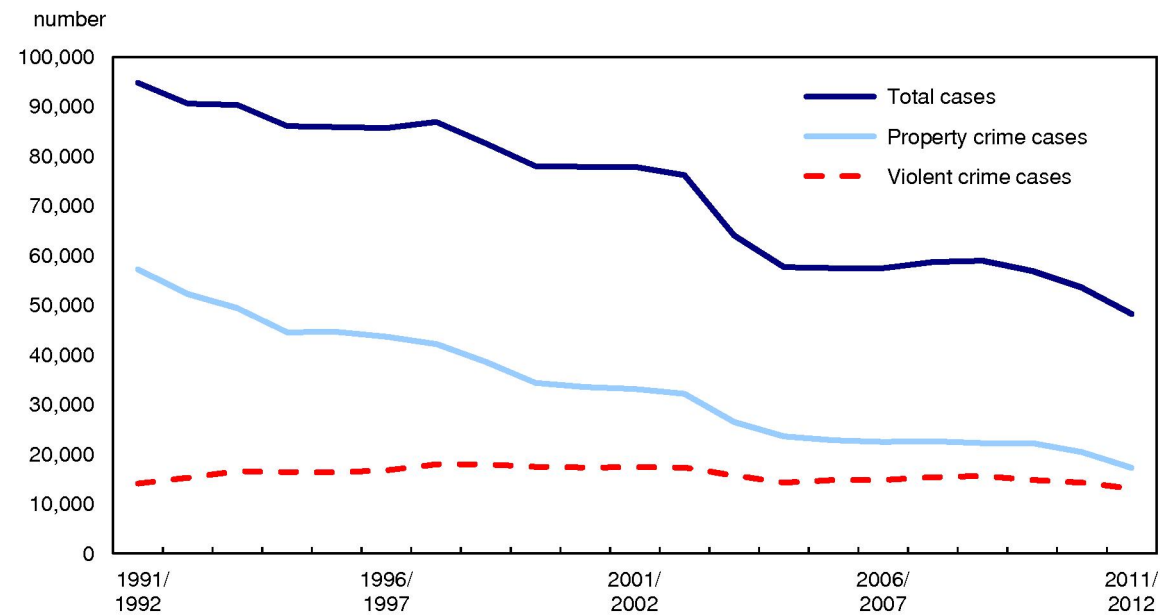


# Youth court statistics, 2011/2012

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Canadian youth courts, which handle cases involving 12 to 17 year-olds, completed about 48,000 cases in 2011/2012, down 10% from the previous year. The 2011/2012 decrease marks the third consecutive annual decline and the lowest number of cases completed in youth courts since national data were first collected in 1991/1992.

**Chart 1**  
**Cases completed in youth court, Canada**



The 2011/2012 decrease occurred across the country. The largest decreases in the number of completed youth court cases were in the territories, where declines ranged from 23% to 36%. Among the provinces, British Columbia (-16%) recorded the largest decline, followed by New Brunswick (-14%) and Ontario (-12%).

The long-term drop in the number of completed youth court cases has been driven primarily by fewer cases involving non-violent crimes, such as property crimes. Even so, cases involving theft (14%) and break and enter (8%) continued to be the most common. The most common type of completed violent youth court case involved common assault (8%) in which little to no physical harm was caused to victims.

Virtually all types of completed youth court cases declined in 2011/2012. Some of the largest declines were for cases involving theft (-17%), break and enter (-15%) and major assault (-15%). Cases involving the possession of drugs (+7%) as well as those for other drug crimes (+2%), such as drug trafficking, production and exporting/importing, were among the few types of cases to increase.

Among cases completed in youth court, the accused was usually male (77%). Additionally, most (61%) involved older youth, those aged 16 or 17 years of age.

Almost 6 in 10 (57%) youth court cases completed in 2011/2012 resulted in a finding of guilt, lower than the proportion seen a decade ago (66%). Another 42% were stayed, withdrawn, dismissed or discharged, and about 1% of cases were acquitted.



Probation, either on its own or in combination with another type of sentence, continued to be the most common type of youth court sentence, imposed in 58% of all guilty youth court cases in 2011/2012. The median length of probation was 365 days.

A community service order, in which a youth is required to perform unpaid work, was ordered in one-quarter (25%) of all guilty youth court cases in 2011/2012. This type of sentence was most commonly associated with cases involving drug offences.

Youth courts handed down a custody sentence in 15% of guilty youth court cases, down by almost half compared with the 1990s and early 2000s. Most sentences to custody were relatively short, at three months or less (74%).

The median length of time taken to complete a youth court case fell for the third year in a row to 108 days (or about 3½ months), yet remained longer than throughout the 1990s and the early part of the 2000s.

**Note to readers**

*The data presented in this article are drawn from the youth portion of the Integrated Criminal Court Survey. The individuals involved are people aged 12 to 17 years at the time of the offence. Youth court cases that involve more than one charge are represented by the most serious offence. A completed case is defined as one or more charges against an accused person or company that were processed by the courts at the same time and received a final decision.*

**Available in CANSIM: tables 252-0064 to 252-0074.**

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3312.**

The *Juristat* article "Youth court statistics in Canada, 2011/2012" (85-002-X), is now available. From the *Browse by key resource* module of our website under *Publications*, choose *All subjects*, then *Crime and justice*, and *Juristat*.

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