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Petitions

In the juvenile justice system, a case may be handled informally by the probation department or formally by the juvenile court. If the case is going to proceed for formal processing, the District Attorney files a petition with the juvenile court to initiate the court action.

This section examines petitions by gender, age, offense, fitness hearings, and disposition.

The age groupings used throughout this report represent the most active age groups for the area being discussed.

The data used were compiled from petitions reported, via the JCPSS, to the DOJ by county probation departments in the 50 JCPSS reporting counties.

Petitions filed in juvenile court consist of two types: new and subsequent. The term "new petition" refers to a juvenile who is not being supervised by the probation department and is typically a first-time offender. The term "subsequent petition" refers to a juvenile who is currently being supervised by the probation department and generally follows a new arrest.

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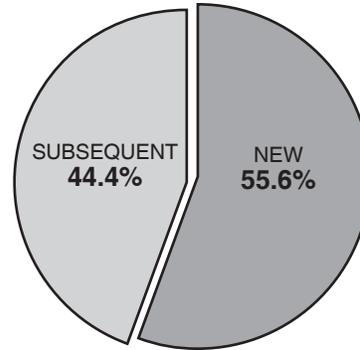


Type of Petition

Of the 87,927 reported petitions filed in juvenile court in 2003:

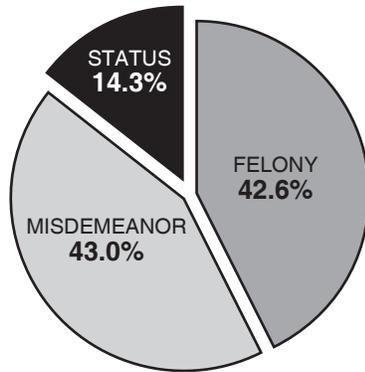
- 55.6 percent (48,898) were new petitions.
- 44.4 percent (39,029) were subsequent petitions.

Petitions Filed, 2003 By Type



Source: Tables 4 and 8.

**Petitions Filed, 2003
By Level of Offense**



Source: Tables 5 and 9.
Note: Percentages do not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Level of Offense

Of the 104,812 petitioned offenses filed in 2003:

- 42.6 percent (44,690) were for felonies.
- 43.0 percent (45,084) were for misdemeanors.
- 14.3 percent (15,038) were for status offenses.

■ Of the petitions filed for formal juvenile court action, the percentage of misdemeanor and felony petitions were virtually the same (43.0 and 42.6 percent, respectively).

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Petitions by Gender

Of the 87,927 reported petitions filed in juvenile court in 2003:

- 80.9 percent (71,144) were male.
- 19.1 percent (16,783) were female.

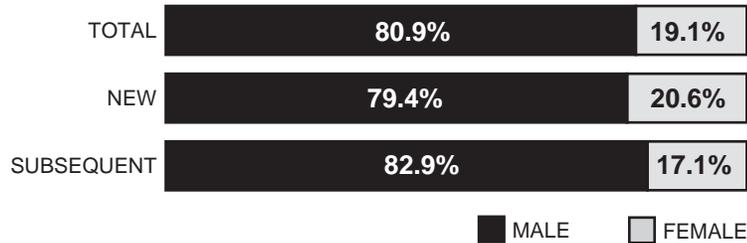
Of the 48,898 new petitions filed in 2003:

- 79.4 percent (38,804) were male.
- 20.6 percent (10,094) were female.

Of the 39,029 subsequent petitions filed in 2003:

- 82.9 percent (32,340) were male.
- 17.1 percent (6,689) were female.

