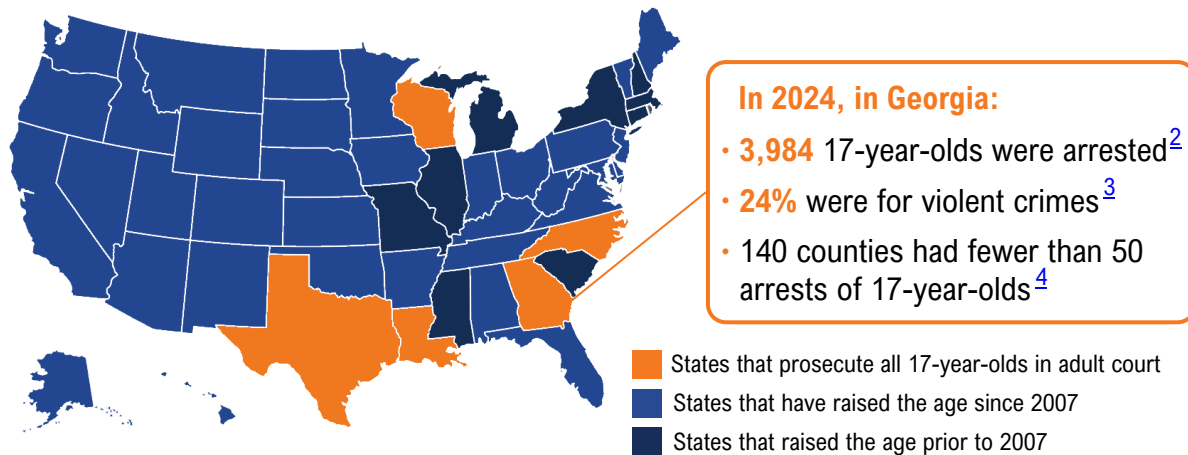


RAISING THE AGE OF JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION

Georgia is **one of five states** that processes all 17-year-olds as adults in the criminal justice system, sending them to adult court rather than through the juvenile justice system.¹



If Georgia raises the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to 18, youth as young as 13 charged with certain violent felonies may still be tried as adults. Such crimes include murder, rape, armed robbery committed with a firearm, aggravated child molestation, aggravated sodomy, aggravated sexual battery, terroristic acts on a school, and voluntary manslaughter.

WHY 17-YEAR-OLDS ARE NOT ADULTS

Research shows that 17-year-olds are still in adolescence, with brains that function differently from adults. Their executive functioning skills, like self-control, emotional regulation, and understanding different points of view, are still developing. When compared to adults, 17-year-olds are:^{5, 6}

- less capable of impulse control
- more likely to overreact to situations
- less able to consider the consequences of their actions
- more susceptible to negative peer influences
- more likely to change course if given the right support

The U.S. Supreme Court* finds adolescents are **more capable of change** than adults and should be given the **opportunity to rehabilitate**.⁷

*Graham v. Florida (2010)



HOW GEORGIA'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM SUPPORT REHABILITATION

Juvenile court and juvenile court-ordered plans focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment, recognizing that 17-year-olds are still developing and highly capable of change. By addressing misbehavior with **developmentally-appropriate interventions**, the system helps **redirect behavior** into more healthy and socially positive outcomes, and reduce the likelihood that the child will commit offenses as an adult.⁸ Below are examples of services offered through Georgia's Juvenile Justice System:



Mental health treatment/
substance abuse counselors



Diversion programs



Career development and
job readiness training



Evidence-based programs



Accountability courts



Education opportunities

Juvenile courts prepare youth for adulthood while recognizing they are still children.

REDUCING DETENTION RATES WHILE IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY

Evidence-based alternatives to detention have been proven to reduce the likelihood of criminal activity.⁹ By employing these strategies, Georgia has seen a **68% reduction** in juvenile incarceration since 2013.^{10, 11}

Georgia's **Juvenile Justice Incentive Grants (JJIG)** and **Community Service Grants (CSG)** fund the delivery of evidence-based programs proven effective for juveniles: Seven Challenges, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Multisystemic Therapy-Problem Sexual Behavior, Multi-Systemic Therapy, Aggression Replacement Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, and Thinking for a Change.^{12, 13} Together these grants make these therapies available to juvenile court jurisdictions encompassing 99% of Georgia's at-risk youth population.¹⁴

JJIGs in 2024



Served **1,027** youth at moderate or high risk to reoffend ¹⁵



70% successfully completed their evidence-based programs ¹⁶



94% were actively enrolled in or had completed high school ¹⁷



69% reduction in out-of-home placements in JJIG-participating counties ¹⁸

CSGs in 2024

Served **355** youth at moderate or high risk to reoffend ¹⁹

70% successfully completed their evidence-based programs ²⁰

95% were actively enrolled in or had completed high school ²¹

52% reduction in out-of-home placements in CSG-participating counties ²²

SCAN BELOW TO SEE
FACTSHEET CITATIONS



OUTCOMES FROM RAISING THE AGE

States that have recently raised the age as part of their juvenile justice reforms have experienced lower arrest and detention rates. Connecticut, Illinois, and Massachusetts have all seen significant drops in juvenile arrests after raising the age to 18.²³



