

# Should juvenile offenders be tried and punished as adults

[Law](#), [Court](#)



The transfer of juvenile offenders to adult criminal courts has long been debated and in almost all instances, two arguing sides appear. Under the main objective of rehabilitating rather punishing the young offenders, adherence to the confines of juvenile justice system has always been considered as the most effective way of dealing with the issue. However, time has witnessed notable changes in such structure and most significantly with the manner how adolescent offenders are breaking the laws creating apprehension and doubt about its effectiveness.

Hence, the emergence and increasing significance of the dilemma of whether juvenile offenders be tried and punish as adults. Therefore, it is of best position that such very relevant question needs to pave the way for a clear identification and understanding of the factors to be considered in order to come up with a solid and undisputable answer. Presenting definite and reasonable supporting claims will definitely justify one side of the argument or the other and the solution to the question will ultimately be achieved.

Considering the significance of the apparent mental or psychological distinctions between juveniles and adults and lately, the alarming gravity of juvenile offenses as premises of the argument, at least three important issues have materialized. The recognition that the age and psychological state of an offender as well as the severity of the crimes committed by an adolescent offender spell a difference, it is essentially empirical to explain, support and justify the three areas in order to come up with a final answer or take one side of the dispute (Steinberg 1).

In essence, the requirement for juvenile offenders to be tried and punished either under the juvenile justice system or the jurisdiction of adult criminal court may be determined in three varying points. Under the structure of the juvenile court, young offenders are treated under the presumptions of their unfinished hence imperfect maturity, decision-making which is below the maturity level and a still evolving personality.

Compared with subjecting juvenile offender in trial and eventually punishing them under the adult court, there are evident differences wherein the young offenders are considered to be capable, accountable and inclined not to change. To further explain, it is then valuable to reflect on the effects of these three important concerns. First, subjecting juvenile offenders to similar condition as that of adult offenders changes the authorized way of legal procedure.

This is because of the foundation of adult criminal courts which is in accordance with an undesirable style while the theory of the juvenile justice system is based on a more helpful and accommodating framework. Second, the trial and punishment of juvenile offenders in adult courts clearly draw opposing legal benchmarks. Such difference particularly refers to ability to stand trial. It is apparent that there is a significant difference between adolescents and adults concerning their respective competence to stand trial and accept punishment.

Lastly, the idea of juvenile offenders being tried and punished as adults has a merit in deciding the probable results. If subjected to adult courts, around

80 percent of criminally convicted adolescents are imprisoned which confirms the effect of being held responsible of a grave crime and which almost always leads to jail sentence. Juvenile courts, in contrast, always prefer the rehabilitative position (3-4).

With the mentioned three most important issues, it is now apparently possible to take the more practical and feasible side. In doing so, this now leads us to choose the argument which is more acceptable and in accordance with the above-cited concerns. That is, juvenile offenders should not be tried and punished as adults. The fundamental justification is that regardless of the gravity of crimes committed by juvenile offenders, their psychological conditions must deviate them from the cruelty of the adult criminal justice system.