Type of Petitions, 2003 By Gender

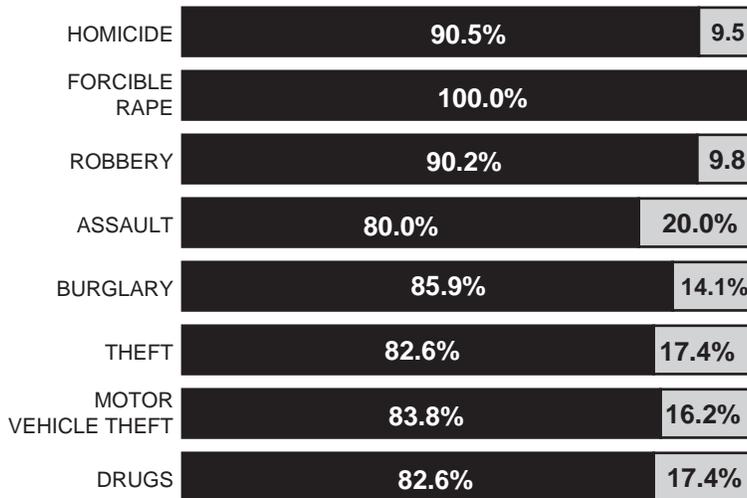


Source: Tables 4 and 10A.

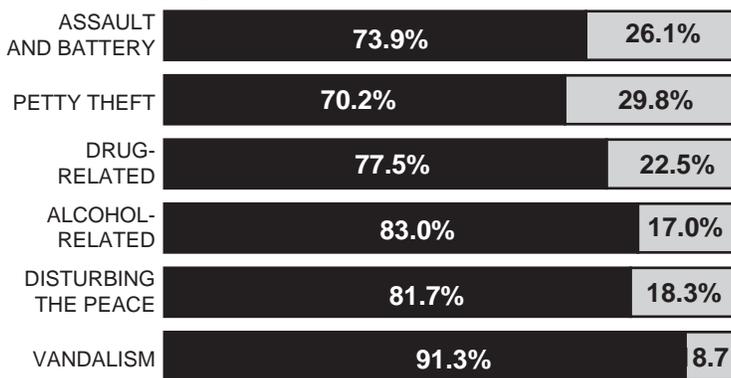
Selected Petitions by Gender

Selected Petitions, 2003 By Gender

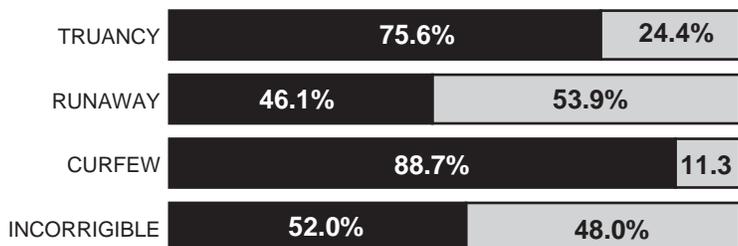
FELONIES



MISDEMEANORS



STATUS OFFENSES



Source: Table 11A.

■ MALE □ FEMALE

Of the 8 selected felonies:

- Males accounted for 90.2 percent of the robbery petitions filed in juvenile court.
- Females accounted for 20.0 percent of the assault petitions filed in juvenile court.

Of the 6 selected misdemeanors:

- Males accounted for 91.3 percent of the vandalism petitions filed in juvenile court.
- Females accounted for 29.8 percent of the petty theft petitions filed in juvenile court.

Of the 4 selected status offenses:

- Males accounted for 88.7 percent of the curfew petitions filed in juvenile court.
- Females accounted for 53.9 percent of the runaway petitions filed in juvenile court.

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Petitions by Age Group

Of the 87,927 reported petitions filed in 2003:

- 18.7 percent (16,478) were for juveniles aged 12-14.
- 68.7 percent (60,403) were for juveniles aged 15-17.
- 12.6 percent (11,046) were for all other age groups.

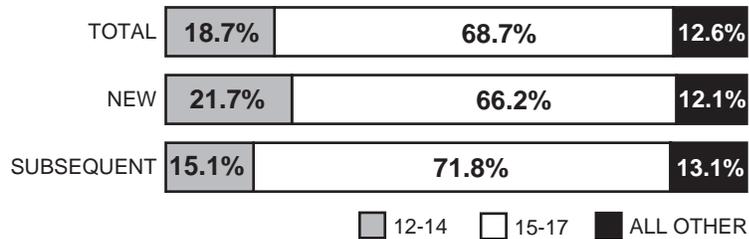
Of the 48,898 new petitions filed in 2003:

- 21.7 percent (10,592) were for juveniles aged 12-14.
- 66.2 percent (32,374) were for juveniles aged 15-17.
- 12.1 percent (5,932) were for all other age groups.

