

## 6. Social and Community Involvement of Out-of-High School Youth With Disabilities

Clearly, participating in postsecondary education and competitive employment are critical post-high school outcomes for youth, whether or not they have identified disabilities. However, the field of research related to youth with disabilities has embraced a broader perspective on desired post-high school outcomes that includes the holistic concept of “quality of life.” One definition of quality of life illustrates this comprehensive view: “Quality of life is the combination of objectively and subjectively indicated well-being in multiple domains of life considered salient in one’s culture and time...” (Wallender, Schmitt, and Koot 2001, p. 574). The relevant domains considered central for youth with disabilities have long included youth’s living successfully in their communities (Halpern 1985). An important aspect of whether a youth is living successfully in the community is the “adequacy of his or her social and interpersonal network [which]...is possibly the most important of all” aspects of adjustment for young adults with disabilities (Halpern 1985, p. 480).

This chapter addresses three dimensions of the social and community involvement of out-of-high school youth with disabilities:

- friendship interactions;
- participation in community/civic activities; and
- negative community involvement (i.e., involvement in violence-related activities and with the criminal justice system).

Findings for each of these dimensions of involvement are presented first for youth with disabilities as a whole, followed by discussions of significant differences in these factors for youth who differ in their primary disability category, secondary school-leaving characteristics, and selected demographic characteristics.

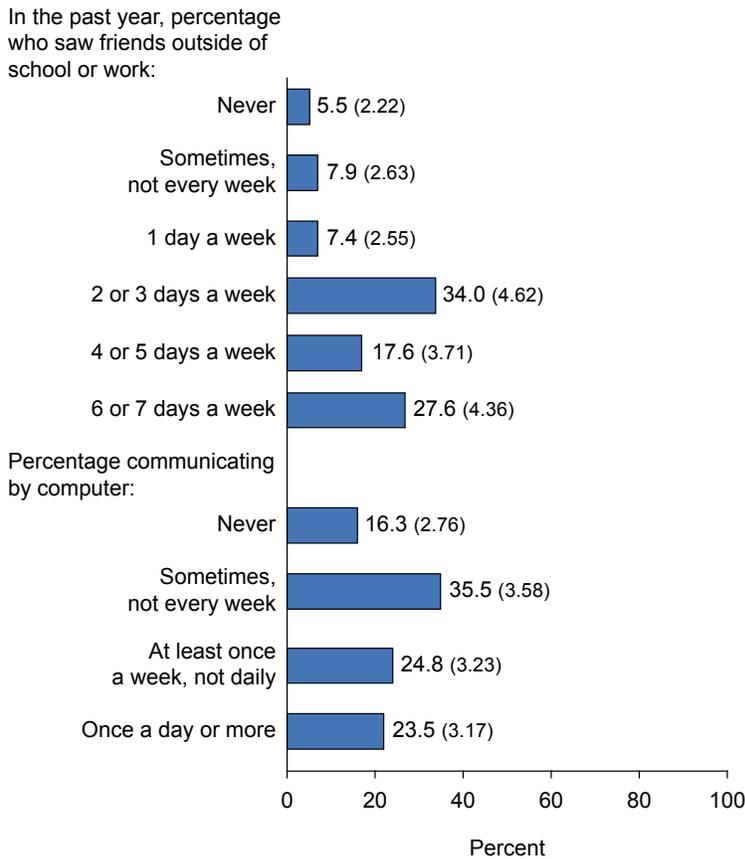
### Friendship Interactions

Unlike adolescence, which is a time for discovering who one is and what one’s role in the world is, the primary developmental task for the young adult is the development of intimate relationships (Erikson 1974). Considerable research has documented the importance of personal relationships as “protective factors”<sup>1</sup> against a variety of adolescent risk behaviors. For example, results regarding factors associated with emotional health, youth violence, substance use, and sexuality from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health (Add Health), the largest, most comprehensive survey of adolescents to date, provide “consistent evidence that perceived caring and connectedness to others is important in understanding the health of young people today” (Resnick et al. 1997, p. 830). Connectedness with friends has been found to be associated with a variety of youth behaviors in either a prosocial or antisocial direction, depending on the nature of the friendships (e.g., Bearman and Moody 2004; Crosnoe and Needham 2004; Fraser 1997; Rodgers and Rose 2002; Smith et al. 1995).

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<sup>1</sup> Protective factors have been defined as “those aspects of the individual and his or her environment that buffer or moderate the effect of risk” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2001, chapter 4, para.1).

Figure 38. Friendship interactions of out-of-high school youth with disabilities



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding friendships are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; findings regarding electronic communication are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples of approximately 1,160 youth for friendships and 2,200 youth for electronic communication.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 parent interview and youth interview/survey, 2005.

A majority of youth with disabilities who had been out of high school from 1 to 4 years were reported to have active friendships<sup>2</sup> (figure 38); 87 percent saw friends outside of school or organized activities at least weekly, although 6 percent never saw friends informally ( $p < .001$ ). Electronic means of communication<sup>3</sup> (i.e., e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging) were reported to be used by 24 percent of out-of-high school youth with disabilities at least daily, whereas 16 percent never communicated in these ways.

