

Juvenile crime essay



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Remember doing something mischievous or wrong when you were a kid and getting the label “ delinquent” slapped on you ? Did you ever wonder what it meant ? That is what my topic for today is . . . juvenile delinquency. In this report I will: define juvenile delinquency, give the extent of juvenile delinquency, give some suggestions on what causes juvenile delinquency, and what is being done in various communities to deal with this growing problem. The legal term juvenile delinquent was established so that young lawbreakers could avoid the disgrace of being classified in legal records as criminals. Juvenile delinquency laws were designed to provide treatment, rather than punishment, for juvenile offenders. Young delinquents usually are sent to juvenile courts, where the main aim is to rehabilitate offenders, rather than to punish them. But the term juvenile delinquency itself has come to imply disgrace in today’s society. A youngster can be labeled a delinquent for breaking any one of a number of laws, ranging from robbery to running away from home. But an action for which a youth may be declared a delinquent in one community may not be against the law in another community. In some communities, the police ignore many children who are accused of minor delinquencies or refer them directly to their parents. But in other communities, the police may refer such children to a juvenile court, where they may officially be declared delinquents. Crime statistics, though they are often incomplete and may be misleading, do give an indication of the extent of the delinquency problem. The FBI reports that during the early 1980’s, about two-fifths of all arrests in the United States for burglary and arson were of persons under the age of 18. Juveniles also accounted for about one-third of all arrests for larceny. During any year, about 4 % of all children between the ages of 10 and 18 appear in a juvenile

court. The percentage of youngsters in this group who are sent to court at least once is much higher. A third or more of those boys living in the slum areas of large cities may appear in a juvenile court at least once. Girls are becoming increasingly involved in juvenile delinquency. Today, about one of every five youngsters appearing in juvenile court is a girl. In the early 1900's, this ratio was about 1 girl to every 50 or 60 boys. Sociologists have conducted a number of studies to determine how much delinquency is not reported to the police. Most youngsters report taking part in one or more delinquent acts, though a majority of the offenses are minor. Experts have concluded that youthful misbehavior is much more common than is indicated by arrest records and juvenile court statistics. Many studies have been made in an effort to determine the causes of delinquency. Most of these have focused on family relationships or on neighborhood or community conditions. The results of these investigations have shown that it is doubtful that any child becomes a delinquent for any single reason. Family Relationships, especially those between parents and individual children, have been the focus of several delinquency studies. An early study comparing delinquent and nondelinquent brothers showed that over 90 % of the delinquents had unhappy home lives and felt discontented with their life circumstances. Only 13 % of their brothers felt this way. Whatever the nature of the delinquents' unhappiness, delinquency appeared to them to be a solution. It brought attention to youths neglected by their parents, or approval by delinquent friends, or it solved problems of an unhappy home life in other ways. More recent studies have revealed that many delinquents had parents with whom they did not get along or who were inconsistent in their patterns of discipline and punishment. Neighborhood conditions have been stressed in studies by <https://assignbuster.com/juvenile-crime-essay/>

sociologists. Many of these inquiries concentrate on differing rates of delinquency, rather than on the way individuals become delinquents. A series of studies have shown that delinquency rates are above average in the poorest sections of cities. Such areas have many broken homes and a high rate of alcoholism. They also have poor schools, high unemployment, few recreational facilities, and high crime rates. Many young people see delinquency as their only escape from boredom, poverty, and other problems. Social scientists have also studied the influence of other youngsters on those who commit delinquencies. For example, they point out that most youngsters who engage in delinquent behavior do so with other juveniles and often in organized gangs. Studies indicate that the causes of delinquency also extend to a whole society. For example, delinquency rates tend to be high among the low-income groups in societies where most people are well-to-do. The pain of being poor and living in slum conditions are felt more strongly in a rich society than in a poor one. Many efforts have been made to develop programs of delinquency prevention. There is little evidence, however, that any of these programs is truly effective. Some programs provide counseling services to youths who appear to be on the verge of becoming delinquents. Other programs draw youngsters into clubs and recreational centers in an effort to keep them away from situations in which delinquency is likely to occur. In recent years, many efforts have centered on improving the educational and work skills of youngsters. For those juveniles who have already become delinquents, there are programs designed to prevent them from committing future delinquent acts. Probation services are offered through juvenile courts in an effort to provide guidance for delinquent children. The more progressive institutions for juveniles

attempt to provide treatment programs for offenders—work experiences, counseling, education, and group therapy. However, many other institutions provide little more than protective custody for juvenile delinquents. In conclusion, I have defined juvenile delinquency, explained the extent of juvenile delinquency, gave some suggestions on what causes juvenile delinquency, and what is being done in various communities to deal with the problem of juvenile delinquency.