

CHILD, YOUTH, AND TEEN VICTIMIZATION

Children, youth, and teens experience high levels of victimization. Crimes against young people can range from abuse and neglect to assaultive violence and homicide. A majority of children and adolescents have experienced some form of physical assault in their lifetime. Teenagers, in particular, experience high levels of assault, maltreatment, and property victimization. In addition to direct victimization, large percentages of children, youth, and teens are exposed to physical and emotional violence in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods. Children, youth, and teens are victimized in many ways, and a number of youth experience multiple forms of violence (polyvictimization). In addition, exposure to violence increases the chances a youth will also experience other types of violence, and these effects can be cumulative and extremely damaging over time. The exposure to violence also increases the probability of future victimization.¹ Given the amount of time that youth and teens spend at school, victimizations in this particular location constitute an important subset of crime and are addressed in the section devoted to [School Crime](#).

Assaults Against Young Children and Teens

The NCVS only collects information on household members over age 12. Other sources of data must be considered to identify patterns and trends for children under the age of 12. The following section relies on data from the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV).

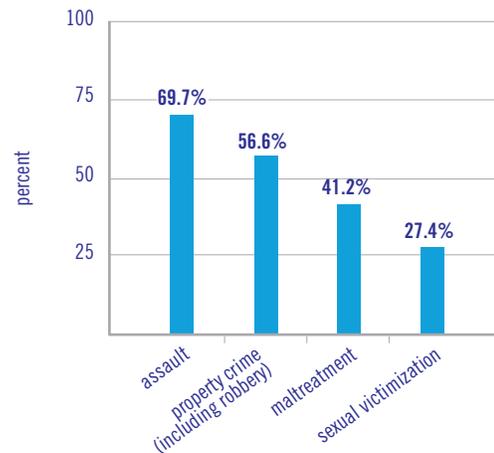
- Of children age 0 to 17 years in 2011, 41.2 percent were physically assaulted in the previous 12 months.²
- Of the U.S. population of 14- to 17-year-olds, 69.7 percent had been assaulted, 56.6 percent had experienced a property victimization (including robbery), 41.2 percent had been maltreated, and 27.4 percent had been sexually victimized at some point in their lifetime.³

1 David Finkelhor, *Polyvictimization: Children's Exposure to Multiple Types of Violence, Crime and Abuse*, (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, 2011), 2, accessed October 28, 2014, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/235504.pdf>.

2 David Finkelhor et al., "Violence, Crime, and Abuse Exposure in a National Sample of Children and Youth: An Update," *Pediatrics* 167, no. 7 (2013): 616, accessed October 7, 2014, <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1686983&resultClick=3>.

3 Ibid., 616-18.

LIFETIME VICTIMIZATION OF TEENS, AGES 14 – 17, BY TYPE, 2011*



*Note: "Maltreatment" is maltreatment by a caregiver.

- At some point in their lifetime, 54.5 percent of children and adolescents (age 0 to 17) experienced some form of physical assault, 24.6 percent were victims of physical intimidation (i.e., physical bullying), 51.8 percent were victims of relational aggression (i.e., emotional bullying),⁴ and 10.3 percent were victims of assault with a weapon.⁵

Child Maltreatment

The data for the following section was obtained from the official reports in each state to a child protection agency and refer to abuse or neglect by a caregiver.⁶

- There were 686,000 child maltreatment victims or 9.2 per 1,000 children in 2012.⁷
- In 2012, just under one-half (44 percent) of all child victims of maltreatment were white, 21 percent were African American, and 21.8 percent were Hispanic.⁸

4 Finkelhor et al. used the terms physical intimidation and relational aggression instead of the more common terms of physical and emotional bullying because the latter terminology requires a "power imbalance" in the victim-perpetrator relationship.

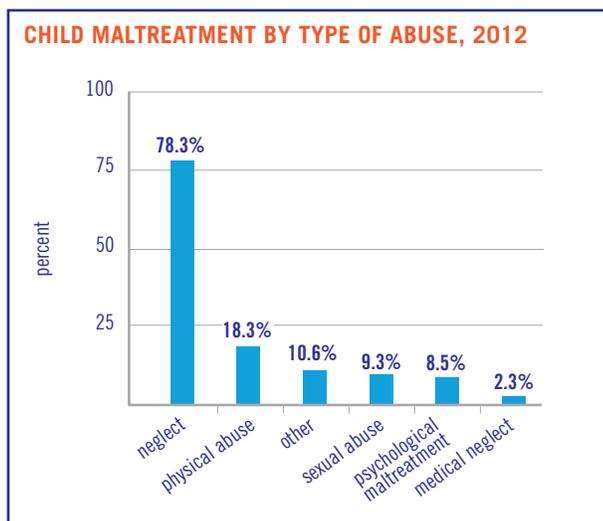
5 Ibid.