### **Disability Differences in Friendship Interactions**

More than 90 percent of youth with learning disabilities or visual impairments who had been out of secondary school from 1 to 4 years were reported to see friends informally at least weekly (92 percent for both groups, table 62). For both groups, this was significantly higher than the rate for youth with multiple disabilities (33 percent,  $p < .001$ ), and youth with learning disabilities also were significantly more likely to see friends frequently than youth

with orthopedic impairments (65 percent,  $p < .01$ ). Youth in the categories of emotional disturbance or speech/language, hearing, or other health impairment also were reported to be significantly higher on this measure of social involvement than youth with multiple disabilities (84 percent, 88 percent, 82 percent, and 79 percent, respectively, vs. 33 percent;  $p < .01$  compared with youth with emotional disturbances and other health impairments,  $p < .001$  for other comparisons).

<sup>2</sup> Respondents were asked, “During the past 12 months, about how many days a week [did you/did *name of youth*] get together with friends (outside of school *if youth was in school*) and outside of organized activities or groups?”

<sup>3</sup> Respondents were asked, “How frequently do you [does youth] use e-mail, instant messaging, or take part in chat rooms? Would you say several times a day, once a day, several times a week, once a week, or less often than that?”

Table 62. Friendship interactions of out-of-high school youth, by disability category

Friendship interactions	Learning disability	Speech/language impairment	Mental retardation	Emotional disturbance	Hearing impairment	Visual impairment	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Autism	Traumatic brain injury	Multiple disabilities	Deaf-blindness
	Percent											
In the past year, percentage who saw friends outside of school or work at least weekly	92.4 (3.99)	87.8 (5.41)	69.0 (8.70)	84.1 (5.34)	81.9 (7.42)	91.6 (7.20)	64.9 (8.74)	78.5 (6.03)	59.2 (13.77)	72.6 (13.00)	33.2 (15.21)	‡
Percentage communicating by computer at least daily	24.5 (4.83)	33.4 (5.51)	11.6 (3.96)	18.6 (4.56)	39.4 (6.85)	44.6 (8.80)	46.4 (6.09)	29.0 (5.12)	32.0 (8.79)	21.3 (9.71)	19.6 (7.87)	‡

‡ Responses for items with fewer than 30 respondents are not reported.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding friendships are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; findings regarding electronic communication are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples of approximately 1,160 youth for friendships and 2,200 for electronic communication.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 parent interview and youth interview/survey, 2005.

Reported rates of communicating by computer at least daily ranged from 12 percent to 46 percent ( $p < .001$ ). Youth with speech/language, hearing, visual, orthopedic, or other health impairments were more likely to have at least daily electronic communication (29 percent to 46 percent did so) than were youth with mental retardation (12 percent;  $p < .001$  compared with youth with hearing, visual, and orthopedic impairments;  $p < .01$  for other relationships). Youth with orthopedic impairments also were reported to be more likely than those with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, or multiple disabilities to communicate by computer at least daily (46 percent vs. 25 percent, 19 percent, and 20 percent, respectively;  $p < .001$  compared with youth with emotional disturbances,  $p < .01$  for other comparisons), and youth with visual impairments were more likely to do so than youth with emotional disturbances (45 percent vs. 19 percent,  $p < .01$ )

### **Differences in Friendship Interactions by High School-Leaving Characteristics**

Youth with disabilities who had completed high school did not differ significantly from those who had not in the frequency with which they saw friends outside of organized activities (table 63); 88 percent and 80 percent of the two groups, respectively, reportedly saw friends informally at least weekly. Neither were there differences between the two groups in the frequency of communicating by computer. Twenty-five percent of youth with disabilities who had completed high school communicated by e-mail or instant messaging or participated in chat rooms at least once a day, compared with 12 percent of those who had not completed high school. There also were no differences in the frequency of either form of friendship interaction

Table 63. Friendship interactions of out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by secondary-school-leaving status and years since leaving high school

	Completers	Non-completers	Less than 1 year	1 up to 2 years	2 up to 4 years
			Percent		
In the past year, percentage who saw friends outside of school or work at least weekly	88.3 (3.67)	79.8 (8.71)	†	83.9 (4.78)	88.8 (4.49)
Percentage communicating by computer at least daily	24.5 (3.66)	12.1 (5.90)	22.6 (5.05)	24.1 (5.57)	23.9 (5.87)

† Not applicable; only youth out of high school 1 to 4 years included in this analysis.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding friendships are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; findings regarding electronic communication are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples of approximately 1,160 youth for friendships and 2,200 for electronic communication.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

across the number of years since youth had left high school. The percentages of out-of-high school youth with disabilities who were reported to see friends at least weekly ranged were 84 percent and 89 percent for youth out of high school 1 up to 2 years and 2 up to 4 years, respectively; the percentages communicating by computer at least daily ranged from 23 percent to 24 percent.

### ***Demographic Differences in Friendship Interactions***

The percentage of out-of-high school youth with disabilities who were reported to see friends at least weekly did not differ by youth's household income or racial/ethnic background (table 64). One difference was apparent, however, regarding the frequency with which youth communicated by computer. Thirty-three percent of youth with disabilities from households with incomes of more than \$50,000 were reported to have electronic communication at least daily, compared with 13 percent of youth from households with incomes of \$25,000 or less ( $p < .01$ ). There were no significant differences in the rates of seeing friends outside of organized activities at least weekly or of communicating by computer at least daily between young men and women with disabilities.

