy Policy Subcommittee as a model for other jurisdictions facing similar privacy issues.

Systems survey

IJIS staff surveyed municipal police departments, sheriffs, circuit court clerks, state's attorneys, and probation officers in 2001 to better understand how justice information was managed and shared among justice agencies. The surveys gathered information on the types of data routinely exchanged by justice agencies, as well as the extent of computer automation throughout the justice system.

Of the 239 agencies that responded to the survey, 74 percent indicated that they maintained a computerized records management system. The most frequently stated integration need was connectivity to the circuit court clerk's office, although the findings suggested that municipal law enforcement agencies may be more concerned with operational functionality within their departments than with connectivity to other components of the criminal justice system.

The surveys also demonstrated the repetitive nature of justice information. Specifically, 24 types of justice information accounted for 70 percent of the information transferred. These core data elements included the offender's name, date of birth, state identification, driver's license, and social security numbers, and other information commonly collected at the time of arrest or booking.

In addition, the survey revealed that many incompatible electronic record or case management systems are in use by criminal justice agencies throughout Illinois. Incompatibility also existed within single agencies with multiple stand-alone systems.

A second survey was issued in February 2006 to all county chief information officers in an effort to gauge each county's integrated justice governance structures and planning efforts. Results of this survey will enhance the IJIS Implementation Board's understanding of state government assistance needed for county-level integration projects.

2005 IJIS Summit

More than 200 justice officials from 28 Illinois counties met to discuss the various perspectives on justice systems integration, strategic planning, privacy, and interagency cooperation at a June 2005 IJIS Summit. The summit promoted the coordination of state and county efforts to improve justice information sharing and introduced the justice com-

Publications

The following summaries and reports are available from the Authority. Most Authority publications can be found online at www.icjia.state.il.us.

Assessing disproportionate minority contact with the Illinois juvenile justice system

This *Research Bulletin* describes the problem of minority overrepresentation in the Illinois juvenile justice system. Findings of a study conducted by the Authority indicated that in many Illinois counties where there is a measurable percentage of minority youth, those youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. The problem of minority overrepresentation is especially acute for African Americans in Illinois.

2004 Summary of Drug Enforcement Activities Across Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Task Forces

This summary provides an overview of the drug and violent crime problem in the jurisdictions covered by Illinois metropolitan enforcement groups (MEG) and task forces, and their responses to these problems. The report provides information on local police agency participation in a MEG or task force, the impact that participation may have on drug enforcement activity and arrests, types of arrests made, regional variations, and case outcomes.

CAPS at Ten

Northwestern University has completed the last phase of the comprehensive multi-year assessment of the Chicago Police Department's community policing program. Since 1993, the evaluation has surveyed more than 48,500 residents and 13,600 police officers. In addition, more than 1,000 in-depth personal interviews of police and residents were conducted.

A profile of Class 4 felony offenders sentenced to prison in Illinois

This *Research Bulletin* examines the criminal histories and incarceration trends of Class 4 felons. According to the Department of Corrections, the

(Continued on back page)

Research

Meth database to fill gaps

A new database under development by the Authority will help eliminate existing gaps in the drug information network that records the growing methamphetamine problem in the U.S.

With a \$50,000 federal grant, the Authority will create an online database that will allow all law enforcement agencies in Illinois to report meth lab seizures. When combined with Illinois State Police and federal El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) data, this comprehensive information-sharing network will help stem the proliferation and sale of methamphetamine by more accurately pinpointing the sources of its production.

The shared database will supplement state and federal drug information banks that are already in place. While the Illinois State Police data collection system records lab seizures made by its multi-jurisdictional drug task forces and by other state police units, it excludes seizures made by local law enforcement agencies.

Access to the EPIC national network requires membership fees to be paid through a regional information sharing system for information, presenting a hardship for small police departments. Another drawback to the present system is that the state police network's information is not completely assumed into the EPIC database. About 85 percent of Illinois methamphetamine lab seizure reports appeared in the EPIC's 2004 compilation.

Evidence-based practices initiative to decrease recidivism

Providing probation departments with strategies to reduce recidivism is the goal of a three-year, interstate study funded by the National Institute of Corrections. Supported with a \$194,000 grant, Authority researchers are working with participating probation departments, state agencies, and funding entities on an evidence-based practices probation initiative to develop research and evaluation measures that will improve probation department practices and management.

The study will examine changes in services ordered and provided to probationers, and their compliance rates. The project also will foster partnerships among the departments, as

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The Illinois Integrated Justice Information System Implementation Board

The IJIS Implementation Board comprises a diverse group of criminal justice practitioners from across Illinois. They include:

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Executive Director, ICJIA

Dorothy Brown, Vice Chair
Clerk of the Circuit Court
of Cook County

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Jesse White
Illinois Secretary of State

munity to integration resources. Summit participants heard presentations regarding the global principles of information sharing, building business cases for justice integration, the history and status of the IJIS initiative, and how to address privacy concerns.