6 *Child Maltreatment 2012*, (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, 2013), accessed October 7, 2014, <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>.

7 Ibid., Table 3-4.

8 Ibid., Table 3-7.

- Of those children who were victims of maltreatment in 2012, in 36.6 percent the mother was the perpetrator, in 18.7 percent of the cases the father was the perpetrator, and in 12.0 percent of the cases someone other than the parent was the perpetrator.⁹
- During 2012, 78.3 percent of child maltreatment victims experienced neglect, 18.3 percent were physically abused, 9.3 percent were sexually abused, 8.5 percent were psychologically maltreated, and 2.3 percent were medically neglected. In addition, 10.6 percent of child victims experienced other types of maltreatment.¹⁰



- Of those who were defined as having been a victim of abuse in 2012, 21.9 per 1,000 children were less than 1 year of age. With each additional year of age, the risk of victimization decreased. With the exception of the teen years (ages 13, 14, and 15), there is a slight increase.¹¹
- In 2012, for neglect victims (29.7 percent) and physical abuse victims (24.6 percent), children two years old and younger have the highest percent of victimization. Teen's ages 12 to 14 have the highest risk of sexual abuse (26.3 percent).¹²

- In 2012, girls are most often victims of abuse at a rate of 9.5 per 1,000 children. Boys were victims of abuse at a rate of 8.7 per 1,000 children.¹³
- An estimated 1,593 children died as a result of maltreatment, or 2.2 per 100,000 children in 2012. Forty-four percent of these children were under a year old. Eighty percent of child fatalities were caused by the child's parents, and 27.1 percent of fatalities were caused by the mother alone.¹⁴

Polyvictimization

- NatSCEV found that 38.7 percent of children surveyed reported more than one type of direct victimization in the previous year.¹⁵
- Of those who reported any direct victimization 64.5 percent reported multiple types of victimization.¹⁶
- Almost 11 percent or more than 1 in 10 children reported being directly exposed to five or more different types of violence with just over one percent reporting 10 or more victimizations.¹⁷
- A disproportionate number of youth who have been polyvictimized experienced the most serious types of victimizations, including sexual assault and parental maltreatment.¹⁸
- The survey identified four pathways or prior circumstances affecting polyvictimization, including living in a violent family, living in a distressed or chaotic family, living in a violent neighborhood and having preexisting psychological symptoms.¹⁹

⁹ Ibid., Table 3-13.

¹⁰ Ibid., Table 3-8.

¹¹ Ibid., Table 3-C.

¹² Ibid., Table 3-E.

¹³ Ibid., Table 3-6.

¹⁴ Ibid., Tables 4-2, 4-4.

¹⁵ David Finkelhor, *Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey*, (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, 2009), 1, accessed October 25, 2014, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/227744.pdf>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

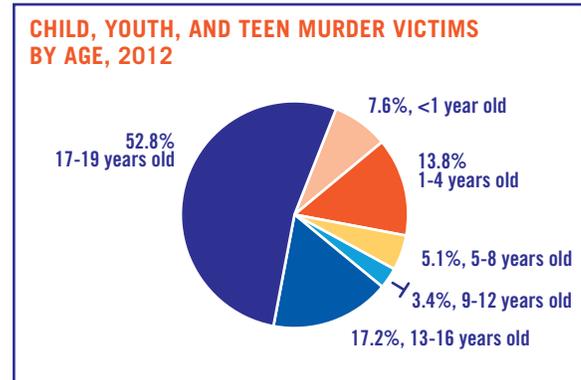
¹⁷ David Finkelhor, *Polyvictimization: Children's Exposure to Multiple Types of Violence, Crime and Abuse*, (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, 2011), 1, accessed October 28, 2014, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/235504.pdf>.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹ Ibid.

- Polyvictims are slightly more likely to be boys (54 percent) than girls (46 percent).²⁰
- African American youth, as well as youth living in single-parent and stepparent families, displayed higher rates of polyvictimization.²¹
- Youth who are polyvictimized have a far greater level of additional lifetime adversities and distress, including illnesses, accidents, family unemployment, parental substance abuse, and mental illness.²²
- Polyvictims exhibit much higher levels of distress, such as anxiety, depression, anger, and PTSD. They also display higher levels of distress than children who experienced frequent victimizations of a single type.²³

- Of the 1,893 homicide victims ages 0 to 19, 7.6 percent (144) were infants under age one, 13.8 percent (261) were children 1 to 4 years of age, 5.1 percent (96) were children 5 to 8 years of age, 3.4 percent (65) were children 9 to 12 years of age, 17.2 percent (326) were youth 13 to 16 years of age, and 52.8 percent (1,001) were teens age 17 to 19.²⁶



Fatal Violence Against Children and Youth

- The data on fatal violence against children and youth is obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, and therefore, only accounts for violence that has been reported to the police through law enforcement agencies.²⁴
- In 2012, 8.6 percent (1,101) of all homicide victims were children and youth under 18 years of age. Of total homicides, 5.8 percent (736) were males under the age of 18, and 2.9 percent (364) were females under the age of 18. (The sex of one victim was unknown.) Of homicide victims under the age of 18 whose race was known, 46.7 percent (514) were black and 50.3 percent (554) were white. (The race of 33 victims was either “other” or “unknown.”)²⁵

Exposure to Violence²⁷

- In 2011, 22.4 percent of children stated they witnessed an act of violence in their homes, schools, or communities within the previous year, and 3.4 percent stated they had indirect exposure to violence.²⁸
- Of children surveyed, 39.2 percent witnessed an act of violence and 10.1 percent stated they had indirect exposure to violence sometime during their lifetime.²⁹

²⁰ Ibid., 5.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2012), accessed October 25, 2014, <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s>.

²⁵ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2012*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2012), calculated from Expanded Homicide Data Table 2, http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2012/crime-in-the-u.s.-2012/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/expanded-homicide/expanded-homicide_data_table_2_murder_victims_by_age_sex_and_race_2012.xls.

²⁶ Ibid.

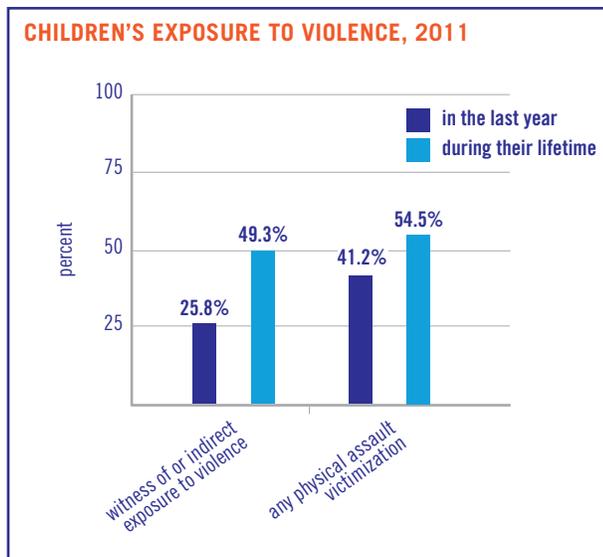
²⁷ The information on exposure to violence was obtained via telephone surveys of children ages 10 to 17 years of age in the United States. This was conducted as part of the NatSCEV. David Finkelhor, *Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey*, (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, 2009), 3, accessed October 25, 2014, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/227744.pdf>.

²⁸ “Witnessing” violence includes witnessing the following: an assault by a family member against another family member, an assault on a family member by someone outside the household, an assault outside the home, or a murder. “Indirect exposure to violence” includes exposure to shooting, bombs, or riots; exposure to war or ethnic conflict; being told about or seeing evidence of a violent event in the household or community; theft or burglary from the child’s household; or a credible threat of a bomb or attack against the child’s school; David Finkelhor, *Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey*, (Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, 2009), 7, accessed October 7, 2014, <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/227744.pdf>.

²⁹ David Finkelhor et al., “Violence, Crime, and Abuse Exposure in a National Sample of Children and Youth: An Update,” Table 5.

Child, Youth, and Teen Victimization

- By comparison, 41.2 percent of children stated they were victims of a physical assault within the previous year, and 54.5 percent stated they were victims of a physical assault during their lifetime.³⁰



- In 2011, 8.2 percent of children under the age of 18 had witnessed a family assault in the previous 12 months and 20.8 percent had witnessed a family assault at some point in their lifetime.³¹
- In 2011, 29.8 percent of children were victims of an assault with no weapon or injury, 9.7 percent were victims of an assault with a weapon, 10.1 percent were victims of an assault with an injury, 5.6 percent experienced sexual victimization, and 13.8 percent experienced child maltreatment by a caregiver.³² ★

³⁰ Ibid., Table 1.

³¹ Finkelhor, "Violence, Crime, and Abuse Exposure," Table 5.

³² Ibid., Tables 1–3.