Table 64. Friendship interactions of out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by household income, race/ethnicity, and gender

	\$25,000 or less	\$25,001 to \$50,000	More than \$50,000	Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
				White	African American	Hispanic	Male	Female
Percent								
In the past year, percentage who saw friends outside of school or work at least weekly	85.8 (5.05)	86.9 (7.37)	87.4 (4.03)	88.4 (3.89)	83.5 (7.94)	84.3 (10.25)	89.2 (3.83)	81.1 (6.08)
Percentage communicating by computer at least daily	12.7 (4.28)	19.0 (6.08)	32.5 (5.52)	27.4 (4.16)	14.3 (5.39)	17.2 (8.89)	23.5 (4.03)	23.5 (5.05)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding friendships are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; findings regarding electronic communication are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples of approximately 1,160 youth for friendships and 2,200 for electronic communication.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 parent interview and youth interview/survey, 2005.

## Community Participation

Engaging in activities in the community can provide opportunities for youth to meet people with like interests, develop new skills, and experience the satisfaction of shared accomplishments and of making a contribution to the community. NLTS2 investigated three forms of community participation in the year preceding the Wave 3 interview/survey by out-of-high school youth with disabilities:

- taking lessons or classes outside of formal school enrollment;<sup>4</sup>
- participating in a volunteer or community service activity;<sup>5</sup> and
- belonging to an organized community or extracurricular group.<sup>6</sup>

Because these items refer to activities in the preceding 12 months and because the focus of this report is activities of youth with disabilities after high school, findings for these aspects of community participation are reported only for youth who had been out of secondary school at least a year so as to avoid including secondary school experiences. The full sample of out-of-high school youth with disabilities is included in findings regarding whether age-eligible youth had driving privileges<sup>7</sup> and were registered to vote.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Respondents were asked, “During the past 12 months [have you/has *name of youth*] taken lessons or classes (outside of school *for those in school*) in things like art, music, dance, a foreign language, religion, or computer skills?”

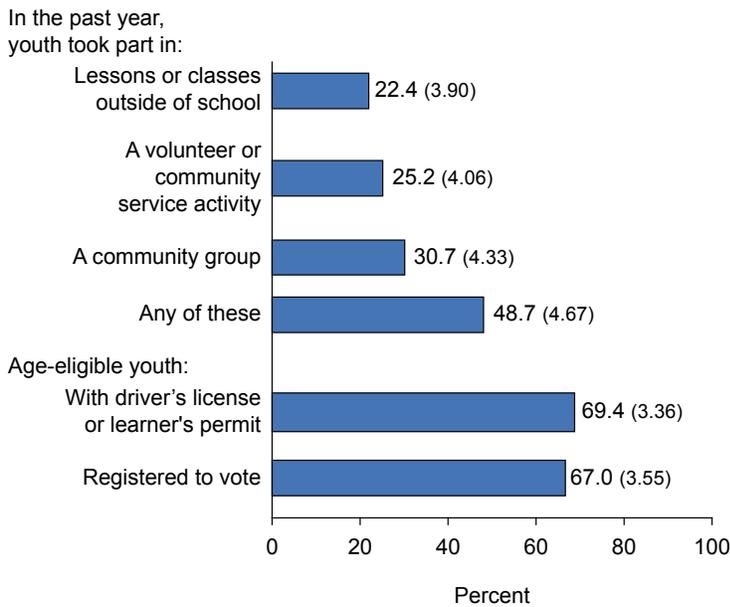
<sup>5</sup> Respondents were asked, “During the past 12 months [have you/has *name of youth*] done any volunteer or community service activities? This could include community service that is part of a school class or other group activity.”

<sup>6</sup> Respondents were asked, if a youth was not enrolled in school, “During the past 12 months [have you/has *name of youth*] participated in any school activities outside of class, such as a sports team, band or chorus, a school club, or student government?” All respondents were asked, “During the past 12 months [have you/has *name of youth*] participated in any [out-of-high school, *for those in school*] group activity, such as scouting, church or temple youth group, or nonschool team sports like soccer or softball?”

<sup>7</sup> Respondents were asked for youth at least 15 years old, “[Do you/does *name of youth*] have a driver’s license or learner’s permit?”

<sup>8</sup> Respondents were asked for youth at least 18 years old, “[Are you/is *name of youth*] registered to vote?”

Figure 39. Community participation of out-of-high school youth with disabilities



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding participation in the past year are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; other findings are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,320 to 2,300 youth across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 parent interview and youth interview/survey, 2005.

Overall, 49 percent of youth with disabilities who had been out of secondary school from 1 to 4 years were said to have engaged in some kind of extracurricular activity in the preceding year (figure 39), with the rates of participation in extracurricular lessons or classes, volunteer or community service activities, and extracurricular groups ranging from 22 percent to 31 percent. A driver's license or learner's permit had been earned by 69 percent of out-of-high school youth with disabilities. Among age-eligible youth, 67 percent who had been out of secondary school up to 4 years were reported to be registered to vote. This compares with 58 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds in the general population who were registered to vote in 2004 (U.S. Census Bureau 2006).

