

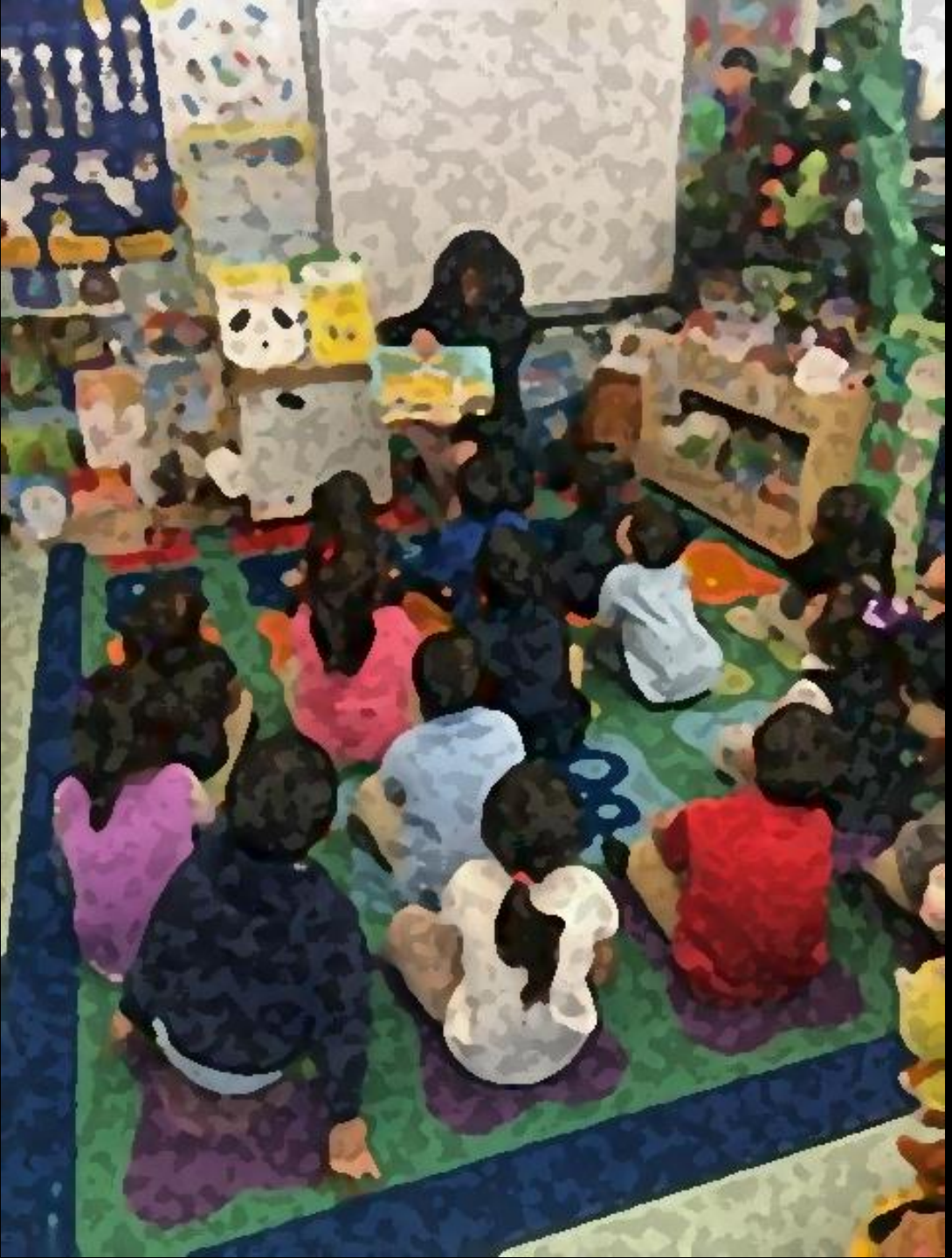
Role of Youth in Improving Public Safety and Strengthening Public Trust

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF EDUCATION



40 Developmental Assets: Empowerment

- **7. Community Values Youth**
  - Young person perceive that adults value youth.
- **8. Youth As Resources**
  - Young people are given useful roles in community.
- **9. Service to Others**
  - Young person serves in community one-hour per week.
- **10. Safety**
  - Young person feels safe at home, school, and neighborhood.



Youth in Houston and Harris County

Houston, Texas:

Total Population: 2,099,451
18 and Under: 524,862
Total Percentage: 25%

Black: 22.5%	Asian: 6.9%
Latino: 44.8%	Native American: 0.3%
White: 24.6%	Two or more races: 2.1%

Harris County:

Total Population: 4,092,469
18 and Under: 1,080,411
Total Percentage: 26.4%

Children under 18 living below poverty level in 2015:
Houston: 35.3% Harris County: 27.4%

Safety – Child and Youth Experience

- Research team from Rice's Baker Institute conducted a needs assessment survey on 20,055 children in 4th – 12th grade and 8,772 parents from 80 schools across Harris County.
- The study took place during the 2018-2019 school year.
- https://www.bakerinstitute.org/media/files/files/29816f15/chb-pub-harrisco-091120-1.pdf.



WHY ARE CHILDREN UNDERPERFORMING IN SCHOOL?

A Comprehensive Needs Assessment of Students in Harris County

Quianta Moore, M.D., J.D.
Fellow in Child Health Policy

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Research Analyst, Child Health Policy Program

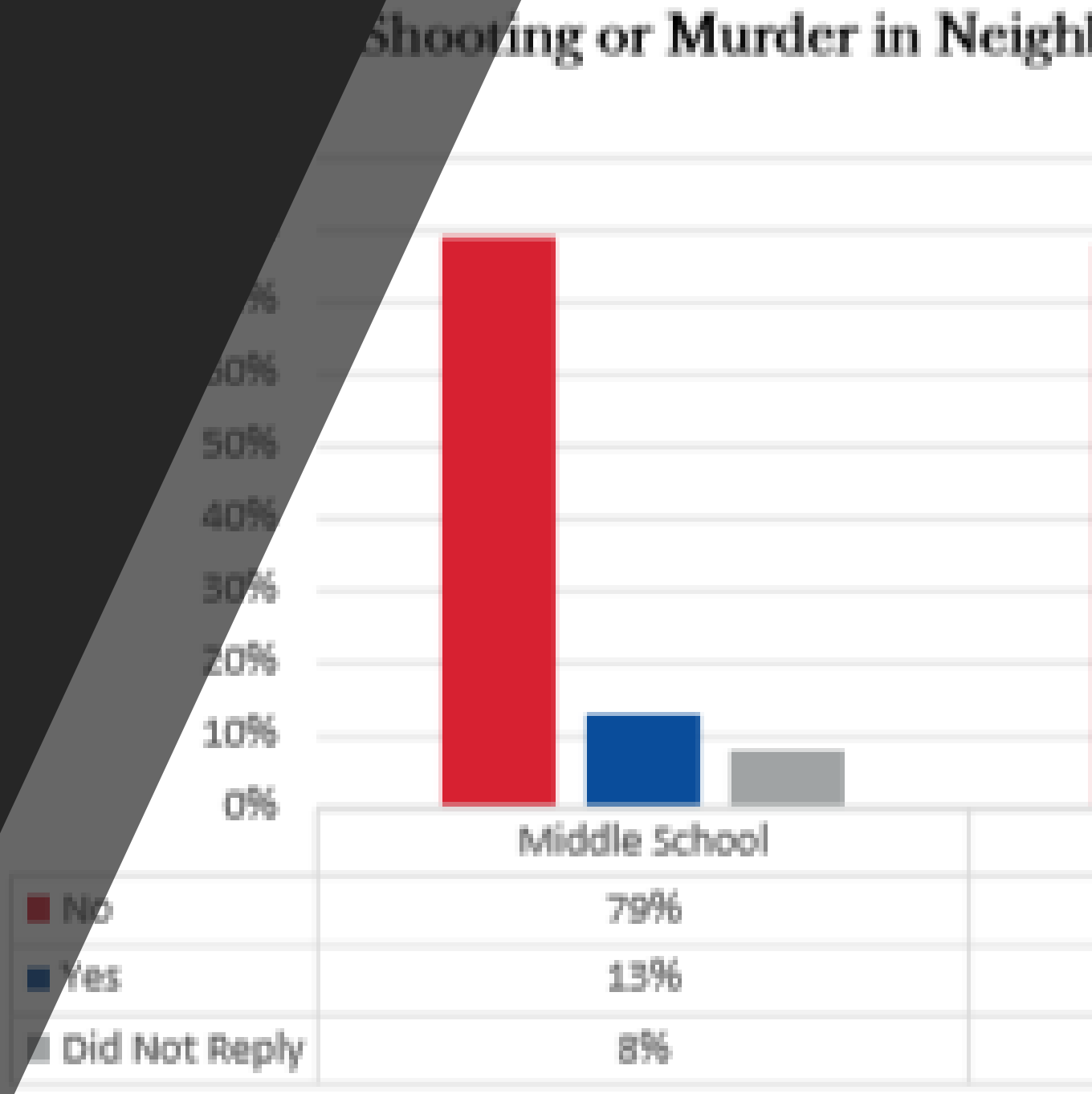
Hannah Bablak
Research Intern, Child Health Policy Program