Also highlighted was the Illinois Citizen and Law Enforcement Analysis and Reporting (I-CLEAR) system, a joint effort by Chicago Police Department and Illinois State Police to create a data warehouse that will facilitate cross-jurisdictional sharing of police incident reports and criminal history information to help investigate and prevent crime.

The future of IJIS

The next step to IJIS implementation is development of a tactical plan. The IJIS tactical plan will pinpoint individual projects required to achieve the vision of integrated justice. The plan also will describe how the projects relate to each

other functionally and over time, and briefly discuss each project's scope, content, and benefits to the Illinois criminal justice system. Detailed project plans will follow outlining development timetables, specific deliverables, necessary personnel, and overall cost.

The Implementation Board directed the Planning & Policy Committee to begin developing the IJIS Tactical Plan in 2005. A draft is expected in the fall of 2006 and the final document will aid IJIS in its implementation phases. The plan also will bring Illinois closer to achieving its vision of ensuring that justice decision-makers have more effective means of obtaining the most complete, accurate, and timely information available.

(Karen Levy McCanna is a senior research analyst with the Authority. Wil Nagel is an Authority integration analyst. Visit www.icjia.state.il.us/IJIS to obtain copies of reports described in this article.)

Illinois at forefront on privacy issues related to integration

By Wil Nagel

Resolving privacy issues that confront the enhanced sharing of justice information is a key component of the ILJIS Strategic Plan. Protecting the privacy interests of those about whom data is being gathered, analyzed, and shared by an integrated justice system is a planning priority. Under development is a uniform privacy policy that prevents unauthorized disclosures of information while allowing appropriate access to data.

Policy development

A comprehensive privacy policy that will govern information sharing with justice agencies and the public is the main focus of the ILJIS Privacy Policy Subcommittee. The subcommittee comprises representatives from the criminal justice system, the media, law schools, victim services groups, and private users of criminal history information. The diverse nature of the subcommittee ensures that a broad spectrum of interests will be reflected. The group is examining and organizing a summarized list of existing laws regarding collection, sharing, and retention of justice information so that they are clear and concise. The process will also expose areas where laws do not regulate information sharing.

Balancing privacy and information sharing

The first step in policy development was to divide the types of information collected and shared by the justice system into discrete categories. Policy provisions are being developed in three areas, including traditional justice information, intelligence data, and juvenile justice information.

Because it underlies the day-to-day operation of the justice system, traditional justice information sharing was first to be examined. Provisions in this area also will provide a foundation for policy development in the more difficult privacy issues surrounding intelligence data and counter-terrorism information.

Policy provisions on traditional justice information sharing methods included guidance on sharing offender information and accessing victim and witness information throughout the justice system. Subcommittee members and the stakeholder groups they represent are reviewing the provisions.

Privacy issues that have not found resolution in existing law will be identified. Other issues facing the ILJIS initiative range from ensuring accessibility of officer safety information to sharing incident report information. Making justice information management practices transparent and providing a right to access, review, and challenge justice information also must be examined.

The privacy group will address these issues by drafting additional policy provisions and by making recommendations to the General Assembly for legislative action as they are deemed appropriate. Staff will also begin identifying federal and state statutes and regulations that control collection and sharing of criminal intelligence data and juvenile justice information.

Illinois at forefront

Illinois is recognized as a national leader in the development of privacy policies for criminal justice information systems. Former Authority General Counsel Robert Boehmer serves as chair of the Global Privacy and Information Quality Work Group, a national organization that develops resources to help governmental units address privacy issues in integrated justice information systems. In its Privacy Policy Development Guide, the group uses Illinois as a model for developing privacy policy.

(Wil Nagel is an integration analyst with the Authority.)

Research, continued

well as with local university researchers, and state agencies.

Serving as pilot sites in this study are probation departments in Adams, Cook, DuPage, Lake, and Sangamon counties, and the 2nd Judicial Circuit, serving Crawford, Edwards, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, and White counties. Probation departments in Maine also are participating.

Redeploy Illinois program evaluation under way

The Authority is providing technical assistance and oversight to an evaluation of Redeploy Illinois, a program serving at-risk youth in local communities. Supported with federal funding administered by the Department of Human Services, Redeploy Illinois aims to provide community-based resources to serve non-violent youth who would otherwise be sent to the Department of Corrections, ultimately saving tax dollars that would have been spent on incarceration.

Sites serving Macon, Peoria, and St. Clair counties and the 2nd Judicial Circuit are piloting the program. Participating counties receive funding and resources to provide youth with mental health and drug treatment, mentoring, aggression replacement training, and family and multi-systemic therapy.