### **Disability Differences in Community Participation**

The proportions of out-of-high school youth with disabilities who were reported to have taken part in at least one of the social activities investigated in NLTS2 ranged from 28 percent of youth with mental retardation to 82 percent of youth with visual impairments ( $p < .001$ ; table 65). Youth with visual impairments also were significantly more likely than those with learning disabilities or emotional disturbances to participate in their community (82 percent vs. 51 percent and 46 percent, respectively;  $p < .01$ ), and youth with hearing or other health impairments were more likely than youth with mental retardation to do so (59 percent and 58 percent, respectively, vs. 28 percent;  $p < .01$ ).

Youth with mental retardation and those with visual impairments also demarcated the low and high rates of participation in lessons or classes outside of formal school enrollment (9 percent and 52 percent,  $p < .001$ ). Youth with speech/language or other health impairments also were significantly more likely to experience this form of community participation than youth with mental retardation (37 percent and 32 percent, respectively vs. 9 percent;  $p < .01$  for both comparisons), and youth with visual impairments had a significantly higher rate of

Table 65. Community participation of out-of-high school youth, by disability category

Community activities	Learning disability	Speech/language impairment	Mental retardation	Emotional disturbance	Hearing impairment	Visual impairment	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Autism	Traumatic brain injury	Multiple disabilities	Deaf-blindness
	Percent											
In the past year, percentage who took part in:												
Lessons or classes outside of school	22.9 (6.02)	36.7 (7.59)	8.6 (4.95)	19.0 (5.43)	32.5 (8.34)	52.4 (11.28)	29.5 (7.75)	31.6 (6.48)	32.1 (12.29)	20.7 (10.68)	32.2 (14.72)	‡
A volunteer or community service activity	25.3 (6.23)	35.2 (7.57)	19.6 (7.02)	24.3 (5.94)	26.3 (7.91)	67.4 (10.73)	28.1 (7.62)	23.9 (5.97)	16.2 (9.70)	28.8 (13.25)	34.4 (14.97)	‡
A community group (e.g., sports team, hobby club, religious group)	35.2 (6.88)	34.5 (7.48)	11.8 (5.70)	23.4 (5.90)	26.4 (7.94)	45.8 (11.33)	25.2 (7.36)	32.8 (6.53)	25.4 (11.46)	20.1 (11.73)	19.4 (12.46)	‡
Any of these	50.5 (7.17)	55.3 (7.83)	28.3 (7.96)	45.8 (6.90)	58.8 (8.73)	82.1 (8.66)	51.5 (8.47)	57.5 (6.88)	50.8 (13.16)	49.8 (14.63)	65.6 (14.97)	‡
Percentage who had a driver's license or learner's permit	76.4 (4.66)	80.2 (4.58)	34.8 (5.78)	64.3 (5.36)	78.5 (5.64)	17.4 (6.68)	47.1 (6.17)	74.9 (4.78)	51.8 (9.53)	82.0 (8.62)	36.3 (9.24)	24.5 (9.98)
Percentage of age-eligible youth registered to vote	66.2 (5.31)	77.8 (4.93)	58.7 (6.22)	69.1 (5.51)	76.5 (6.11)	80.6 (7.16)	75.4 (5.40)	75.3 (4.88)	66.4 (9.12)	78.1 (9.73)	66.3 (9.50)	‡

‡ Responses for items with fewer than 30 respondents are not reported.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding participation in the past year are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; other findings are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,320 to 2,300 youth across variables. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 parent interview and youth interview/survey, 2005.

participation than those with emotional disturbances (52 percent vs. 19 percent,  $p < .01$ ). Youth with visual impairments also had a significantly higher rate of participation in volunteer or community service activities (67 percent) than did youth in seven disability categories: learning disability (25 percent), mental retardation (20 percent), emotional disturbance (24 percent), hearing impairment (26 percent), orthopedic impairment (28 percent), other health impairment (24 percent), and autism (16 percent) ( $p < .001$  compared with youth with learning disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbances, other health impairments, or autism,  $p < .01$  for other comparisons). Overall, the rate of participation in community group activities ranged from 12 percent of youth with mental retardation to 46 percent of youth with visual impairments ( $p < .001$ ); youth with learning disabilities also had a significantly higher rate of such participation than youth with mental retardation (35 percent vs. 12 percent,  $p < .01$ ).

Approximately three-fourths or more of youth with learning disabilities (76 percent); speech/language, hearing, or other health impairments (80 percent, 79 percent, and 75 percent); or traumatic brain injuries (82 percent) were reported to have driving privileges, as were 64 percent of youth with emotional disturbances. In contrast, 36 percent and 35 percent of youth with multiple disabilities or mental retardation, respectively, had a driver's license or learner's permit, as did 25 percent of youth with deaf-blindness and 17 percent of youth with visual impairments ( $p < .001$  for all comparisons except  $p < .01$  comparing youth with emotional

disturbances and those with multiple disabilities). The rates of having a driver's license or learner's permit among youth with learning disabilities; speech/language, hearing, or other health impairments; or traumatic brain injuries (76 percent to 82 percent) also exceeded those with orthopedic impairments (47 percent,  $p < .001$  for all comparisons). Nonetheless, youth with orthopedic impairments or autism (47 percent and 52 percent) were still more likely than those with visual impairments to have a driver's license (17 percent,  $p < .01$  for both comparisons), and youth with traumatic brain injuries were more likely to have one than youth with multiple disabilities or deaf-blindness.