Selena Guo
Research Intern, Child Health Policy Program

September 2020

Findings

- A significant number of students reported food insecurity, bullying, school mobility, neighborhood violence, and depression, which correlate with poor academic outcomes.
- 1 out of 6 students screened positive for depression across all grade levels.
- Neighborhood violence is correlated with depression.
- 11% of high school students and 13% of middle school students reported witnessing a shooting or murder in their neighborhood in their lifetime.
- Bullying is also correlated with depression.
- 20% of high school, 27% of middle school, and 35% of elementary school students reported being bullied.
- Access to mental health services was limited.
- “Adverse events during early childhood set children on a trajectory for poor outcomes, and this was validated in [the] research.”

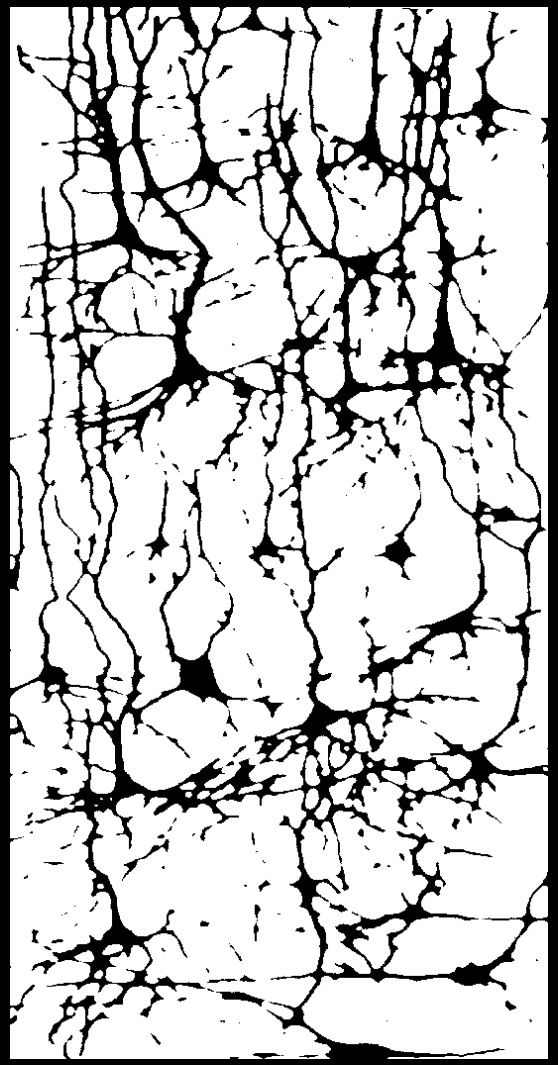




Birth



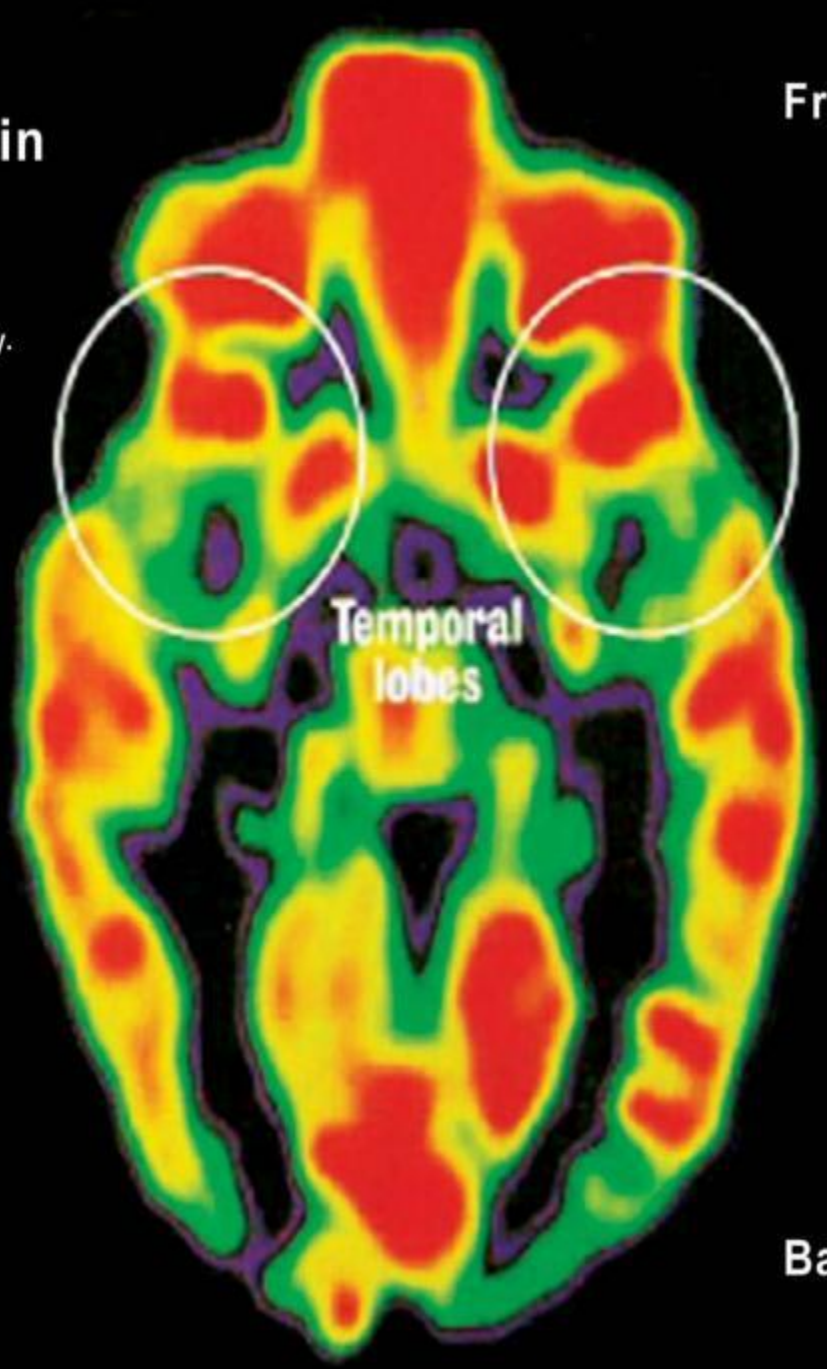
Age 3



Age 14

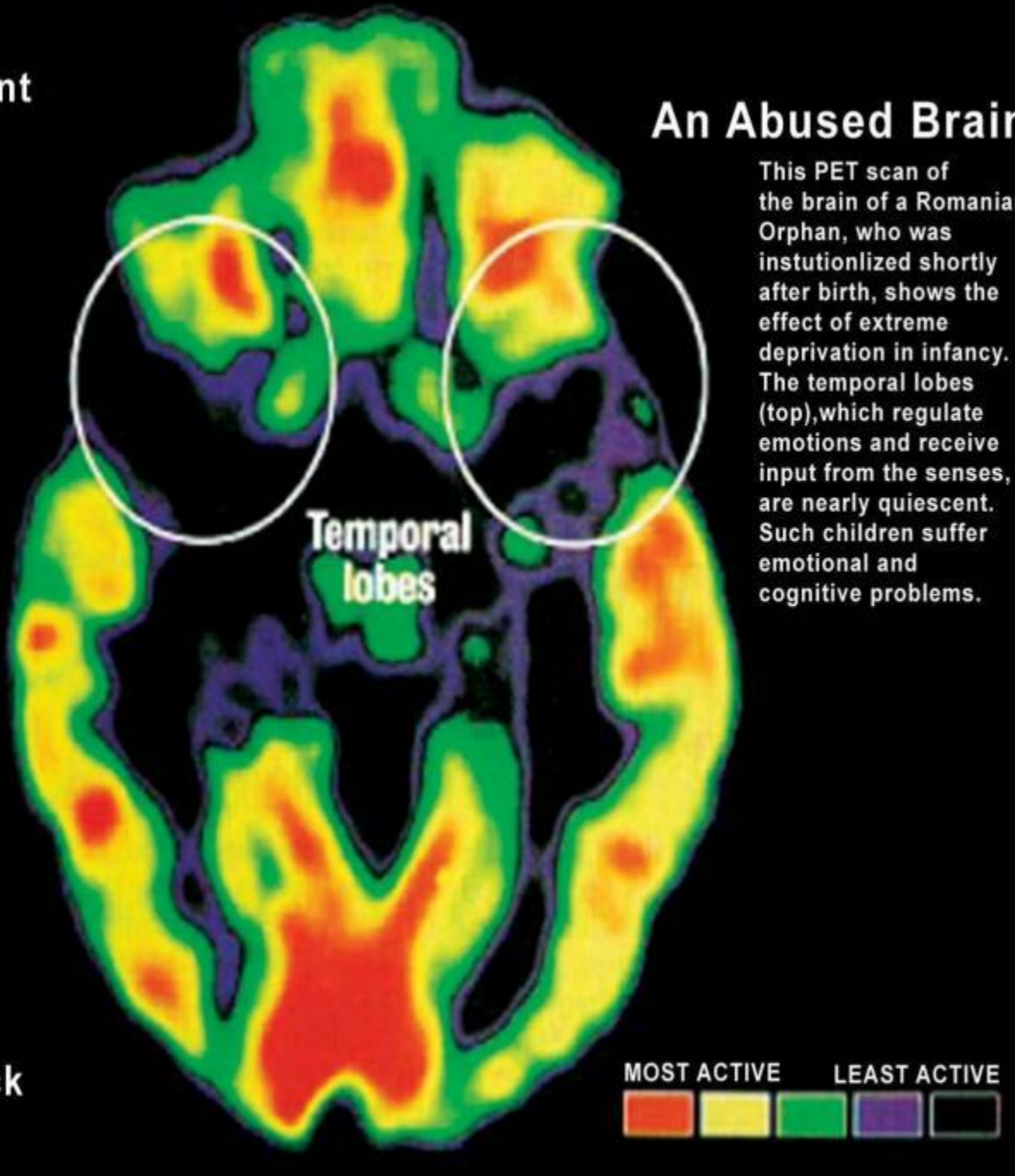
Healthy Brain

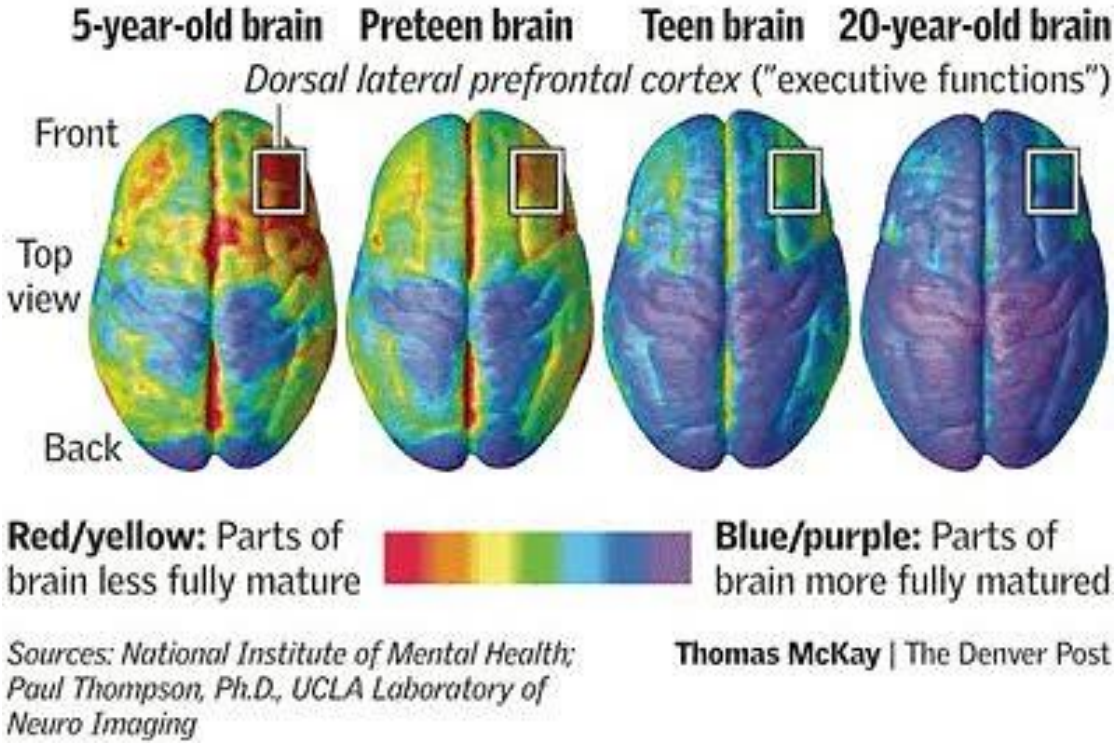
This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.



