

The Advocacy Foundation, Inc.

Preparing Individuals, Organizations and Communities to Achieve Their Full Potential



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Characteristics of A Juvenile Delinquent (Part I—Family Structure)

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1 Samuel 2:12-14 (NIV)
Eli's Wicked Sons

¹² Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD. ¹³ Now it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled ¹⁴ and would plunge the fork into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh.

The Most Critical Factor In Juvenile Delinquency - Family Structure

Positive Attributes | Negative Influences

"Mounting social science research confirms what most Americans already know: The breakdown of the family contributes significantly to many of society's ills, including poverty, crime, drug addiction, school drop-out rates, and poor health. From this same research, Americans are [also] learning that when fathers are absent from their families, the rate of juvenile delinquency rises dramatically."

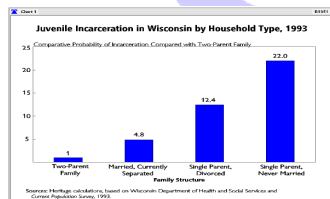
Interestingly, the British have done a great deal more research in this area than we have done in the United States. Despite any relevant cross-cultural factors, however, their findings are strikingly similar when compared to the data that we have developed.

Moreover, "startling data available from Wisconsin—the one state that has identified some of the family backgrounds of its delinquents--

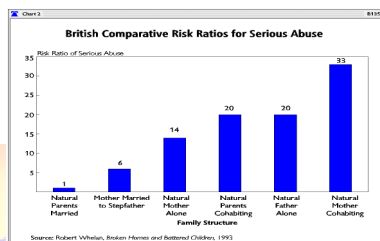
indicate that the probability of incarceration for juveniles in families headed by never-married single mothers might be at least as much as 22 times higher than for juveniles in the two-parent family.

[In the year 2000 study], [t]he rate of incarceration of juveniles is lowest among two-parent families, five times higher among families with married-but-separated parents, 12 times higher among divorced-single-parent families, and 22 times higher among families with always-single parents."

- The Heritage Foundation (www.Heritage.org) circa 2000



In addition, previous research has disclosed enormous differences among these types of families in rates of *child abuse*, a significant precursor to delinquency and crime.

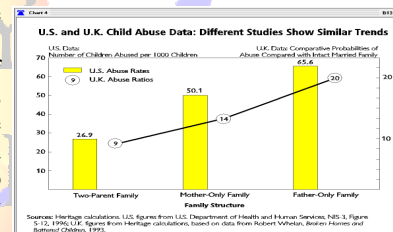


Research on child abuse, for example, shows that the rate of abuse in British stepfamilies is at least six times higher than the rate in intact-always-married families; while it is 20 times higher in cohabiting-biological-parent families

than intact married families

Comparing data from the United States with data from Great Britain yields a similar progression in the rates of abuse among different family structures.

Researchers cannot do the same analysis with the U.S. data because [at the time of the study], no attempt was made to break down the data in the "two-parent" and "single parent" categories to reflect everyday family situations. There is some likelihood that the true U.S. picture of child abuse by family type is akin to that of Britain ..., but the case cannot be argued persuasively in the absence of authoritative U.S. data.



Always feel welcome to contact me directly with any questions, comments, or great ideas!

Jack Johnson

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Achieve Their Full Potential*

The underlying rationale of the juvenile court system is that youth are developmentally different from adults and that their behavior is malleable. Rehabilitation and treatment, therefore, in addition to community protection, are considered to be primary and viable goals.

Limitations are placed on public access to juvenile records because of the belief that juvenile offenders can be successfully rehabilitated, and to avoid their unnecessary stigmatization.

The juvenile justice system follows a psychological casework approach, taking into account a detailed assessment of the youth's history in order to meet his or her specific needs. The juvenile offender faces a hearing, rather than a trial, which incorporates his social history as well as legal factors.

Court proceedings may be confidential to protect privacy.

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