Voter registration rates for age-eligible youth with disabilities ranged from 59 percent to 81 percent across disability categories, a difference that was not statistically significant.

### ***Differences in Community Participation by High School-Leaving Characteristics***

Youth with disabilities who completed high school and those who did not were not significantly different with regard to participation in volunteer or community service activities or organized community groups (table 66). However, other measures of community participation showed higher rates of participation by school completers relative to noncompleters.

High school completers were almost three times as likely as noncompleters to have had some form of community participation (55 percent vs. 20 percent,  $p < .01$ ), and they were more than six times as likely as noncompleters to take extracurricular lessons or classes (26 percent, vs. 4 percent,  $p < .001$ ). Seventy-five percent of high school completers had earned driving privileges, and 72 percent were reported to be registered to vote; 38 percent of noncompleters had each of these forms of community participation ( $p < .001$  for both comparisons).

There were no significant differences in any form of community participation associated with the length of time since youth had left high school. The rates at which youth with disabilities who had been out of high school 1 to 4 years were reported to have taken part in extracurricular lessons or classes in the past year were 25 percent and 20 percent for youth out of high school 1 up to 2 years and 2 up to 4 years, respectively; rates of participation in volunteer or community service activities were 24 percent and 27 percent; and rates of participation in organized community groups were 25 percent and 35 percent. Overall, 46 percent and 51 percent of youth with disabilities in the two age groups reportedly had participated in at least one of these activities in the past year. From 65 percent to 77 percent of youth across years were reported to have a driver's license or learner's permit, and from 60 percent to 73 percent of age-eligible out-of-high school youth were reported to be registered to vote.

Table 66. Community participation of out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by secondary-school-leaving status and years since leaving high school

	Completers	Non-completers	Less than 1 year	1 up to 2 years	2 up to 4 years
			Percent		
In the past year, percentage who took part in:					
Lessons or classes outside of school	25.9 (4.73)	3.5 (4.25)	†	25.1 (5.57)	20.1 (5.39)
A volunteer or community service activity	29.2 (4.92)	8.6 (6.48)	†	23.5 (5.45)	26.7 (5.95)
A community group (e.g., sports team, hobby club, religious group)	35.0 (5.16)	11.6 (7.52)	†	25.4 (5.59)	35.4 (6.48)
Any of these	55.0 (5.37)	20.3 (9.29)	†	45.8 (6.40)	51.3 (6.71)
Percentage who had a driver's license or learner's permit	75.4 (3.58)	38.4 (8.52)	64.6 (5.67)	67.7 (6.01)	76.5 (5.59)
Percentage of age-eligible youth registered to vote	72.1 (3.83)	38.4 (9.20)	59.9 (5.98)	72.8 (5.87)	69.9 (6.34)

† Not applicable; only youth out of high school 1 to 4 years included in these analyses.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding participation in the past year are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; other findings are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,320 to 2,300 across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

### ***Demographic Differences in Community Participation***

Only with regard to having driving privileges were there significant differences associated with household income or youth's racial/ethnic background (table 67). Youth with disabilities from the middle or the upper income group were significantly more likely to have driving privileges than youth from households with incomes of \$25,000 or less (75 percent and 83 percent, respectively, vs. 51 percent;  $p < .01$  and  $p < .001$ ). Additionally, White youth were significantly more likely than African American youth to have a driver's license or learner's permit (79 percent vs. 49 percent,  $p < .001$ ). The difference between White and Hispanic youth (79 percent vs. 57 percent) was not significant.

There were no statistically significant differences in any form of community participation between male and female youth with disabilities who had been out of high school from 1 to 4 years. Twenty-two percent of both groups were reported to have taken lessons or classes outside of school; 27 percent and 21 percent of males and females, respectively had taken part in a volunteer or community service activity; 34 percent of males and 23 percent of females were reported to have belonged to an organized community group; and 51 percent and 43 percent, respectively, were reported to have had at least one of these forms of community participation. A driver's license or learner's permit reportedly had been earned by 72 percent of out-of-high school males with disabilities and 64 percent of their female counterparts. Rates of voter registration were reported to be 67 percent for both groups.