An Abused Brain

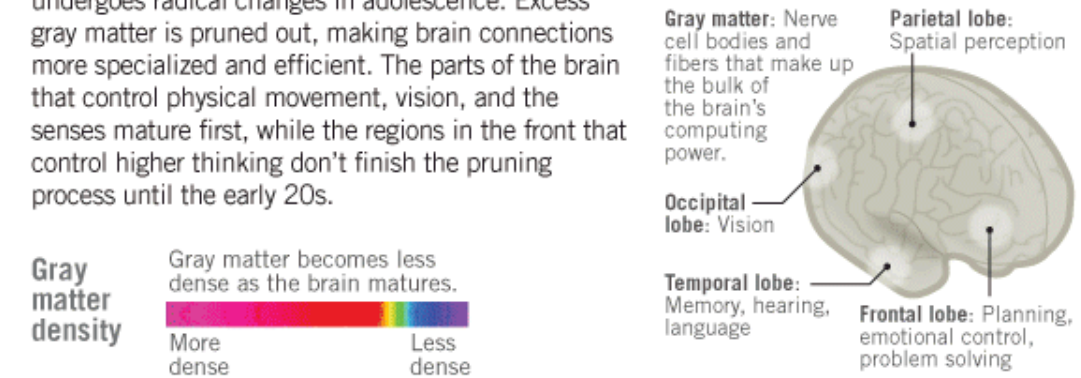
This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was instutionlized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top),which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.

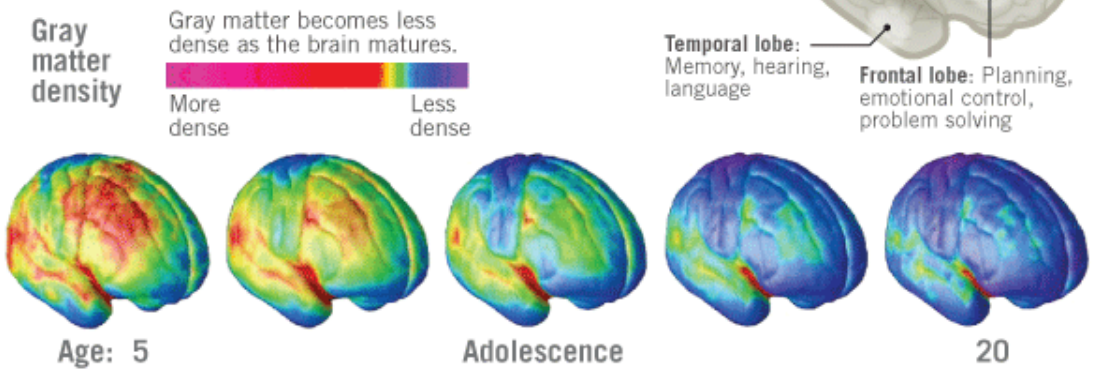




Growing a Grown-up Brain

Scientists have long thought that the human brain was formed in early childhood. But by scanning children's brains with an MRI year after year, they discovered that the brain undergoes radical changes in adolescence. Excess gray matter is pruned out, making brain connections more specialized and efficient. The parts of the brain that control physical movement, vision, and the senses mature first, while the regions in the front that control higher thinking don't finish the pruning process until the early 20s.





Source: "Dynamic mapping of human cortical development during childhood through early adulthood," Nitin Gogtay et al., *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, May 25, 2004; California Institute of Technology

ADOLESCENTS ACT DIFFERENTLY FROM ADULTS!

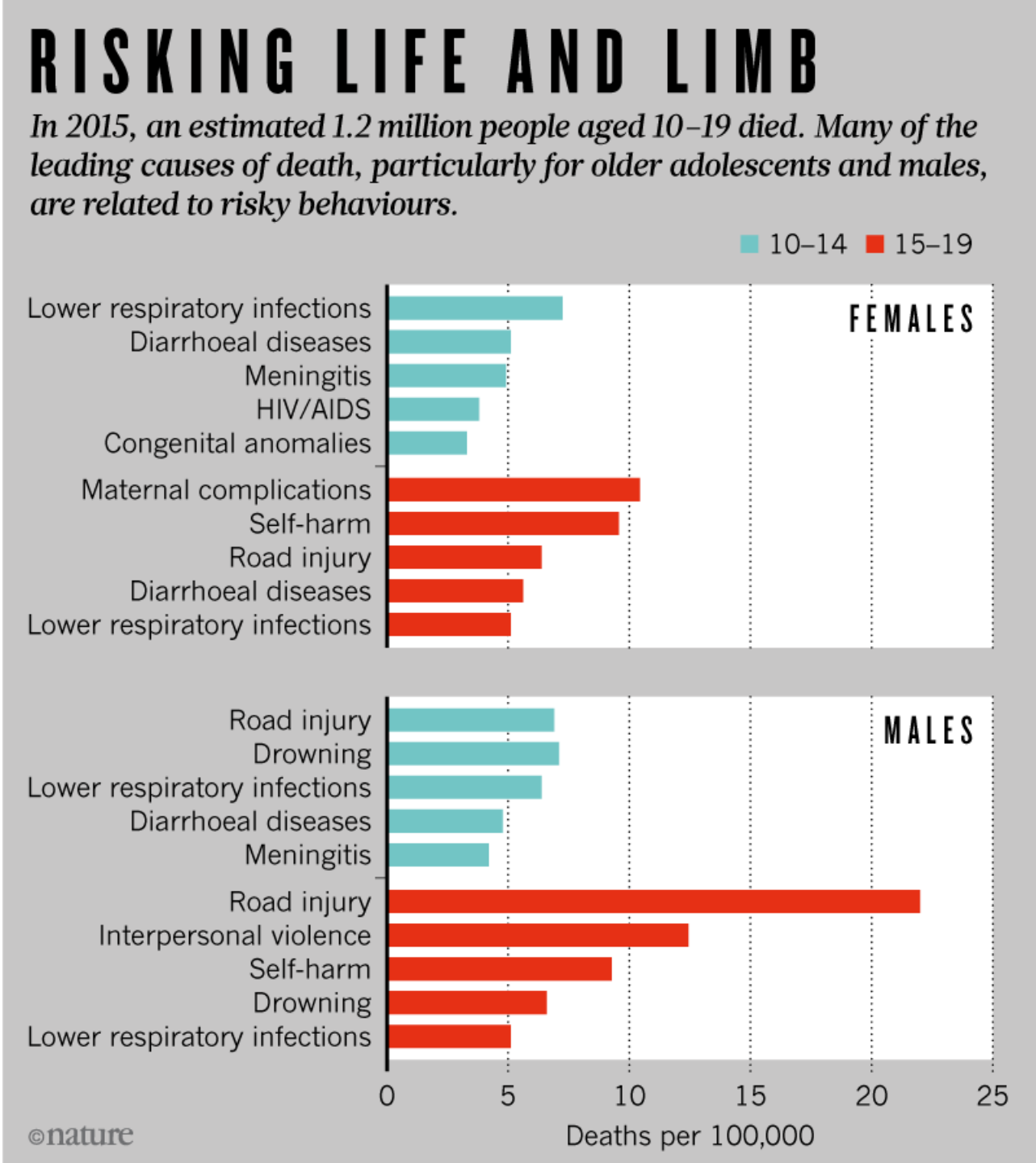
Teen brains are guided more by the emotional and reactive amygdala and less by the thoughtful, logical frontal cortex.