Of the 39,029 subsequent petitions filed in 2003:

- 15.1 percent (5,886) were for juveniles aged 12-14.
- 71.8 percent (28,029) were for juveniles aged 15-17.
- 13.1 percent (5,114) were for all other age groups.

Petitions, 2003 By Age Group



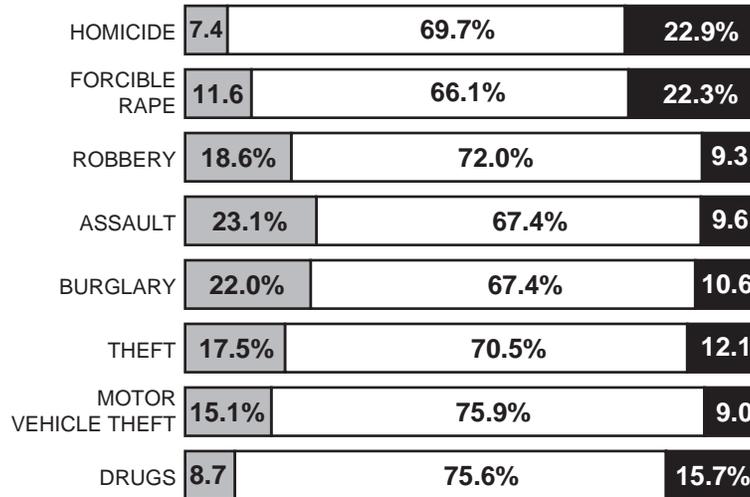
Source: Table 4.

Nearly two-thirds of the new petitions filed in juvenile court were for offenders aged 15-17 (66.2 percent).

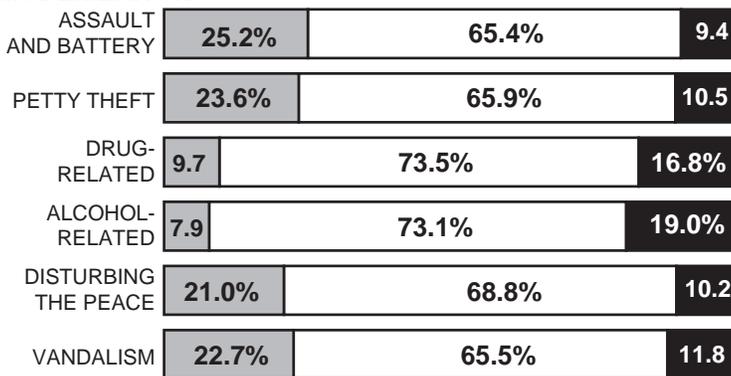
Selected Petitions by Age Group

Selected Petitions, 2003 By Age Group

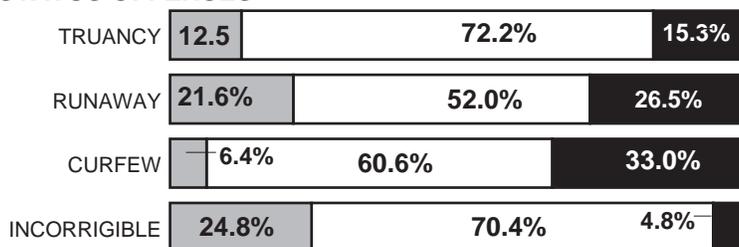
FELONIES



MISDEMEANORS



STATUS OFFENSES



■ 12-14 □ 15-17 ■ ALL OTHER

Of the 8 selected felonies:

- Juveniles aged 12-14 accounted for 23.1 percent of the petitions filed for assault.
- Juveniles aged 15-17 accounted for 75.9 percent of the petitions filed for motor vehicle theft.

Of the 6 selected misdemeanors:

- Juveniles aged 12-14 accounted for 25.2 percent of the petitions filed for assault and battery.
- Juveniles aged 15-17 accounted for 73.5 percent of the petitions filed for drug-related offenses.

