

# FATHERLESSNESS AND CRIME

Jack Brewer | August 25, 2022

An absent father affects all aspects of a child's life, from socio-cognitive and socio-emotional development to academic performance. In addition, fatherlessness has a negative influence on criminal or delinquent behavior.

## FATHERLESSNESS IN THE UNITED STATES

- ★ Approximately **18,395,000** children in the United States live without a biological father, stepfather, or adoptive father present in the home.
- ★ **23%** of children in the United States are raised by a single parent. This is more than **three times** the world average (**7%**) of children raised by a single parent, the highest rate of any country in the world.
- ★ Fatherless children are **more likely** to suffer from psychosocial development issues, live in poverty, drop out of school, engage in school violence, abuse substances, and enter the juvenile justice system.
- ★ Approximately **41%** of children are born to unwed mothers. For women under age 30, the out-of-wedlock rate increases to **53%**.
- ★ Single fathers are absent from approximately **80%** of single-parent homes.

## FATHERLESS CHILDREN AND RISK FACTORS

- ★ **63%** of youth suicide victims are from fatherless homes.
- ★ **90%** of all homeless and runaway children come from fatherless homes.
- ★ **70%** of juveniles in state-operated institutions and **85%** of youth in prisons come from fatherless homes.
- ★ **80%** of rapists come from fatherless homes.
- ★ Fatherless children are **six times more likely** to live in poverty and commit criminal acts than children raised in dual-parent households.
- ★ Approximately **85%** of children with behavioral disorders have been raised in fatherless homes—**20 times** the national percentage.

## FATHERLESS CHILDREN AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

- ★ Fatherless children are **three times more likely** to be behind bars by the time they are **30 years old**.
- ★ Fatherless children are **more likely** to suffer from alcohol and substance abuse, participate in school violence, and engage in impulsive and delinquent behavior.
- ★ From 1980 to 2010, the arrest data of fatherless boys ages 10 to 14 **increased** by **50%**.
- ★ Most adolescents who enter the justice system have suffered from parental abandonment, substance abuse, or a dysfunctional household. In a study of 75 juvenile delinquents, **66%** experienced fatherlessness, **20%** had never lived with their father, and **25%** had an alcoholic father.
- ★ Minimal parental involvement, unstable family dynamics, and the development of attachment issues—all common consequences of a fatherless

home—contribute to an **increased risk** of juvenile delinquency.

- ★ Fatherless children are **20 times more likely** to be incarcerated than children raised in dual-parent households.

## **FATHERLESSNESS AND SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

- ★ **71%** of teachers and **90%** of law enforcement officials state that the lack of parental supervision at home is a major factor that **contributes to violence in schools**.
- ★ In a study of **56 school shootings**, only **10 of the shooters (18%)** were raised in a stable home with both biological parents. **82%** grew up in either an unstable family environment or grew up without both biological parents together.