Evaluations on Macon County and 2nd Judicial Circuit programs were completed earlier this year and full reports are available online at www.icjia.state.il.us. Peoria and St. Clair evaluations are expected to conclude July 1.

Statewide restorative justice training conducted

The Authority sponsored six intensive, restorative justice training sessions for 150 juvenile justice practitioners throughout Illinois in the fall of 2005. Sessions were held in Oak Brook and Springfield on how to conduct family group conferencing, peacemaking circles, and victim-offender mediation.

A diverse group of practitioners from youth service organizations and juvenile justice system agencies participated in interactive training sessions. The initiative was a result of the Authority's continued dedication and support for the implementation of balanced and restorative justice in the Illinois juvenile justice system.

Grants

Justice Assistance Grant Program introduced

The **Justice Assistance Grant Program** (JAG) was designed to streamline justice funding and grant administration. The program blends funding for Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance (also known as the Anti-Drug Abuse Act) and Local Law Enforcement Block Grant (LLEBG) programs to provide agencies with the flexibility to prioritize and place justice funds where they are needed most. JAG funds can be used for state and local initiatives, technical assistance, training, personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual support, and information systems for criminal justice for any one or more of the following purpose areas:

- Law enforcement.
- Prosecution and court.
- Prevention and education.
- Corrections and community corrections.
- Drug treatment programs.
- Planning, evaluation, and technology improvement.

Illinois' combined federal fiscal year 2004 Byrne Formula and LLEBG awards from the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance totaled \$19.6 million. Illinois' federal fiscal year 2005 JAG allocation was \$14.3 million, an approximate 25 percent reduction in funds. Program planning is under way for designation of JAG funding.

Grant designations received: Federal fiscal year 2004

The Authority received a \$14.6 million designation from the U.S. Department of Justice to administer **Victims of Crime Act** (VOCA) grant programs. Funded with fines paid by those convicted of violating federal laws, VOCA supports direct services to violent crime victims.

The Authority also received a \$4.8 million designation from the U.S. Department of Justice to administer **Violence Against Women Act** (VAWA) grant programs. VAWA funds are used to improve the response of the criminal justice system to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

More than \$4 million was received to administer the **National Criminal History Information Improvement Program** (NCHIP). NCHIP was established

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Comparing official and unofficial criminal history records in Illinois

By Wil Nagel and Christopher Humble

In 2002, 20 percent of Americans ages 16 and older had at least one face-to-face contact with a police officer resulting in a written record, according to the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics. Regardless of the type of contact made—whether it was to report a crime or be arrested for one—personal information is collected and stored. Many records maintained by the justice community are publicly available, and these records are often compiled and resold by private companies as criminal history records with little, if any, accountability.

In the past decade, the Internet has enabled private companies to collect records from government agencies and compile them into large databases. While the Internet has eased access to unofficial sources of criminal history information, the accuracy of these compilations is not yet known.

Criminal history records are used to make many important non-criminal justice decisions, from determining an individual's qualifications for employment and granting a professional or business license, to evaluating potential tenants and confirming voter eligibility. Although official criminal history repositories are not free of errors, much is known about the accuracy of these records and federal funding has been made available to help states meet accuracy goals. These factors lend weight to the reliability of official compilations of conviction information. However, the use of official sources of criminal history information is not always required. In addition, unofficial information is much easier to obtain.

Illinois Integrated Justice Information System planners recognized a gap in empirical literature comparing the unofficial sources of criminal history information to records maintained by official criminal history repositories. They conducted a review and comparison of rap sheets belonging to six individuals to

While the Internet has eased access to unofficial sources of criminal history information, the accuracy of these compilations is not yet known.

determine the extent and nature of available criminal history data.

Methodology

The review compared the official rap sheets of two felons, two sex offenders, and two subjects whose records had been expunged with criminal history information compiled by two private providers. Records were requested from the Illinois State Police and the two commercial providers for each subject on the same day. All information was collected within 24 hours. Authority researchers manually compared the records provided to determine whether the providers accurately compiled each subject's convictions as reflected in the official repository, and whether expunged records appeared in the unofficial compilations.

Subjects were randomly selected. The identities of individuals with expunged records are kept by Illinois State Police for audit purposes.

Results

According to the official repository, the first subject with felony convictions had been convicted of four offenses: attempted possession of a controlled substance, delivery of a controlled substance to a minor, criminal trespass to a vehicle, and manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance. The unofficial sources, however, returned only disposition information on the manufacturing or delivering a controlled substance offense.