Of the 4 selected status offenses:

- Juveniles aged 12-14 accounted for 21.6 percent of the petitions filed for running away.
- Juveniles aged 15-17 accounted for 72.2 percent of the petitions filed for truancy violations.

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Source: Table 5.

Note: Percentages may not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Fitness Hearings

Of the 586 fitness hearings held in juvenile court in 2003:

- 31.1 percent (182) of the juveniles were found fit for juvenile court services.
- 68.9 percent (404) of the juveniles were remanded to the adult court for processing.

Fitness Hearings by Gender

Of the 182 juveniles found fit for juvenile court services:

- 86.8 percent (158) were male.
- 13.2 percent (24) were female.

Of the 404 juveniles found unfit for juvenile court services:

- 95.3 percent (385) were male.
- 4.7 percent (19) were female.

Fitness Hearings by Age Group

Of the 182 juvenile found fit for juvenile court services:

- 14.3 percent (26) were for juveniles aged 12-14.
- 63.7 percent (116) were for juveniles aged 15-17.
- 22.0 percent (40) were for all other age groups.

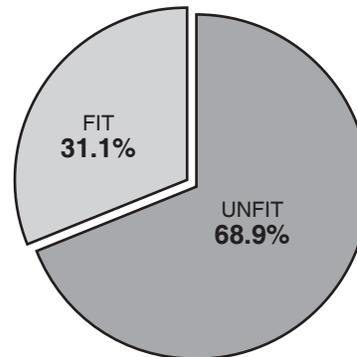
Of the 404 juveniles found unfit for juvenile court services:

- 3.2 percent (13) were for juveniles aged 12-14.
- 71.3 percent (288) were for juveniles aged 15-17.
- 25.5 percent (103) were for all other age groups.

Note: See Appendix 7, page 108, for a definition of a fitness hearing.

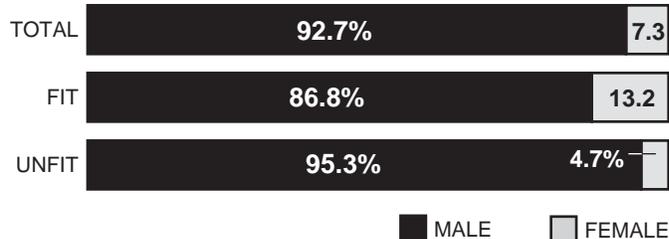
In 2003, less than one percent of the juveniles petitioned in juvenile court had fitness hearings (586 out of 87,927).

Fitness Hearings, 2003 By Outcome



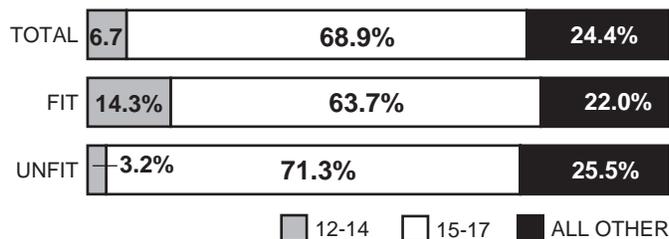
Source: Tables 12, 13, and 14.

Fitness Hearings, 2003 By Gender



Source: Table 14.

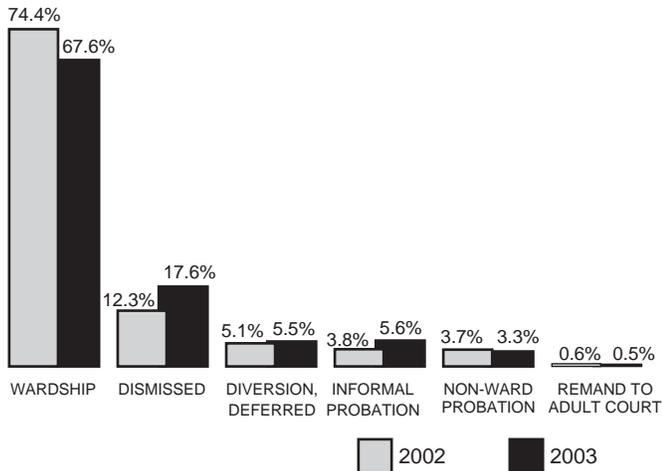
Fitness Hearings, 2003 By Age



Source: Table 12.

