

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Self Check page 5

What assumptions led to the establishment of a separate system of justice for juvenile offenders?

The assumptions that juveniles are less mature than adults, incapable of the same level of intent as adults, and more easily rehabilitated. This led to the basic theory that the **juvenile justice system** should be more rehabilitative than punitive, and this affects the ways in which juvenile offenders are managed at almost every step of the process.

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1. What is a status offender?

A status offender is a juvenile who commits **status offenses**, a category of delinquent acts that are illegal only when committed by juveniles. Status offenders include truants, runaways, and underage smokers and drinkers.

2. What is the most common maximum age of juvenile court jurisdiction?

The most common maximum age is 17, although the range among the 50 states is from 15 to 17.

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Why was a separate set of terms established for use in the juvenile justice system?

Since the original goal of the juvenile justice system was to rehabilitate, rather than punish, offenders, a separate set of terms was devised to further distance the two systems from one another. The purpose is to aid rehabilitation by not labeling the process in criminal terms. Therefore, in the juvenile justice system an offender is not a criminal, his or her adjudication is not a trial, and so on.

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What is the most common disposition in juvenile court?

Probation, which allows the juvenile to remain in the community as long as he or she abides by the terms of probation. Probation requires that the juvenile avoid breaking the law; it can also require counseling programs (such as drug counseling), community service, or payment of victim restitution.

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Do the similarities and differences between the juvenile justice system and criminal justice system apply to every jurisdiction?

Not usually, although they are constant in most places. For example, most jurisdictions do not allow juveniles that are taken into custody to be photographed and fingerprinted; in the past, all jurisdictions followed this rule. This is one example of how, gradually, the line between adult and juvenile is appearing to blur.