

By Jimmie Davis, Jr. for [The Westside Gazette](#)

Part One

When Black and white juveniles are arrested for the same crime what's been transpiring in the juvenile court system is that white youths normally get a slap on the wrist and Black offenders are getting shipped off to a detention center.

"The legal processes used to incarcerate youth often violate core American values of fairness and due process," stated in a report entitled "No Place For Kids," authored by Richard A. Mendel and published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. "The most glaring of these injustices involve racial inequities and the failure to provide youth with effective legal representation."

Compared with white juveniles, African America youth are more likely to be formally charged and less likely to have their cases dismissed or diverted from court.

Furthermore, Black youths are far more likely to be detained pending trial instead of being released to their parents or next of kin.

When they do appear in court they are more likely to be committed to a residential facility and less likely to receive a probation sentence.

Two out of every five youth confined are African American and one-fifth is Hispanic.

White youth who comprise three-fifths of the total population are just 37 percent of the confined youth.

Information released from Katherine Taylor, Analyst with the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice gives data pertaining to Florida's juvenile detention centers during 2009 through 2010 demonstrates there were a total of 9,358 Black male juvenile offenders locked up as in comparison to 6,403 white male juvenile offenders.

There were 2,421 Black females and 2,130 white females.

"Among youth adjudicated delinquent in juvenile court, African American youth are more likely than white youth to be placed and, if placed, more likely to be sent to a state youth correctional facility, rather than a private group home or residential treatment center," Mendel wrote. "African American youth are nine times as likely to be sentenced to adult prisons as white youth. Piled one on top of the other, the ultimate impact of these serial disparities is an enormous cumulative disadvantage for youth of color."

In the fiscal years 2009 through 2010 1,668 kids referred to DJJ were from Bro-ward County Public Schools.

Miami-Dade Public Schools came in second with 1,554.

The Westside Gazette recently informed its readers in a three part series entitled "Are kids getting suspended because they are Black?" about African American kids getting suspended/expelled and being un-supervised, which leads them to a pattern of criminal activity.

Society and the criminal justice system aren't the only guilty parties of racial discrimination against Black youths, but America's school system is a culprit also.

Of the 18,467 school-related referrals received by DJJ for FY 2009-10, 6,195 [or 34 percent] were for Black males and 4,778 [or 26 percent] were for white males.

Black females accounted for 2,458 [or 13 percent] and white females accounted for 1,588 [or 9 percent] of all school-related referrals.

This comparison of demographics makes it obvious that Black youth are more likely to receive a school-related referral than their white counterparts.