Adolescents are more likely to:
- act on impulse
- misread or misinterpret social cues and emotions
- get into accidents of all kinds
- get involved in fights
- engage in dangerous or risky behavior

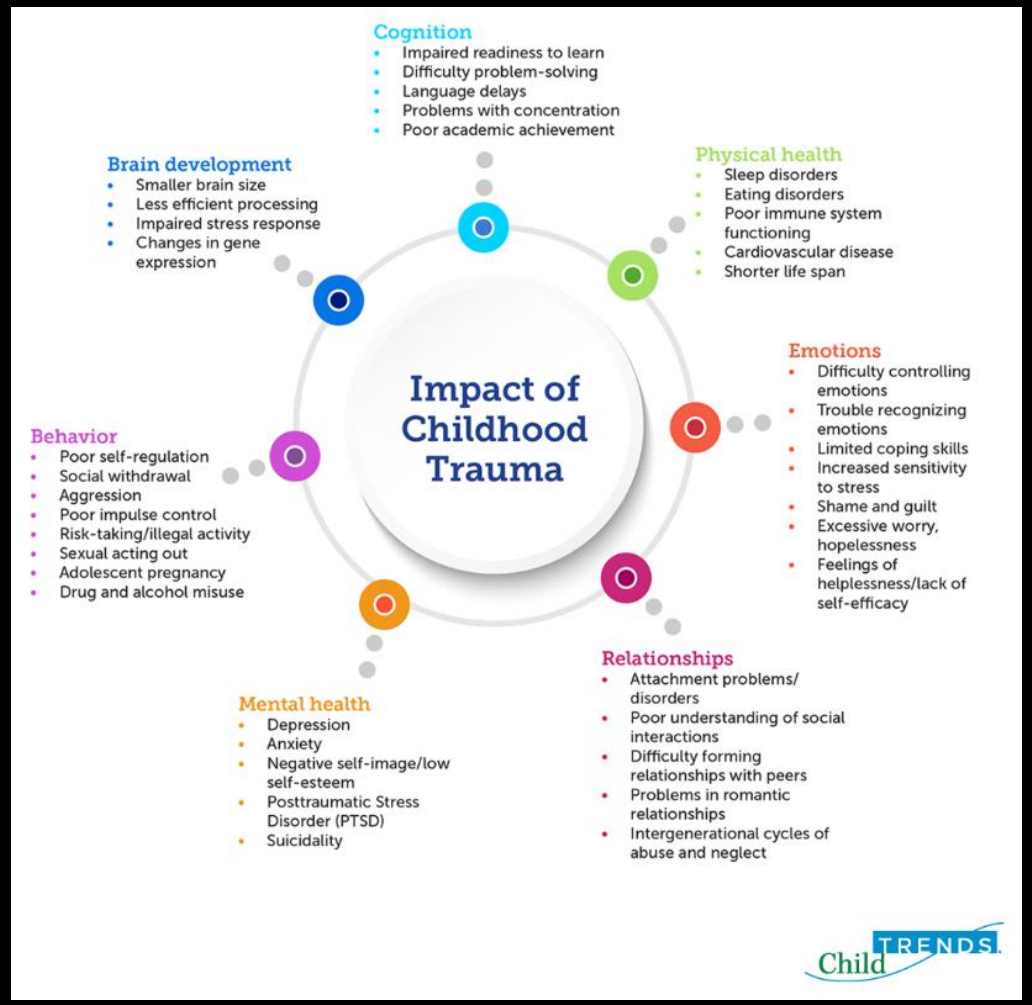
Adolescents are less likely to:
- think before they act
- pause to consider the consequences of their actions
- change their dangerous or inappropriate behaviors

This awareness can help us better understand, anticipate, and manage teen behavior.

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/The-Teen-Brain-Behavior-Problem-Solving-and-Decision-Making-095.aspx



“How to Implement Trauma-informed Care to Build Resilience to Childhood Trauma”
Authors, Jessica Dym Bartlett and Kate Steber



https://www.childtrends.org/publications/how-to-implement-trauma-informed-care-to-build-resilience-to-childhood-trauma

“School-age children who experience trauma may:
Engage in aggressive behavior
Become withdrawn
Fixate on their own safety or the safety of others
Re-enact the traumatic event through play
Have frequent nightmares
Exhibit difficulty concentrating in school

Adolescents who experience trauma may:
Become anxious or depressed
Engage in risk-taking or self-destructive behaviors (e.g., drug and alcohol misuse, dangerous driving, sexual promiscuity, unprotected sex, self-harm, illegal activity)
Feel intense guilt, anger, or shame
Adopt a negative view of people and society
In some cases, have persistent thoughts about suicide or seeking revenge”

Youth Violence

Facts at a Glance 2016

Youth Violence

- In 2014, 4,300 young people ages 10 to 24 were victims of homicide—an average of 12 each day.[1]
- Homicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for young people ages 10 to 24 years old.[1]
- Among homicide victims 10 to 24 years old in 2014, 86% (3,703) were male and 14% (597) were female.[1]
- Among homicide victims ages 10 to 24 years old in 2014, 86% were killed with a firearm.[1]
- Youth homicides and assault-related injuries result in an estimated $18.2 billion in combined medical and work loss costs.[1]

Violence-related Behaviors

In a 2015 nationally-representative sample of youth in grades 9-12:

- 22.6% reported being in a physical fight in the 12 months preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among males (28.4%) than females (16.5%).[2]
- 16.2% reported carrying a weapon (gun, knife or club) on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among males (24.3%) than females (7.5%).[2]
- 5.3% reported carrying a gun on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among males (8.7%) than females (1.6%).[2]

Health Disparities

- Among 10 to 24 year-olds, homicide is the leading cause of death for African Americans; the second leading cause of death for Hispanics; and the third leading cause of death American Indians and Alaska Natives.[1]
- Homicide rates in 2014 among non-Hispanic, African-American males 10-24 years of age (48.2 per 100,000) exceeded those of Hispanic males (9.6 per 100,000) and non-Hispanic, White males in the same age group (2.6 per 100,000).[1]

School Violence

In a 2015 nationally representative sample of youth in grades 9-12:

- 7.8% reported being in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey.[2]
- 10.3% of male students and 5.0% of female students reported being in a physical fight on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey.[2]
- 5.6% did not go to school on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school.[2]
- 4.1% reported carrying a weapon (gun, knife or club) on school property on one or more days in the 30 days preceding the survey.[2]
- 6.0% reported being threatened or injured with a weapon (gun, knife or club) on school property one or more times in the 12 months preceding the survey.[2]

Nonfatal Injuries Due to Violence

- In 2014, 501,581 young people ages 10 to 24 were treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained from physical assaults.[1]
- In 2015, of a nationally-representative sample of students in grades 9-12, 2.9% reported being in a physical fight one or more times in the previous 12 months that resulted in injuries that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse.[2]

National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
Division of Violence Prevention

Youth Violence Facts at a Glance

Juvenile Arrests

- Juveniles (<18 years) accounted for 10.2% of all violent crime arrests and 14.3% of all property crime arrests in 2015.[3]
- In 2015, 605 juveniles (< 18 years) were arrested for murder, 2,745 for forcible rape, and 21,993 for aggravated assault.[3]

Bullying

In a 2015 nationally-representative sample of youth in grades 9-12:

- 20.2% reported being bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among females (24.8%) than males (15.8%).[2]
- 15.5% reported being bullied electronically (email, chat room, instant messaging, website, texting) in the 12 months preceding the survey; the prevalence was higher among females (21.7%) than males (9.7%).[2]

School-associated Violent Deaths

- During the 2012-2013 school year, 31 homicides of school-age youth ages 5 to 18 years occurred at school.[4]
- Approximately 2.6% of all youth homicides in 2012-2013 occurred at school, and the percentage of all youth homicides occurring at school has been less than 3% since the 1992-1993 school year.[4]
- There was approximately one homicide or suicide of a school-age youth at school per 1.5 million students enrolled during the 2012-2013 school year.[4]

- In 2016, homicide was the third leading cause of death for youth aged 10 to 24.
- 86% of youth were killed with a firearm.
- Homicide is the leading cause of death for African Americans and the second leading cause of death for Latinos.
- From 1980-2018, there has been a downward trend in the number of violent crimes committed by youths and in the share of crimes involving youths.
- While fewer youth are being confined overall, children of color have been confined at higher rates, even with a decline in overall juvenile crime levels.



