

Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families, Inc.
Disproportionate Minority Contact in the Juvenile Justice System
Relative Rate Index Calculations

Using the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s approach to assess disproportionate minority contact, data from the juvenile justice system was analyzed by calculating the cumulative effect and the decision specific relative rate indices.

Data for the major decision points were gathered from the Montgomery County Police Department’s Family Crimes Division (FCD) and the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS).

- Police data for FY2003 was from the FCD database of all juvenile citations and arrests in Montgomery County, with the exception of contacts by the Takoma Park Police.
- Police data for FY2004 was extracted from the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJUS).
- DJS data for FY2003 and FY2004 are from published annual reports and data received through GOCCP.

Cumulative Effect Relative Rate Index

The **cumulative effect relative rate index** shows the effect of multiple decisions made along the path. Each decision point is calculated as the rate per 1,000 youth at risk (ages 10 to 17). From the time a juvenile has contact with the police to the time a decision is made to place a youth in an out-of-home placement, the impact of DMC multiplies.

Tables 1a and 1b present the cumulative effect relative rate index, in Montgomery County, for minority youth and African-American youth compared to white youth in FY 2004. (Due to the fact that DJS data is only disaggregated by race for white, black and other, different population bases are used and the analysis is separated from the local law enforcement data which does disaggregate by non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, and Hispanic or Latino.)

For African-American youth in particular, the rate of contacts with the police is 3 times higher than white youth, cases referred to DJS are nearly 5 times higher, cases petitioned are 6 times higher, cases resulting in residential committed programs are nearly 8 times higher and those admitted to secure detention facilities are over 11 times higher. These rates are consistent with findings in FY 2003.

Table 1a. Population-Based Cumulative Effect Relative Rate Index Montgomery County Department of Police						
FY2004	Total Youth	White NH Youth	Minority Youth	Minority RRI	African American NH Youth	African American NH RRI
DATA FROM MCDP						
Population at Risk	106,756	61,132	45,624		16,527	
Juvenile Contacts with Police	3,785	1,654	2,130	1.73	1,514	3.39
Cases Diverted by FCD	862	574	288	0.67	164	1.06
Cases Referred to DJS by FCD	2,919	1,079	1,840	2.28	1,349	4.62

Table 1b. Population-Based Cumulative Effect Relative Rate Index Maryland Department of Juvenile Services						
FY2004	Total Youth	White Youth	Minority Youth	Minority RRI	African American Youth	African American RRI
DATA FROM DJS						
Population at Risk	106,756	61,132	45,624		16,527	
Youth Referred to DJS Intake	2,615	1,103	1,512	1.84	1,059	3.55
Youth Diverted by DJS	870	477	393	1.10	258	2.00
Youth Given Formal Petitioned	948	291	657	3.03	465	5.91
Youth Assigned to Probation	389	135	254	2.52	170	4.66
Youth Admitted to Residential Committed Programs	283	80	203	3.40	167	7.72
Youth Admitted to Secure Detention Facilities	178	35	143	5.47	110	11.63

Decision-Specific Relative Rate Index

The **decision-specific relative rate index** assesses DMC change from one stage of the juvenile system to the next. Rates are calculated using the population at the preceding decision-point. For example, rates for cases diverted or referred to DJS are calculated based on the number of contacts with the police.

Tables 2a and 2b present the decision-specific relative rate index for African-American and all minority youth compared to white youth. The table shows that in FY 2004, minority youth, and African-American youth in particular, are a half to a third less likely to have a case diverted by the police and about 1.3 to 1.4 times more likely to have the case referred to DJS. Using data from Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, minority youth are found to be more likely to be given a formal petition. Minority youth are more likely to be admitted to residential committed program or secure detention and less like to be assigned to probation. Again, these findings are consistent with FY2003 data.

Table 2a. Decision-Specific Relative Rate Index – Montgomery County Department of Police								
FY2004	Total Youth	White NH Youth	Minority Youth	Minority RRI	African American NH Youth	African American NH RRI	Hispanic Youth	Hispanic RRI
Population at Risk	106,756	61,132	45,624		16,527		14,117	
Juvenile Contacts with Police	3,785	1,654	2,130	1.73*	1,514	3.39*	523	1.37*
Cases Diverted by FCD	862	574	288	0.39*	164	0.31*	92	0.51*
Cases Referred to DJS	2,919	1,079	1,840	1.32*	1,349	1.37*	431	1.26*

* Statistically Significant (p<.05)

FY2004	Total Youth	White Youth	Minority Youth	Minority RRI	African American Youth	African American RRI
DATA FROM DJS						
Population at Risk	106,756	61,132	45,624		16,527	
Youth Referred to DJS Intake	2,615	1,103	1,512	1.84*	1,059	3.55*
Youth Diverted by DJS	870	477	393	0.60*	258	0.56*
Youth Given Formal Petitioned	948	291	657	1.65*	465	1.66*
Youth Assigned to Probation	389	135	254	0.83*	170	0.79*
Youth Admitted to Residential Committed Programs	283	80	203	1.12*	167	1.31*
Youth Admitted to Secure Detention Facilities	178	35	143	1.81*	110	1.97*

* Statistically Significant (p<.05)

RRI for Family Crime Division (FCD) Diversions from DJS Intakes

Diversions are not offered at the FCD intake for felony crimes, arguable offenses such as assault or vandalism, or for re-offending youth. Working with the Montgomery County Police Department, we calculated the RRI of only cases that involved offenses which could be eligible for diversion, based on crime type only, such as: non-felony shoplifting, marijuana possession or use, and alcohol violations.

Table 3 shows the decisions made for these cases only. For all cases that involved eligible offenses and regardless of the youth's race, a number of cases are being referred to DJS and not to diversion. Despite the fact that this analysis has not yet eliminated re-offending youth or non-residents, the proportion is still high: 55 percent of these crimes were referred to DJS. Clearly, these youth may on the surface appear to be eligible for diversion but there may be other circumstances that make the case in-eligible. Minority youth are 1.4 times more likely to be referred to DJS in these cases.

FY2004	Total Youth	White NH Youth	Minority Youth	Minority RRI	African American NH Youth	African American NH RRI	Hispanic Youth	Hispanic RRI
Population at Risk	106,756	61,132	45,624		16,527		14,117	
Juvenile Contacts with Police	3,785	1,654	2,130		1,514		523	
Selected Out Contacts	1,559	957	602	0.49*	389	0.44*	181	0.60*
Cases Diverted by FCD	703	497	206	0.66*	116	0.57*	68	0.72*
Cases Referred to DJS	856	460	369	1.37*	273	1.46*	113	1.30*

* Statistically Significant (p<.05)