Table 67. Community participation of out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by household income, race/ethnicity, and gender

	\$25,000 or less	\$25,001 to \$50,000	More than \$50,000	White	African American	Hispanic	Male	Female
				Percent				
In the past year, percentage who took part in:								
Lessons or classes outside of school	14.1 (5.10)	16.5 (7.58)	35.0 (7.19)	20.9 (4.78)	22.8 (8.43)	32.0 (12.51)	22.4 (4.86)	22.4 (4.69)
A volunteer or community service activity	17.2 (5.53)	28.6 (9.21)	31.8 (7.03)	24.6 (5.07)	25.6 (8.77)	30.8 (12.38)	27.2 (5.19)	21.3 (6.38)
A community group (e.g., sports team, hobby club, religious group)	23.6 (6.22)	23.1 (8.73)	39.7 (7.37)	33.3 (5.58)	25.4 (8.75)	30.1 (12.30)	34.3 (5.54)	23.2 (6.62)
Any of these	41.8 (7.23)	40.2 (9.99)	60.8 (7.35)	48.1 (5.87)	49.7 (10.05)	56.6 (13.29)	51.4 (5.72)	43.2 (7.71)
Percentage who had a driver's license or learner's permit	50.8 (6.22)	75.1 (6.51)	82.8 (4.39)	78.8 (3.72)	49.1 (7.53)	56.5 (11.38)	71.9 (4.16)	64.4 (5.60)
Percentage of age-eligible youth registered to vote	62.3 (6.44)	65.5 (7.25)	70.5 (5.42)	67.4 (4.40)	74.2 (6.88)	61.8 (11.45)	67.0 (4.51)	66.8 (5.68)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding participation in the past year are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; other findings are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,320 to 2,300 across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

## Negative Community Involvement

The preceding section described generally positive modes of community participation involving out-of-high school youth with disabilities. However, the community participation of some youth can have negative repercussions, both for them and for their communities. NLTS2 has investigated two forms of negative community involvement: participating in violence-related activities and involvement with the criminal justice system.

### *Involvement in Violence-Related Activities*

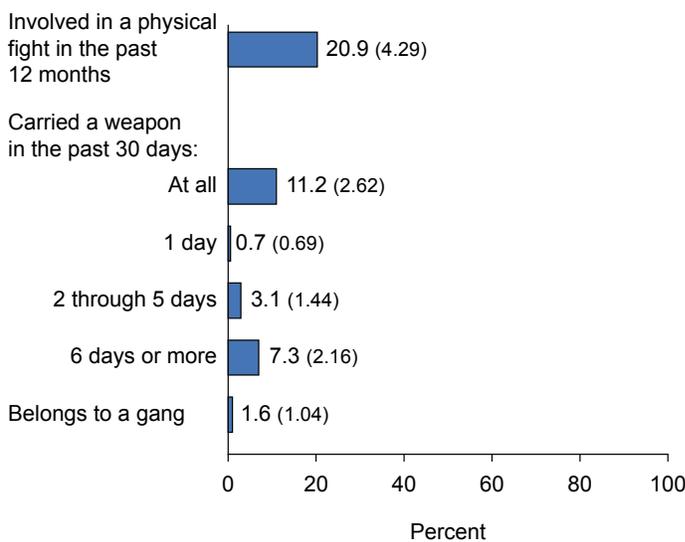
NLTS2 has investigated the reported involvement of youth with disabilities who were at least 18 years old in three forms of violence-related activities: physical fights,<sup>9</sup> carrying a weapon,<sup>10</sup> and belonging to a gang.<sup>11</sup> Because the question about physical fights referred to involvement in the past 12 months and because the focus of this report is on experiences of youth with disabilities after high school, those findings are reported only for youth who had been out of high school at least 1 year, so as to avoid including secondary school experiences. Findings for weapons carrying and gang membership address activities in the preceding 30 days and currently, respectively; thus, they include the full sample of youth with disabilities 18 or older who had been out of high school up to 4 years.

<sup>9</sup> Youth were asked, "In the past 12 months, have you gotten in a physical fight?"

<sup>10</sup> Youth age 18 or older were asked, "During the past 30 days, on how many days did you carry a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club?"

<sup>11</sup> Youth age 18 or older were asked, "Do you belong to a gang?"

Figure 40. Participation in violence-related activities of out-of-high school youth with disabilities age 18 or older



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding participation in the past year are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; other findings are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,030 to 1,700 youth across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

Twenty-one percent of youth with disabilities who had been out of high school 1 to 4 years reported being in a physical fight in the preceding 12 months (figure 40). Additionally, 11 percent of youth who had been out of high school up to 4 years reported carrying a weapon in the past 30 days; 7 percent had carried a weapon 6 or more days in that time period. Two percent of young adults with disabilities out of high school reported belonging to a gang.

### ***Disability Differences in Involvement in Violence-Related Activities***

Across disability categories, from 3 percent of youth with orthopedic impairments to 31 percent of youth with emotional disturbances who had been out of high school 1 to 4 years and were age 18 or older reported being involved in a physical fight in the preceding year ( $p < .001$ ; table 68). In addition to youth with

orthopedic impairments, youth with emotional disturbances also reported significantly higher rates of involvement in physical fights than youth in the categories of speech/language impairment, mental retardation, or autism (31 percent vs. 8 percent, 4 percent, and 5 percent, respectively;  $p < .001$  for all comparisons). Youth with learning disabilities also had a higher rate of participating in fights than youth with orthopedic impairments, mental retardation, or autism (21 percent vs. 3 percent, 4 percent, and 5 percent respectively;  $p < .001$  and  $p < .01$ ).

