



Black Girls in the School-To-Prison Pipeline

In March, a 12-year-old girl who attends Rhodes Middle School in the San Antonio Independent School District was thrown head first onto the ground by a school resource officer for fighting in school.

Last October, a video circulated on social media of a school police officer throwing a 16-year-old black girl across a classroom at Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina because she did not put away her cell phone. A fellow black classmate was suspended for videotaping the incident.

In September 2014, a 17-year-old black girl was body-slammed by a school resource officer and suffered a broken jaw at Chamberlain High School in Tampa, Florida.

Despite the shocking videos and accounts of aggressive actions toward black girls in schools across the nation, there is still a perception that only boys of color experience disproportionate discipline in school.

Disproportionate Discipline of Black Girls

- On average states spend over \$400 dollars a day to incarcerate a juvenile. 33 states spend at least \$100,000 annually per incarcerated juvenile.ⁱ
- In 2011, youth of colorⁱⁱ under the age of 21 represented 45% of the youth in the United States, but accounted for 71% of youth held in detention nationwide, and 66% of youth committed to juvenile facilities upon a determination of delinquency.ⁱⁱⁱ
- According to the Department of Education, Black girls are 16% of girls in schools, but 42% of girls receiving corporal punishment, 42% of girls expelled with or without educational services, and 34% of girls arrested on campus.
- From 2011 to 2012, black girls in public elementary and secondary schools nationwide were suspended at a rate of 12%, compared with a rate of just 2% for white girls – more than girls of any other race or ethnicity.
- According to the Department of Education, Black girls represented 50.7% of the girls with multiple out-of-school suspensions in 2013. By contrast, Black boys are 39.9% of boys with multiple out-of-school suspensions.
- From 2002 and 2006, per-district suspension rates of Black girls increased by 5.3% compared to a 1.7% increase for Black boys.
- In New York City during that same school year, black girls were nearly 10 times more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts and in Boston, they were suspended at almost 12 times the rate of white girls. In Georgia, the ratio of black girls receiving suspensions in the same period compared with white girls was 5 to 1.
- Black girls who have experienced trauma associated with sexual assault and other forms of violence were often disciplined instead of provided with counseling.
- Today, girls are the fastest-growing segment of the juvenile justice population, and status offenses still remain the primary reason that girls enter the juvenile justice system. ^{iv}

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP)

- JJDP provides funding for states and provides for a series of federal protections for the care and treatment of youth in the justice system.
- JJDP has not been reauthorized since 2002.
- A full reauthorization of the JJDP would be a strong step to combating the disproportionate discipline and criminalization of black girls, which subsequently fuels their entrance into the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Recent studies suggest that trauma is heavily correlated with a girl's presence in a juvenile justice system. Girls in the juvenile justice system were victims of sexual abuse at a rate 4 times higher than boys, and girls' rate of complex trauma is nearly twice as high as boys.
- Any reauthorization of the JJDP should provide grants for continuums of evidence-based prevention and intervention plans developed locally, to stem the tide of juveniles entering the system. Many of these programs have better outcomes than secure detention and cost significantly less.
- Reauthorization of the JJDP should require states to take concrete steps to address Disproportionate Minority Contact at every point of contact juveniles have with the system.
- Any reauthorization of the JJDP should work to eliminate the Valid Court Order (VCO) exception that allowed for status offenders to be held in secure facilities.
- JJDP should recognize the power of trauma-informed care to intervene in the lives of young people, especially girls.

ⁱ Justice Policy Institute: Sticker Shock: Calculating the Full Price Tag for Youth Incarceration
<http://www.justicepolicy.org/research/8477>

ⁱⁱ The term "youth of color" includes all Hispanic, African American, Native American and Asian youth.

ⁱⁱⁱ This information was configured from the 2011 population charts. Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W., "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2012," (Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2013), accessed February 18, 2014, at <http://1.usa.gov/ManX4p>; M. Sickmund, T.J. Sladky, W. Kang, & C. Puzzanchera, "Easy Access to the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement," (Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2013), accessed February 14, 2014, <http://1.usa.gov/19ZrBJA>.

^{iv} National Council on Crime and Delinquency Center for Girls and Young Women, "A Call for Gender Equity for Girls in the Juvenile Justice System" (November 2008), 1, <http://bit.ly/1bKNQie>.