

The Effects of Violence on Youth in Marion County

200+ homicides annually

Indianapolis has experienced several consecutive years with more than 200 homicides, placing it among the more violent large cities in the Midwest.

Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department

Youth homicide impact

Youth ages 19 and under experienced a peak of **44 homicide deaths in 2023**.

Marion County Public Health Department

Gun violence impact

While youth gun homicides declined in 2024, non-fatal shootings involving children increased, demonstrating that violence continues to impact young people beyond homicide statistics.

Marion County Public Health Department

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"Making sure youth are fed, have stable housing, and have mental health support — all of that is important."

— Indianapolis Violence Prevention Practitioner

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VIOLENCE IS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE THAT IMPACTS YOUTH, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES.

Youth violence is **preventable**. By investing in prevention, healing, and opportunity, Marion County can help young people overcome trauma, break cycles of violence, and build safer communities.

Violence exposure is a significant concern for children and young adults in Marion County. Young people are impacted not only when they are direct victims of violence, but also when they witness violence, lose loved ones, experience bullying, or live in communities affected by ongoing violence.

Repeated exposure to violence and trauma can affect brain development, emotional regulation, learning, behavior, and long-term health. Addressing youth violence requires investments in prevention, healing, and the systems that help young people thrive.

VIOLENCE EXPOSURE AFFECTS MORE THAN VICTIMS

Young people can experience trauma from:

- Witnessing violence in their homes, schools, or neighborhoods
- Hearing gunfire or experiencing community violence
- Losing friends or family members to violence
- Experiencing bullying, threats, or intimidation
- Living with chronic stress caused by unsafe environments

WHY IT MATTERS

Exposure to violence and trauma is linked to:

- Increased anxiety, depression, and PTSD
- Difficulty concentrating and learning
- Chronic absenteeism and school disengagement
- Increased risk of behavioral challenges and justice system involvement
- Higher rates of substance use and health challenges later in life

The effects of violence can extend well beyond childhood, impacting young people's health, relationships, education, and economic stability into adulthood.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Invest in Prevention and Community-Based Solutions.** Expand evidence-based violence prevention strategies, including violence interruption, credible messenger programs, and community partnerships that reach youth before violence occurs.
- 2 Expand Trauma-Informed Supports for Youth.** Increase access to culturally responsive mental health services in schools, communities, and high-risk neighborhoods. Ensure young people impacted by violence have consistent support, healing resources, and pathways to recovery.
- 3 Address the Root Causes of Violence.** Strengthen investments in housing stability, economic opportunity, food access, and other basic needs that create safe and supportive environments for children and families.
- 4 Build a Coordinated, Youth-Centered Prevention System.** Align organizations, data, funding, and strategies across sectors while ensuring young people have a meaningful role in shaping violence prevention solutions and measuring progress.



Marion County Commission on Youth

MCCOY is a non-partisan and independent non-profit organization that champions the positive development of youth through leadership on key issues and support of the youth development professional community. MCCOY serves as an advocate on behalf of youth policy, promoting positive practices and effective policies by:

- Educating leaders and community members about key youth development issues
- Supporting formal and informal policies that provide young people with the opportunities they need to succeed
- Consulting and empowering young people to be advocates for their own community goals

PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

Youth Well-Being

All youth should be safe, nurtured, and free from abuse, neglect, and violence through coordinated community efforts.

Youth Engagement

All youth should be empowered to formulate and share their opinions, and be part of decisions that affect them.

Student Success

All youth in Indiana have the right to an equitable, quality education, and to graduate and succeed.

Quality Youth Programs

All youth programs should adhere to quality and best-practice standards to best serve Indiana's young people.

Youth Worker Professional Development

All professionals working with youth should have access to continuing education and professional development with quality standards and credentialing.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Advocacy Resources

Tools and guidance for engaging in youth policy



Youth Day at the Statehouse

Bringing youth voice directly to legislators



Statehouse Sound-Off

Legislative session updates from MCCOY



Coalitions

Statewide partners advancing shared policy goals



Your Vote. Their Future.

Your one-stop voter guide for everything you need to participate in elections in Indiana



mccoyouth.org/advocacy/advocacy-resources

Our role as advocates.

As a leading intermediary organization, MCCOY connects partners, strengthens youth-serving organizations, elevates youth voice, and advocates for policies that support the well-being of young people and families.

OUR ADVOCACY TEAM

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30+

Years MCCOY has worked to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families across Marion County.



We champion the positive development of youth through community and systems change.

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