Table 68. Participation in violence-related activities by out-of-high school youth age 18 or older, by disability category

Violence-related activities	Learning disability	Speech/language impairment	Mental retardation	Emotional disturbance	Visual impairment	Hearing impairment	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Autism	Traumatic brain injury	Multiple disabilities	Deaf-blindness
	Percent											
Percentage reporting involvement in a physical fight in the past 12 months	20.6 (4.78)	7.5 (3.33)	3.9 (3.23)	31.0 (5.94)	11.2 (4.92)	12.8 (5.65)	2.5 (2.45)	12.3 (4.18)	5.1 (4.59)	17.4 (9.00)	11.7 (7.56)	‡
Percentage age 18 or older reporting carrying a weapon in the past 30 days	9.9 (3.57)	7.1 (3.29)	9.6 (5.43)	19.8 (5.46)	9.6 (4.67)	14.1 (5.97)	3.2 (2.76)	17.3 (4.89)	1.8 (3.03)	23.3 (10.66)	7.3 (6.82)	‡
Percentage age 18 or older reporting membership in a gang	1.9 (1.63)	#	2.0 (2.56)	0.8 (1.22)	0.5 (1.12)	1.3 (1.94)	0.4 (0.99)	1.9 (1.76)	#	#	0.4 (1.66)	‡

‡ Responses for items with fewer than 30 respondents are not reported.

NOTE. Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding participation in the past year are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; other findings are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,030 to 1,700 youth.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

Rates at which out-of-high school youth with disabilities age 18 or older reported carrying a weapon in the preceding 30 days ranged from 2 percent and 3 percent of youth with autism and orthopedic impairments to 20 percent and 23 percent of youth with emotional disturbances or traumatic brain injuries; in the case of youth with emotional disturbances, this was a significantly higher percentage than among youth with orthopedic impairments (20 percent vs. 3 percent;  $p < .01$ ). Youth with emotional disturbances or other health impairments also were significantly more likely to report having carried a weapon in the preceding 30 days than youth with autism (20 percent and 17 percent, respectively, vs. 2 percent;  $p < .01$ ). Rates of reported gang membership among out-of-high school youth ranged from no youth in the categories of speech/language impairment, autism, and traumatic brain injury to 2 percent of youth with learning disabilities or mental retardation, not statistically significant differences.

### ***Differences in Involvement in Violence-Related Activities by High School-Leaving Characteristics***

There were no significant differences in involvement in any of these forms of violence-related activities between high school completers and noncompleters (table 69). Neither were there significant differences in violence-related activities for youth with disabilities who differed in their length of time out of secondary school.

Table 69. Involvement in violence-related activities by out-of-high school youth with disabilities age 18 or older, by secondary-school-leaving status and years since leaving high school

	Completers	Non-completers	Less than 1 year	1 up to 2 years	2 up to 4 years
	Percent				
Percentage reporting involvement in a physical fight in the past 12 months	20.3 (4.82)	28.0 (11.45)	†	21.7 (6.06)	20.3 (6.04)
Percentage age 18 or older reporting carrying a weapon in the past 30 days	10.9 (2.95)	11.5 (6.71)	7.9 (3.45)	12.9 (5.07)	13.2 (5.21)
Percentage age 18 or older reporting membership in a gang	1.9 (1.26)	0.8 (1.95)	0.9 (1.21)	0.3 (0.82)	3.5 (2.83)

† Not applicable; only youth out of high school 1 up to 4 years included in this analysis.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding participation in the past year are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; other findings are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,320 to 2,300 across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

### Demographic Differences in Involvement in Violence-Related Activities

There were no significant differences in reported involvement in violence-related activities between youth of different racial/ethnic backgrounds or those who came from households with different income levels (table 70). Young men and women with disabilities also did not differ in their reported participation in physical fights, contrary to the higher prevalence of fighting among males in the general population (Centers for Disease Control 2002). However, they did differ in the proportion who reported carrying a weapon, a gender difference that also was apparent in the general population (Centers for Disease Control 2002). Among youth with disabilities who had been out of high school up to 4 years, 17 percent of males reported carrying a weapon in the past 30 days, compared with 1 percent of females ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 70. Involvement in violence-related activities by out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by household income, race/ethnicity, and gender

	\$25,000 or less	\$25,001 to \$50,000	More than \$50,000	White	African American	Hispanic	Male	Female
	Percent							
Percentage reporting involvement in a physical fight in the past 12 months	27.7 (8.00)	30.2 (9.64)	10.6 (5.30)	16.9 (4.91)	32.2 (9.70)	14.7 (12.41)	24.5 (5.87)	14.5 (5.78)
Percentage age 18 or older reporting carrying a weapon in the past 30 days	12.5 (5.03)	14.4 (5.70)	9.1 (3.72)	10.7 (3.14)	13.3 (5.03)	4.7 (5.03)	17.1 (4.03)	1.0 (1.31)
Percentage age 18 or older reporting membership in a gang	0.7 (1.26)	5.1 (3.57)	0.5 (0.91)	0.5 (0.71)	5.8 (4.07)	0.9 (2.58)	2.6 (1.70)	#

# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding participation in the past year are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; other findings are for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,030 to 1,700 youth.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

