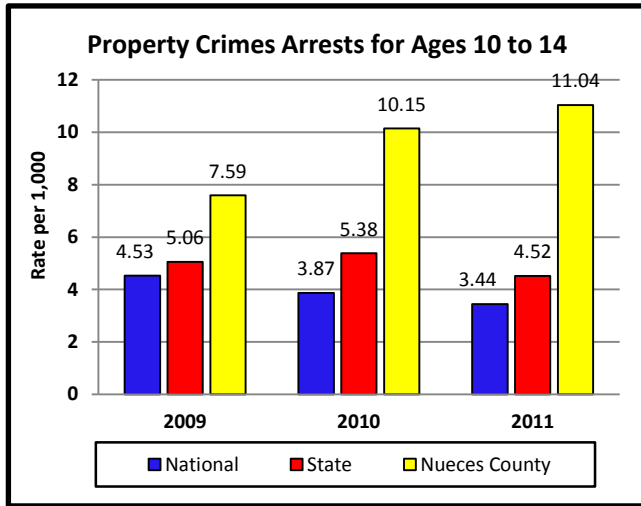


Commission for Children and Youth

Fact Sheet

Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior

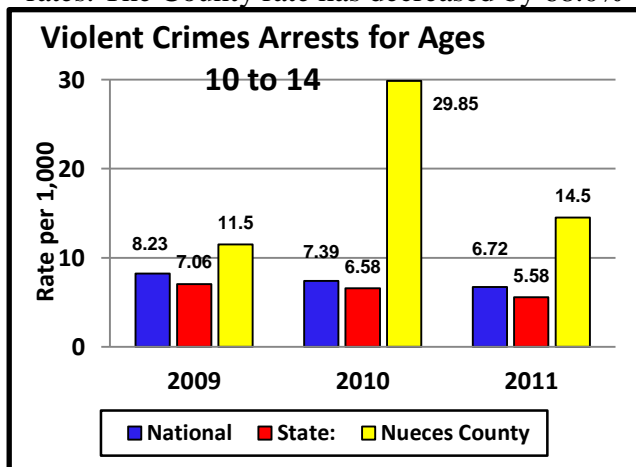
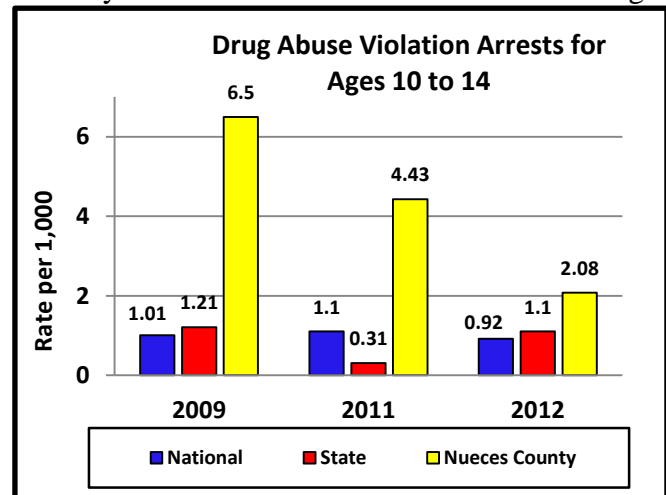


The earlier juveniles become involved in problem behaviors such as crime (delinquency), the longer and more serious their involvement in crime becomes. The indicators for this risk factor are juvenile arrests or referrals for delinquency for the 10-14 age group. When examining arrests or referrals for this group in Nueces County the rates are much higher than State and National rates for each category of serious crime.

Property Crimes Arrests (theft and arson) among the age group 10-14 appears to be a significant problem for Nueces County when compared to the State and National rates. From 2009 to 2011, the County rate (per 1,000 children) of Property Crimes Arrests for the 10 to 14 age group increased by 8.7% to 11.4. The

Nueces County 2011 rate of 11.04 is the highest in the three year interval and is more than twice as high as the State's rate. It is the highest rate since this measure was first collected in 2002.