Juvenile Court Dispositions

Juvenile Court Dispositions, 2002 to 2003 By Year



Source: Tables 4 and 8.

From 2002 to 2003, the number of juveniles who were:

- Made a ward of the court decreased 6.8 percentage points (74.4 to 67.6 percent).
- Dismissed increased 5.3 percentage points (12.3 to 17.6 percent).
- Given diversion/deferred entry of judgment increased 0.4 percentage points (5.1 to 5.5 percent).
- Given informal probation increased 1.8 percentage points (3.8 to 5.6 percent).
- Placed on non-ward probation decreased 0.4 percentage points (3.7 to 3.3 percent).
- Remanded to adult court decreased 0.1 percentage points (0.6 to 0.5 percent).

Note: Because of the differences in the number of reporting probation departments from 2002 to 2003 and the differences in the number of allowable reportable offenses, caution should be used when comparing data reported for 2002 to data reported for 2003.

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Juvenile Court Dispositions

Of the 87,927 reported petitions filed in juvenile court in 2003:

- 67.6 percent (59,405) resulted in the juvenile being made a ward of the court.
- 17.6 percent (15,440) of the petitions were dismissed.
- 5.5 percent (4,867) were placed in a diversion, deferred entry of judgment program, or transferred to another jurisdiction.
- 5.6 percent (4,922) received informal probation.
- 3.3 percent (2,889) received non-ward probation.
- 0.5 percent (404) resulted in the juvenile being remanded to the adult court.

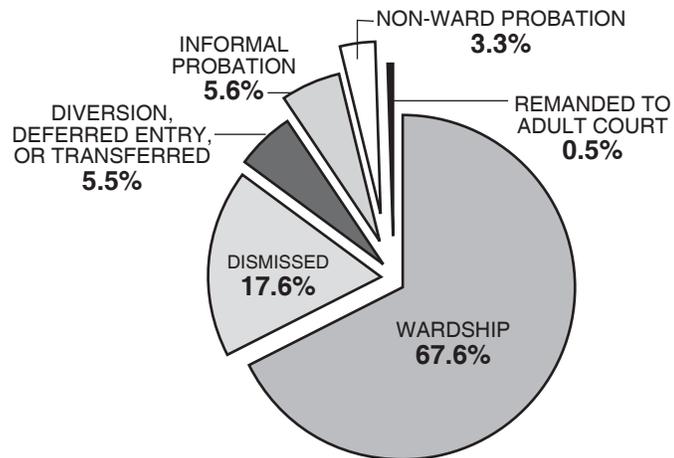
Wardship Placements

Of the 59,405 juveniles made a ward of the court in 2003:

- 57.7 percent (34,299) were allowed to go home.
- 26.1 percent (15,512) were committed to a secure county facility.
- 6.0 percent (3,541) were sent to a non-secure county facility.
- 8.5 percent (5,044) were sent to other public or private facilities.
- 1.7 percent (1,009) were committed to the California Youth Authority.

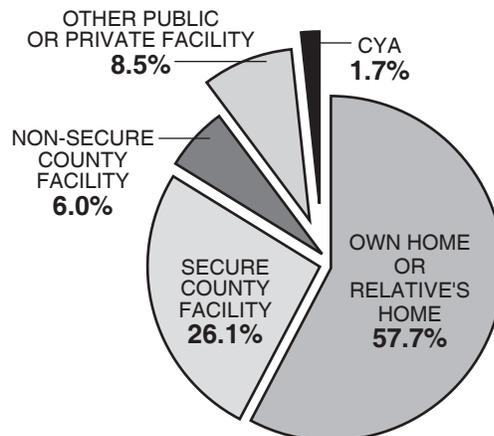
The majority (57.7 percent) of juveniles made a ward of the court were allowed to go home.

Court Dispositions, 2003 By Type



Source: Tables 4 and 8.
Note: Percentages do not add to 100.0 because of rounding.

Wardship, 2003 By Placement



Source: Tables 4 and 8.

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