Trauma does not disappear when a child turns 18.

Trauma, toxic stress, and adverse childhood experiences permanently change a child's body and brain.

In adolescence, the brain further develops and changes impacting impulse control, problem solving, and decision-making.

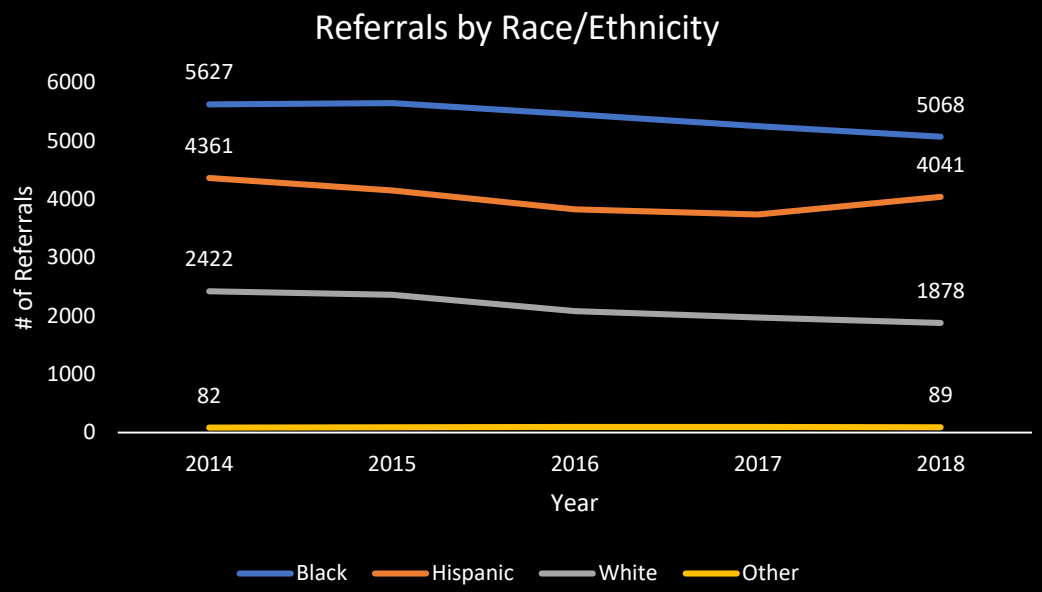
Research indicates that "zero tolerance" school policies are counterproductive and dangerous for youth.

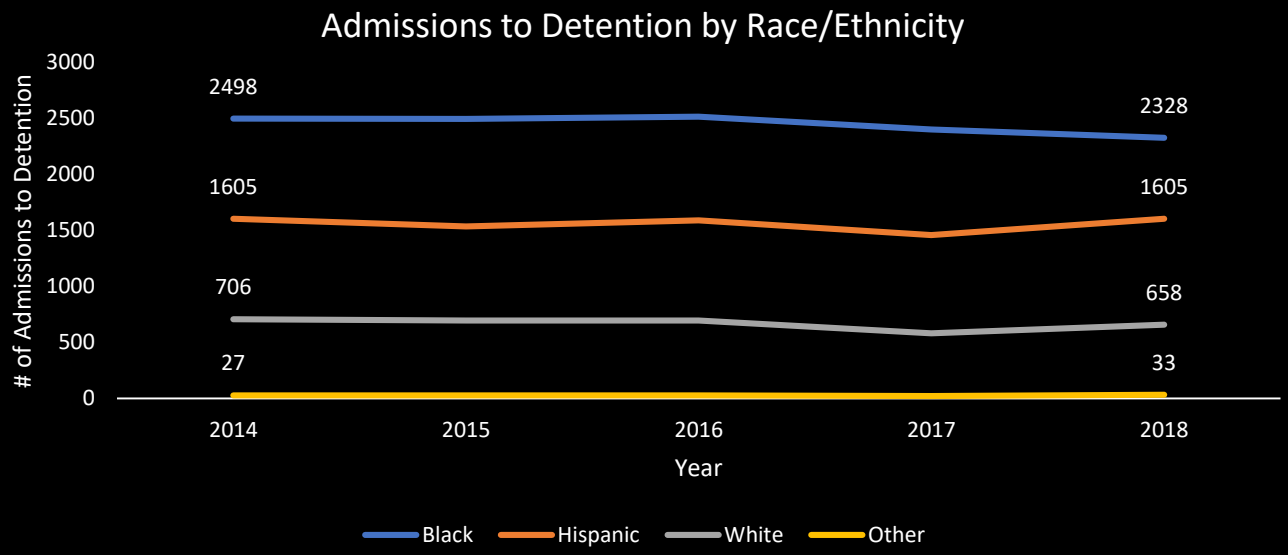
First time arrests during high school doubles the odds of a student dropping out, while a court appearance quadruples the odds of a youth dropping out. (Sweeten, "Who Will Graduate? Disruption of HS Education by Arrest with Ct Involvement, Justice Quarterly 23, no. 4 (2006)).

Black youth are 5x more likely to be confined that white youth, and Latinos are 2x more likely.

Citywide School Discipline Reform
Implicit Bias Training

Referrals and Admissions to HCJPD By Race/Ethnicity





In 2017, Black youth made up 47% of referrals to HCJPD.
Of youth 10-17, Black youth are only 19% of the population *

Source: Harris County Juvenile Probation Department *Census Bureau ACS 2017 1-Year Estimates

COMMENTARY

Examining Racial Disparities in Juvenile Justice

Barbara Robles-Ramamurthy, MD, and Clarence Watson, JD, MD

Decades of research have focused on understanding and addressing racial disparities that occur at every stage of processing in the juvenile justice system. Leaders in the field have raised concerns about the differential treatment and selection of youth based on race. Taking into consideration Sussman and colleagues' results regarding the use of manifest injustice in Washington State, we review briefly the legislative changes that have occurred nationally to address the problem of disproportionate minority contact. We also consider data and hypotheses that have increased our understanding of why and how these racial disparities occur.

J Am Acad Psychiatry Law 47(1) online, 2019. DOI:10.29158/JAAPL.003828-19

The idealistic principle that justice should be administered blindly in criminal matters arguably has no better place than within the juvenile justice system, where a focus on rehabilitation instead of punishment might positively alter the life course of a minor. However, research has documented the existence of racial disparity in the treatment of youth involved in the juvenile justice system for several decades. Studies from the 1980s and 1990s demonstrated that black juveniles were detained and confined at higher rates compared with white youth,[1] and that black youth were more likely to be sent to correctional facilities compared with white youth, who were more likely to be sent to psychiatric hospitals.[2] Additionally, recent studies have documented the continued trend of overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system.[3–5] Such studies have prompted national leaders to enact changes in the requirements imposed on local and state agencies in charge of youth involved in the justice system.

