



Kentucky can...

Expand court discretion when determining the transfer of youth to adult court

An efficient and effective juvenile justice system holds kids accountable, helps them grow up to become contributing members of their community, and increases public safety. Just as a bicycle works best when it uses the right gear for the terrain, our juvenile justice system should use different responses for different situations. Kentucky has made strides in improving its juvenile justice system, yet **our state has been stuck in a single gear** when it comes to the mandatory transfer of youth to adult court for certain offenses.



Using the right gear for the situation keeps Kentucky moving forward.

When judges have the discretion to decide how to handle these cases, courts can respond more effectively. Keeping children within the juvenile justice system means:

- Speedier trials
- Most cost-effective and developmentally-appropriate responses
- Better access to rehabilitative supports and services



But Kentucky is stuck using a single gear.

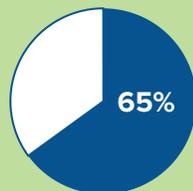
The mandatory transfer of children to adult court has unnecessary consequences:

- More time incarcerated awaiting trial
- Court records are not confidential
- Higher likelihood to commit crimes in the future

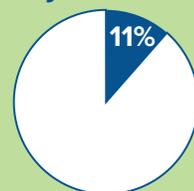
Advancing Equity in the Commonwealth

Despite recent reforms to Kentucky's system of juvenile justice, youth of color continue to be overrepresented in the youth justice system at all points, and the disparities have grown in recent years. This is due, in part, to factors like Black youth receiving harsher treatment than White youth for similar offenses, mandatory policies that focus on toughness rather than what works to keep youth from committing an offense in the future, and the compounding impact of those disparities.

Kentucky



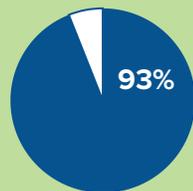
Black youth transferred to adult court



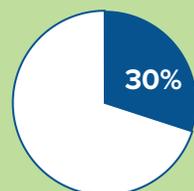
Black youth as proportion of 2017 population

Youth ages 10-17 (whose race was known), 2008-2017

Jefferson County



Black youth transferred to adult court



Black youth as proportion of 2018 population

Black youth ages 10-17, 2016-18

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Solution:

Allow juvenile court judges to use their discretion in the decision to transfer youth ages 14 and older to adult court for situations involving a firearm.