From 2009 to 2011, the rate of juvenile (10 -14 years old) drug-abuse violation arrests per 1,000 children in Nueces County have fallen to 2.09, which is still two times as high as the State and National rates. From 2009 to 2011, the rate remained around 1 per 1,000 children in the State; similar to the National rates. Nueces County shows the highest rates compared to State and National rates. The County rate has decreased by 68.0%



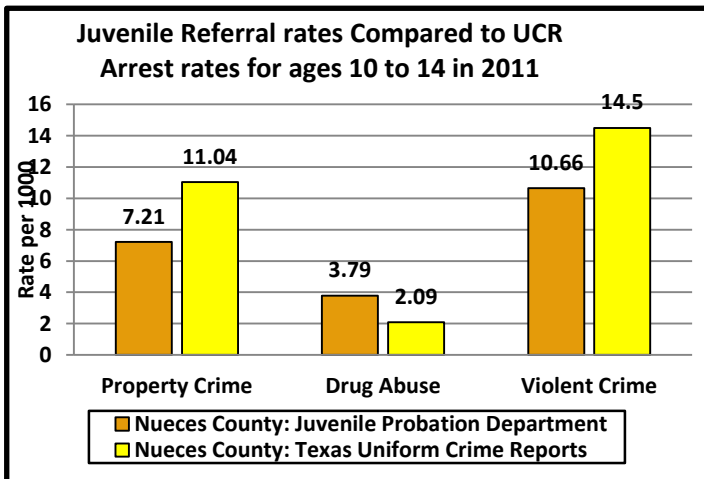
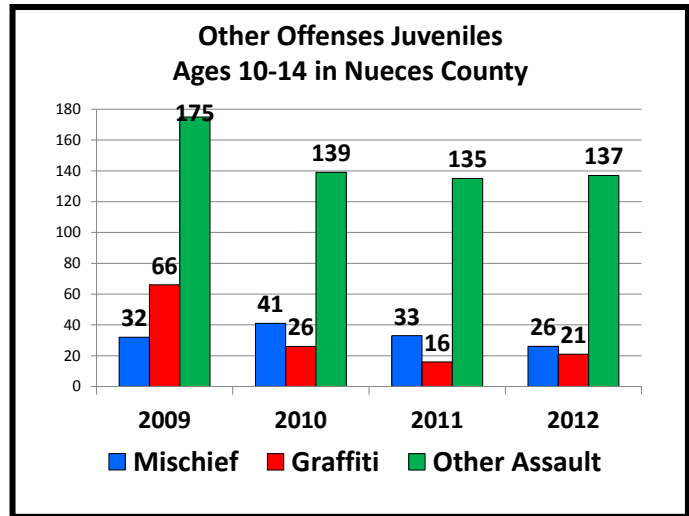
from 2009 to 2011. While the 2009 rate was one of the highest from 1998 to the present, the 2011 rate is the lowest.

The number of Violent Crime arrests was also examined. From 2009 to 2011, the rate (per 1,000 children age 10 to 14) of juvenile Violent Crime arrests decreased overall in Texas and Nationally. These are both at their lowest levels since 1998. The 2011 Nueces County rate of Violent Crime arrests for juveniles was 14.5 and had reached an all-time high in 2010 of almost

30 arrests per 1,000. The 2011 rate places that year among the highest five from 1998 to 2011. Consistently, the Nueces County rate of juvenile violent crime arrests has been higher than those for the State or Nation. The 2011 rate remains double those for the State and Nation.

These data for the most serious criminal offenses still indicate that Nueces County youth become involved in problem behaviors earlier than those in the State and Nation as comparison groups. The basic stability over time of the violent crime rate and the increasing property crime rate are of significant concern. The possibility that early drug use is decreasing may be an encouraging finding.

To consider possible trends, three other offense categories are examined here for the first time. Juvenile arrests in the 10-14 age group appear to be decreasing for the offenses of criminal mischief, graffiti, and other (simple) assault across the 2009 to 2012 time period. These data have not been collected before, so any longer term trend is not available. These offenses have not been considered separately in the literature. However, the basic concept that delinquency becomes more frequent and more serious over time if it starts in this age group should hold for these offenses too. Thus, it may be a positive finding that these offenses appear to be declining.



A final observation is offered. Two different data sources may be used to track juvenile involvement in crime: referrals to the Juvenile Department and arrests by the police. As seen on the adjacent chart, these reflect different numbers for most years. This is a long term pattern. However, even though the reported rates differ between reporting agencies, the fact remains that Nueces County is the leader in crimes committed by 10 to 14 year olds. The County has a more serious problem with early initiation of problem behaviors than its comparison groups.



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