

## **Most Favor Adult Punishment for Juveniles in Violent Cases**

Fifty-five percent of Americans say juveniles convicted of violent crimes should be punished as adults, starting at an average age of 15.

That's older than in one recent case: Lionel Tate, 14, was sentenced as an adult in Florida in March for killing a six year-old when he was 12. But it matches the age of Charles Andrew Williams, 15, who is to be tried as an adult for the Santana High School shooting that killed two and injured 13 people on March 5 in Santee, California.

This random-sample telephone poll for ABCNews.com asked if juveniles convicted of a violent crime should get the same punishment an adult would receive for that same crime, or a lesser punishment. Fifty-five percent said the same, 34 percent a lesser penalty.

Those who favored punishing juveniles as adults were asked at what age that should begin. The largest group, 27 percent, said 16 years old, and the average response was 15.

Juveniles punished as adults?	Yes	No
5/6	55%	34

(If yes) Starting at what age?

Age 17	13%
16	27
15	22
14	11
13	13
12/under	8

Average: Age 15

Parents with children age 12 to 17, the age group in question, are somewhat less likely to favor adult sentencing of juveniles convicted of violent crimes – but a plurality still does.

Juveniles punished as adults?	Yes	No
Have kids 12-17	48%	39
Have kids <12	54	33
No kids	57	33

Among other groups, lower-income and less-educated Americans are more likely to support punishing juveniles as adults. This poll finds no significant differences based on sex or political party identification.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News.com survey was conducted by telephone May 2-6, 2001, among a random national sample of 1,024 adults. The results have a three-point error margin. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS Intersearch of Horsham, Pa.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com on the Internet at:

<http://www.abcnews.com/sections/us/PollVault/PollVault.html>

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89. Do you think that juveniles who are convicted of a violent crime should receive the same punishment that would be given to an adult convicted of that crime, or should juveniles receive a lesser punishment than an adult would receive?

	Same punishment	Lesser punishment	No opinion
5/6/01	55	34	12

90. (IF SAME:) At what age do you think juveniles should start receiving the same punishment as adults - 17 years old, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, or what?

	-----Age-----						No opin.	Avg.
	17	16	15	14	13	12		
5/6/01	13	27	22	11	13	8	6	15

\*\*\*END\*\*\*