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Youth Incarceration Rate Falls in Ohio and Nationally Without Reducing Public Safety

The rate of youth who are incarcerated in Ohio dropped 31% between 1997 and 2010, according to a [new report](#) from the [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#). From the report, [Children's Defense Fund-Ohio](#) finds that Ohio ranks 23rd among other states in the rate at which we incarcerate our youth.

Nationally, the [KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot report](#) reveals that the rate at which young people in trouble with the law are locked up fell by more than 40 percent over the 15-year period 1995-2010, reaching a new 35-year low in 2010. Further, this downward trend has accelerated in recent years. According to data from the U.S. Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, the number of incarcerated youth in the U.S. peaked at 107,637 in 1995 on a given day and dropped to 70,792 in 2010. This drop in both the number and rate of youth who are incarcerated has not led to a surge in juvenile crime. Instead, juvenile crime has also fallen sharply.

Despite these declines, the U.S. continues to lead the industrialized world in the rate at which we incarcerate our youth. Moreover, the majority of youth are confined for non-violent offenses. Although declines have occurred within all of the five largest racial groups, racial disparities persist. African-American youth are five times as likely to be incarcerated as whites, and Latino and American Indian youth are between two and three times as likely.

The report suggests several ways – for example, sanctioning and treating youth in their homes and communities -- to improve the odds for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Ohio is highlighted as an example of a state that has successfully pioneered an approach that incentivizes community-based alternatives to confinement. Ohio's innovative RECLAIM (Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors) funding initiative encourages juvenile courts to pursue a range of community-based options to meet the needs of each juvenile offender or youth at risk of offending. This model has helped Ohio Department of Youth Services reach historic low numbers of incarcerated youth. However, there is more focused work to do within Ohio's juvenile justice system. Similar to reported national trends, Ohio's incarcerated youth are disproportionately African-American, with an incarceration rate more than five times that of whites.

To view the full Annie E. Casey report, visit <http://bit.ly/12TZF0I>.

The KIDS COUNT Data Snapshot features the latest data on child well-being for the nation, as does the [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#). The [Annie E. Casey Foundation](#) is a private national philanthropy that develops solutions to build a brighter future for children, families and communities. For nearly two decades, the Foundation has supported efforts to reform the juvenile justice system, primarily through its groundbreaking Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, a model adopted by a nationwide network of about 200 jurisdictions in 39 states and the District of Columbia.

The Children's Defense Fund Leave No Child Behind® mission is to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.