National Attempts to Address Disparity

Beginning in 1974, Congress enacted the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Act, which led to the supportive role of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to help local and state agencies prevent delinquency and improve the juvenile justice system. In 1988, the JJDP Act was amended to demand that state and local agencies monitor and assess disproportionate minority confinement. Subsequently, in 1992, disproportionate minority confinement was elevated as a core requirement, resulting in 20 percent of federal formula funds being withheld from states that did not comply. Most recently, the Act was amended in 2001 to broaden the matter of racial disparities from disproportionate minority "confinement" to disproportionate minority "contact" as more evidence demonstrated that racial disparities were present at every level of processing within the juvenile justice system.[6]

Through the JJDP Act, the OJJDP requires that states gather race and ethnicity information at nine different juvenile justice contact points, which include arrest, referral, diversion, detention, petitions or charges filed, delinquency findings, probation, confinement in secure correctional facilities, and transfer to adult court. It also requires that states submit a report delineating how they are addressing disproportionate minority contact through identification of racial disparities, assessment of factors contributing to racial disproportionality, implementation and evaluation of the efficacy of interventions to reduce racial disparities, and monitoring of changes in racial disparity trends over time.[7] However, there are no specific requirements about what types of in-

Published online February 13, 2019.

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Disclosures of financial or other potential conflicts of interest: None.

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However, research has documented the existence of racial disparity in the treatment of youth involved in the juvenile justice system for several decades. Studies from the 1980s and 1990s demonstrated that black juveniles were detained and confined at higher rates compared with white youth,[1] and that black youth were more likely to be sent to correctional facilities compared with white youth, who were more likely to be sent to psychiatric hospitals.[2] Additionally, recent studies have documented the continued trend of overrepresentation of minority youth in the juvenile justice system.[3–5] Such studies have prompted

found support for this hypothesis.[21] Implicit bias has been at the core of discussions regarding differential treatment of youth, and it has also been associated with higher referral of black youth to the juvenile justice system through the school-to-prison pipeline.[22]

Less than 1% of training devoted to interactions with youth?

Understanding youth developmental stages and needs at every age can give police officers more insight as to how to interact with youth.

"[O]fficers working with at-risk youth without knowledge of child development is putting children's social/emotional development in jeopardy."

Source: K. Van Antwert "Police Must Learn About Child Development Before Working With At-risk Youth"

Author Manuscript

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Policing the Teen Brain

Jeff Q. **Bostic, MD, EdD**, **Lisa Thurau, JD**, **Mona Potter, MD**, and **Stacy S. Drury, MD, PhD**

Drs. Bostic and Potter are with Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital. Dr. Potter is also with McLean Hospital. Ms. Thurau is with Strategies for Youth. Dr. Drury is with Tulane Medical School.

More than 100 years after the creation of the juvenile court, state juvenile justice policies still promote adult approaches, despite consistent neurobiological evidence that the adolescent brain processes, perceives, and responds differently than adult brains. Although frequently the first responders in youth cases, police officers rarely receive adequate training in effective communication and interaction strategies with youth. Strategies for Youth found that most police academies contacted devote less than 1% of training to interactions with adolescents, [1] yet 20% to 40% of juvenile arrests are for "contempt of cop" offenses, such as questioning or "disrespecting" an officer.[2] Incarceration of adolescents fails to decrease recidivism and compounds the negative impacts on the 60% to 70%[3] of youth in correctional facilities who have significant untreated mental health problems.[4] We found that police officer training in neuro-developmentally sensitive techniques markedly

ADV

Reform Trends: Community-Based Alternatives

EARLY INTERVENTION

Youth come to the attention of law enforcement for many reasons, some for law violations and others for normal adolescent conduct. Early intervention is intended to create alternative responses to youth behavior which, when implemented well, can keep youth from having contact with the juvenile justice system, such as an arrest, petition, or status offense referral. Some examples are detailed below.

Schools

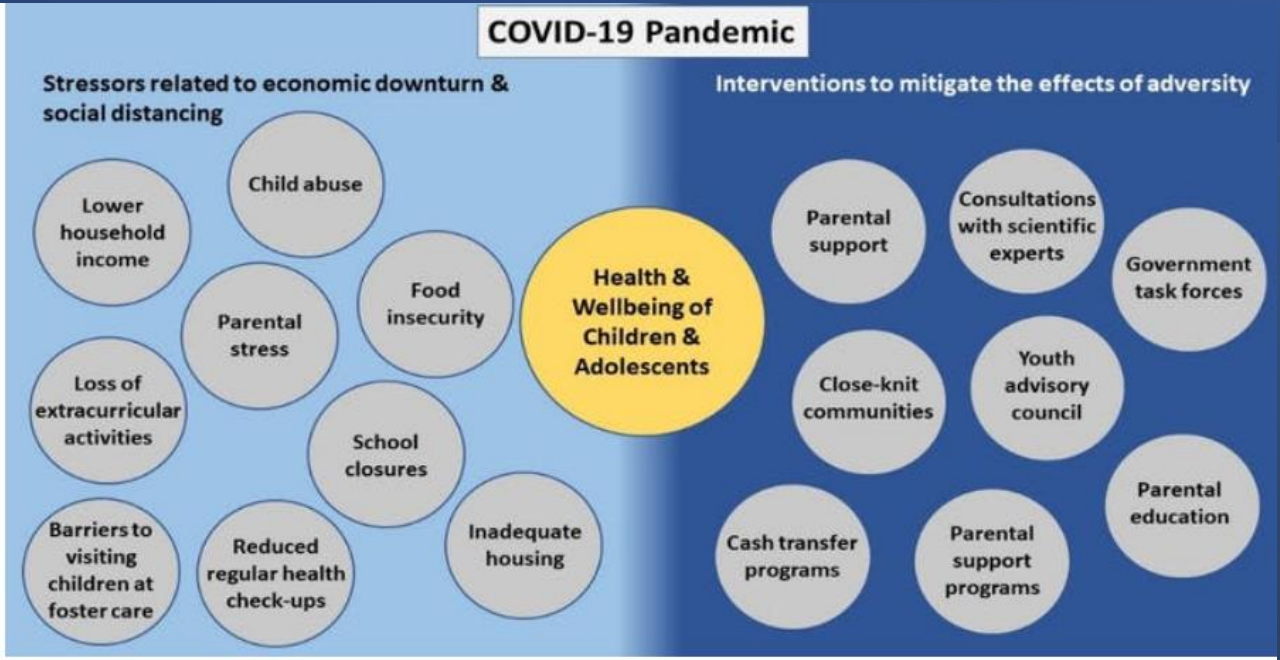
In the past three decades, schools have become a major source of referrals to the juvenile justice system. This phenomenon has come to be called the "school-to-prison pipeline," or the "schoolhouse-to-jailhouse track." Minor school disciplinary problems that used to be handled by school administrators are now frequently referred to law enforcement.[1]

A number of innovations have been developed to reverse this trend and keep youth from getting to the front door of the juvenile justice system. Below are some examples.

Implementing school-based restorative justice programs

These programs bring together the people who have had a conflict to peacefully heal the harm done. It involves holding youth accountable for the harm they have done and involving them in determining how to repair it. There are a variety of restorative conflict resolution programs, examples of which are detailed below.[2]

"A number of youth who act out in schools and in the community have mental health or substance abuse disorders that exacerbate their behavior. Unnecessary arrests and processing of these youth can be decreased when law enforcement officers are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness, substance abuse, and developmental disabilities in youth, and de-escalate their interactions with them."



Stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic and interventions we can take to look after the health and well-being of children and adolescents. (Author provided), Author provided

https://theconversation.com/the-long-term-biological-effects-of-covid-19-stress-on-kids-future-health-and-development-140533

SUPPORTING AND EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND YOUTH:

- Restorative Justice Practices
- Law Enforcement Diversion (https://jjie.org/hub/)
- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Out of School/After School
- Quality Early Childhood Education
- Wrap Around Services
- Community Schools Model
- Youth Advisory Councils
- Youth Support Groups
- Youth Metacognition/Mindfulness/SEL Support
- Mental Health Support and Services
- Hire Houston Youth (SYEP)
- Systemically Protect the Basic Right of Children

STICKER SHOCK? Cost of Incarcerating a youth in Texas for one-year vs cost of one year in-state tuition: **$175,039 vs $10,470**. http://www.justicepolicy.org/research/12928

A one-year increase in average years of schooling reduces murder and assault by almost 30%, motor vehicle theft by 20%, arson by 13% and burglary and larceny by about 6%.

CITYWIDE EFFORT TO ADDRESS

IMPLICIT BIAS

IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

-2020-

INITIATIVE |

We seek to test awareness of implicit bias in Houston and bring together the justice system, school leaders, and advocacy groups to build a comprehensive and intentional citywide school-discipline reform strategy by taking a collective impact approach.

WHY

In Houston, there is an

over-representation

of students of color engaged in punitive school discipline practices such as out-of-school suspensions and being referred to the criminal justice system.

GOALS

- Reduce the number of school-age youth referred to the criminal justice system in Houston
- Improve counselor to student ratio on school campuses
- Increase student achievement and graduation rates
- Develop an evaluation framework for all implicit bias training modules
- Create a revised Student Code of Conduct that eliminates discretionary decision making

> *87% of all punishments in schools are for "discretionary" violations of school Code of Conduct not for offenses that require punishments under the law.*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Over 200 leaders received Implicit Bias awareness training with Rev. Dr. Bryant T. Marks
- Developed 3 work-groups made up of 92 individuals representing 23 organizations dedicated to creating policy and program recommendations
- Engaged with over 500 individuals throughout the design sessions to house meetings for this project
- Held a round-table with city officials to help develop 9 recommendations for implementation
- Created an implementation timeline to begin making strides towards tangible changes

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve Student to Counselor Ratio
- Re-define Counselors' Roles
- Increase Community School Programs
- Review and Redefine of ISD's Code of Conduct
- Develop a Pupil Disciplinary Hearing Structure
- Establish Mandatory Implicit Bias Training
- Establish Mandatory SEL Training for Educators
- Establish a District-wide Equity Policy
- Record and review data for the purposes of ongoing improvement of the established recommendations

COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

8 organizations over the past 9 months have led a collective effort to create a City-wide Effort to Address Implicit Bias for School Discipline Reform:

- City of Houston
- Houston Health Department
- Mental Health America of Greater Houston
- One Houston
- Harris County Juvenile Probation
- Leadership for Educational Equity
- Bloomberg Associates
- My Brother's Keeper Houston

TO LEARN MORE | KRISTI.RANGEL@HOUSTONTX.GOV





Amari Jackson, 7, holds up a Black Lives Matter sign during a peaceful protest against police violence in Bridgeport, Pa., on June 3.
Kristin Jae Bethel

Students maintain 'fight' for gun safety reform



JHV: MICHAEL C. DUKE

Developmental Assets

7

Community Values Youth

- We value youth more when we understand and appreciate them.
- We can benefit from:
  - Implicit bias training.
  - Training in understanding how the teen brain works.
  - Training in mental health and de-escalation

8

Youth As Resources

Youth should be included in policing reform efforts to offer their unique and valuable perspective and input. They are critical partners in developing restorative justice practices at their schools and in the community. Youth have been champions in the anti-gun violence movement, and their activism helped shape the Black Lives Matters movement.

9

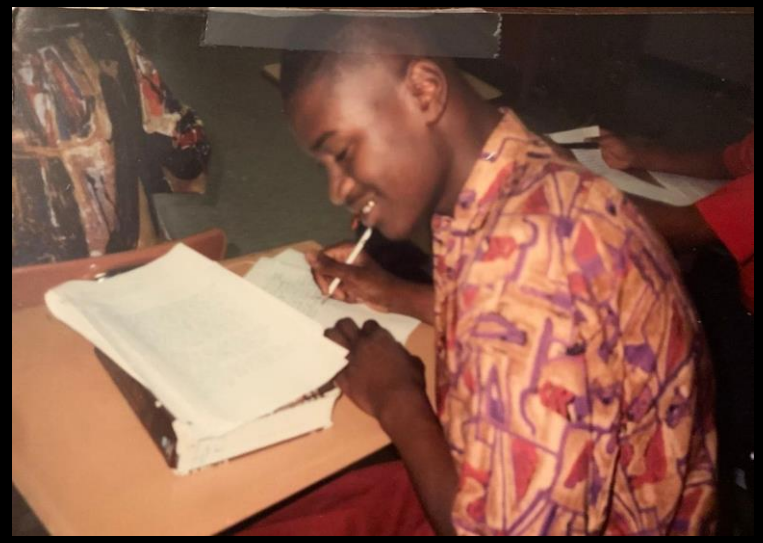
Service to Others

Youth can continue their outstanding advocacy to enhance public safety and public trust. We can offer opportunities to participate in advisory councils for police reform efforts. We can continue to support their service in critical programs like Teen Court, Mayor's Youth Council, MBK and HHY.

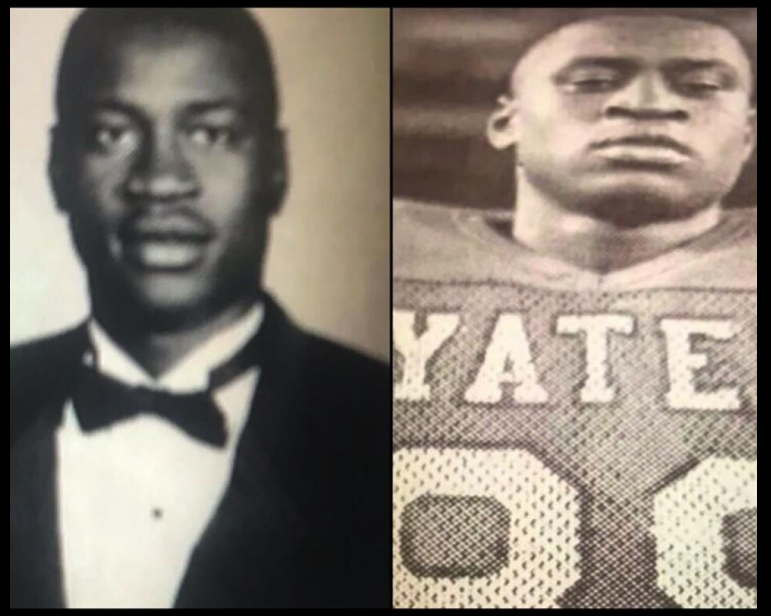
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Safety

We should evaluate how youth within the City of Houston feel about their safety and wellbeing. Data collection and youth input via needs assessment surveys should be regularly conducted to determine how safe youth feel at home, in school, or in their neighborhoods. This can also help with the development and assessment of policies, programs, and practice.







In Memory of Mr. George Perry Floyd Jr. (1973-2020)