Authority Executive Director Lori G. Levin addresses participants of the June 2005 Illinois Integrated Justice Information System Summit in Lisle. The event attracted more than 200 criminal justice practitioners from around the state.
(Photo by Deborah Trainor)



The second felon's official criminal history included two convictions for delivery of a controlled substance to a minor, two convictions for the manufacture or delivery of a controlled substance, and a conviction for possession of a controlled substance. Both providers failed to acquire three of this felon's convictions.

The official criminal history record for the first sex offender consisted of convictions for violating the Sex Offender Registration Act, forgery, and possession of cannabis. While one provider could not find any records on the subject, the other provider was able to match the forgery and registration convictions, and also reported two additional convictions: attempted criminal sexual assault and manufacturing or delivery of a controlled substance.

No records were found in the official repository or by the commercial providers regarding the second sex offender's convictions. One provider identified the subject as a registered sex offender, but only repeated information already available on the Illinois State Police Sex Offender Registry website. No information was provided about the underlying conviction.

No expunged records were returned from any source.

Potential implications

Although the small sample size limits the ability to generalize about the data, the results demonstrate that matching and compiling criminal records based on an offender's self-reported name and date of birth is a poor way to ensure accurately compiled criminal histories. Consumers of privately compiled records may unknowingly rely on inaccurate criminal history information.

Potential policies to address this issue include encouraging greater use among private providers of fingerprint-based state identification numbers to compile conviction records, and providing adequate warnings to purchasers regarding timeliness and quality of the information. Also, by making information in the Illinois criminal history repository competitively available online, the market could drive private provider improvements.

The full report of this review is available online at www.icjia.state.il.us/ijis.

(Wil Nagel is an integration analyst with the Authority. Christopher Humble is an Authority research analyst.)

Grants, continued

in 1995 to promote the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of criminal history records.

Just more than \$765,500 was received for **Local Law Enforcement Block Grants (LLEBG)**. LLEBG funding may be used for purposes of reducing crime and improving public safety.

The Authority received nearly \$1.4 million in federal funding for the **Project Safe Neighborhoods** program in northern and central Illinois districts. Project Safe Neighborhoods was established to reduce gun crime by networking existing local programs that target gun crime and providing those programs with additional tools necessary to be successful.

The Authority received \$430,000 to administer the **Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program (RSAT)**. RSAT provides funding for treatment programs in a correctional setting and is available to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

More than \$289,000 was received to administer the **National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act (NFSIA)**. NFSIA program provides funding to crime laboratories and medical examiner's offices to improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science or medical examiner services.

Grant designations received: Federal fiscal year 2005

The Authority received \$1.6 million in federal funding to administer the **Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program (JABG)**. JABG funding supports local efforts to reduce juvenile delinquency and crime, and hold young people, their families, and the juvenile justice system accountable for improving the quality of life in every community.

Also in federal fiscal year 2005:

- Nearly \$978,000 was received to administer the **Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program**.
- More than \$412,000 was received to administer the **National Forensic Sciences Improvement Act**.
- More than \$390,000 was received to administer **Project Safe Neighborhoods**.

Technology

Enhanced grants management system efforts initiated

Authority staff are implementing a new in-house grant management information system. The Authority's grant administration needs have outgrown the agency's current system, which was first implemented in 1990.

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency originally created the new web-based system, called Egrants, with \$4.5 million in federal funding to meet the needs of the state of Pennsylvania. The Authority will receive that product and source code at no charge, and staff will tailor the system to fit the state's fund planning and grant administration needs.

The new system will eliminate redundancy and allow users outside the agency to submit grant concepts, applications, reports, and other grant-related information online. The system also will allow for a paperless workflow, enforce business rules, and generate more accurate grant reports, while helping monitors track grant loads and status.

Publications, continued

monthly cost of housing an inmate rose 7 percent between state fiscal years 1999 and 2003. Results of this study may assist justice practitioners and policymakers in determining whether incarceration is appropriate for this population of offenders.

Jackson County School-Based Probation Program: Lessons learned

This *Program Evaluation Summary* describes an evaluation of the Jackson County School-Based Probation Program. While the program encountered a number of obstacles, the evaluation highlighted lessons learned and offered suggestions for jurisdictions interested in implementing a school-based probation program of their own.

The rise in reported elder abuse: A review of state and national data

The local and national problem of elder abuse is examined in this *Research Bulletin* with data obtained from the Illinois Department on Aging, the

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, and a study commissioned by the National Center on Elder Abuse.

Children's risk of homicide: Victimization from birth to age 14, 1965 to 1995

This *Research Bulletin* examines the 1,124 homicides of children aged 14 and younger that occurred in Chicago from 1965 to 1995. Trends in population-based risk of homicide compare the risks for young children versus older teens and adults, boys versus girls, children of different racial/ethnic groups, and children in different developmental age groups. Patterns in these 31-year trends suggest practical implications for reducing homicide levels among young children.

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