Connecticut Outcomes

Juvenile arrests have decreased by 50% since moving 16- and 17-year-olds from the adult justice system in 2010.²⁴



Massachusetts Outcomes

Juvenile delinquency arraignments have decreased by 60% since raising the age in 2013.²⁵

FAST FACTS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND INCARCERATION

- Nationally, youth are **36 times** more likely to commit suicide in an adult facility than a juvenile facility.²⁶
- In FY 24, the average daily caseload of youth in Georgia receiving mental health services was **564**.²⁷
- From 2014-2023, more than **16,000 youth** have received individual or group therapy through evidence-based models delivered by the Georgia juvenile justice system.^{28, 29}

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is the 181st school district in the state. **Georgia Preparatory Academy** is the middle and high school within the DJJ school system with 28 campuses across the state in detention and transitional centers. An online version of the Georgia Preparatory Academy is available for youth under DJJ supervision who are unable to return to public high school. Additionally, **Pathways to Success** is an adult education program that offers GED instruction and testing. The **Connections Graduate Program** focuses on re-entry, work skills development, and post-secondary options.³⁰

SCAN BELOW TO SEE
FACTSHEET CITATIONS





REFERENCES FOR RAISING THE AGE OF JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION

- 1 National Conference of State Legislatures. Juvenile Age of Jurisdiction and Transfer to Adult Court Laws (2024) Retrieved May 21, 2025 from <https://www.ncsl.org/civil-and-criminal-justice/juvenile-age-of-jurisdiction-and-transfer-to-adult-court-laws#:~:text=Five%20states%2DGeorgia%2C%20Louisiana%2C,offense%20is%20serious%20or%20not.>
- 2 Georgia Crime Information Center, Data Request. May 2025.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Diamond, A, "Executive Functions," Annual Review of Psychology, 2014. Retrieved June 9, 2025. from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4084861/>.
- 6 Louisiana State University Institute for Public Health and Justice. (2016). A Legislated Study of Raising the Age of Juvenile Jurisdiction in Louisiana. Retrieved June 9, 2025 from http://sph.lsuhsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/RAISE_THE_AGE_DRAFT_20160128Final.pdf; National Governor's Association. (2021). Age Boundaries in Juvenile Justice Systems. Retrieved June 9, 2025 from <https://www.nga.org/publications/age-boundaries-in-juvenile-justice-systems/>.
- 7 Justia Law. (2010). Graham v. Florida, 560 U.S. 210. Retrieved May 21, 2025 from <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/560/48/>.
- 8 Justice Policy Institute. (2016). Raise the Age. Retrieved June 9, 2025 from https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/raisetheagesummary_final_3_6_16.pdf.
- 9 Georgia Council on Criminal Justice Reform. Criminal Justice Reform Council Report, 2017-2018. Retrieved June 9, 2025 from <https://dcs.georgia.gov/important-links/georgia-council-criminal-justice-reform>.
- 10 Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. Annual Report FY 2024. Retrieved June 9, 2025 from <https://djj.georgia.gov/document/document/djj-annual-report-2022/download>.
- 11 Georgia Juvenile Justice Data Clearinghouse. Data Through the Juvenile Justice System. Retrieved June 11, 2025 from <https://juveniledata.georgiacourts.gov/dashboards-reports/system-data/>.
- 12 Personal communication. June 2, 2025. Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.
- 13 Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Community Services Grant Evaluation Report, Year 10, 2023-2024.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. Annual Report FY 2024. Retrieved June 9, 2025 from <https://djj.georgia.gov/document/document/djj-annual-report-2022/download>.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Community Services Grant Evaluation Report, Year 10, 2023-2024.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Justice Policy Institute. (2016). Raise the Age. Retrieved June 9, 2025 from https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/raisetheagesummary_final_3_6_16.pdf.

REFERENCES FOR RAISING THE AGE OF JUVENILE COURT JURISDICTION, CONTINUED

- 24 State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Statistics, Juvenile Cases, Delinquency, July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009; July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Retrieved June 9, 2025 from <https://www.jud.ct.gov/statistics/juvenile/>.
- 25 Citizens for Juvenile Justice. Key Juvenile Justice System Trends that Support Raising the Age in Massachusetts (2013-2022). Retrieved June 9, 2025 from <https://www.cfjj.org/rta-data>.
- 26 UCLA School of Law. (2018). Getting to Zero: A 50-State Study of Strategies to Remove Youth from Adult Jails. Retrieved June 11, 2025 from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LLSF8uBlrcqDaFW3ZKo_k3xpk_DTmltV/view?usp=sharing.
- 27 Personal Communication. Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. May 21, 2025
- 28 Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Georgia Juvenile Justice Incentive Grant Evaluation Report, Year 11, 2023-2024.
- 29 Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Community Services Grant Evaluation Report, Year 10, 2023-2024.
- 30 Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. School System. Retrieved June 11, 2025 from <https://djj.georgia.gov/djj-divisions/our-djj-school-system>.