## ***Criminal Justice System Involvement***

Becoming involved with the criminal justice system is a negative aspect of community involvement that is more prevalent among youth with disabilities than among youth in the general population. A recent compendium of statistics on the prevalence of juvenile crime among youth with disabilities indicates that youth with learning, cognitive, behavior, or emotional disabilities are entering the correctional system at rates four to five times those of youth<sup>12</sup> in the general population (Rutherford et al. 2002); an estimated 37 percent of youth in state juvenile corrections facilities are eligible for special education and related services under IDEA (Quinn et al. 2005). A variety of individual and social costs are associated with this criminal justice system involvement, including the disruption to youth's educational programs; 16 percent of youth in short-term youth detention facilities, 52 percent of those in long-term youth corrections facilities, and 71 percent of those in adult corrections facilities were not enrolled in any kind of educational program during their incarceration (Howell and Wolford 2002). Although these statistics are available regarding incarcerated youth with disabilities, less is known nationally about other kinds of criminal justice system involvement for this population or about the characteristics of those who become involved. NLTS2 is helping to fill this information gap by providing information on the percentages of out-of-high school youth with disabilities who were reported to have

- been stopped by police for other than a traffic violation;<sup>13</sup>
- been arrested;<sup>14</sup>
- spent a night in jail,<sup>15</sup> or
- been on probation or parole.<sup>16</sup>

Findings are reported for the full sample of out-of-high school youth regarding whether they had ever had each of these experiences.<sup>17</sup> To assess more recent involvement, respondents also were asked to report on these forms of criminal justice system involvement in the 2 years preceding Wave 3 data collection.

At some time in their lives, 53 percent of out-of-high school youth with disabilities were reported to have been stopped by police for other than a traffic violation (figure 41); 26 percent of youth out of high school 2 to 4 years were reported to have been stopped by police in the

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<sup>12</sup> Youth are those less than 18 years old.

<sup>13</sup> Respondents were asked, "In the past 2 years, [have you/has *name of youth*] been stopped and questioned by police except for a traffic violation?"

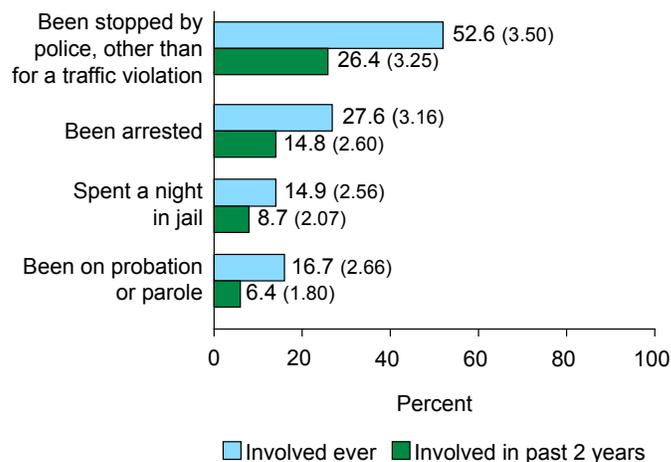
<sup>14</sup> Respondents were asked, "[Have you/has *name of youth*] been arrested at any time in the past 2 years?"

<sup>15</sup> Respondents were asked, "In the past 2 years, [have you/has *name of youth*] been in jail overnight?"

<sup>16</sup> Respondents were asked, "In the past 2 years, [have you/has *name of youth*] been on probation or parole?"

<sup>17</sup> Data on criminal justice system involvement in the preceding 2 years that were collected in Wave 3 were combined with reports of involvement in Waves 1 and 2 to construct variables measuring whether youth had ever experienced each form of involvement.

Figure 41. Criminal justice system involvement by out-of-high school youth with disabilities



NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings are reported for youth who had been out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 2,290 to 2,420 youth across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

preceding 2 years. Twenty-eight percent of youth with disabilities reportedly had been arrested at some time, more than twice the rate for youth in the general population (12 percent,  $p < .001$ ).<sup>18</sup> The rate of arrest in the preceding 2 years for youth with disabilities who had been out of high school during that time was 15 percent. Overall, 15 percent of youth with disabilities had spent a night in jail, and 17 percent had been on probation or parole. Among youth out of high school 2 to 4 years, 9 percent and 6 percent, respectively, had had those experiences in the preceding 2 years.

### ***Disability Differences in Criminal Justice System Involvement***

There were many significant differences across disability categories in the various aspects of involvement with the criminal justice system, particularly involving youth with emotional disturbances (table 71). For all forms of involvement, youth with emotional disturbances were significantly more likely than those in most other categories to have been involved with the criminal justice system. For example, the rates of reported police stops for other than a traffic violation were significantly higher for youth with emotional disturbances (82 percent) than the rates for youth in all disability categories except traumatic brain injury (17 percent to 54 percent,  $p < .001$  for all comparisons except  $p < .01$  compared with youth with other health impairments). Youth with emotional disturbances also had significantly higher rates of being stopped by police in the past 2 years than youth in all other categories (56 percent vs. 7 percent to 28 percent,  $p < .001$  for all comparisons). Sixty percent of youth with emotional disturbances had been arrested at some time, 37 percent within the preceding 2 years. These compare with rates of between 3 percent and 27 percent for youth in all other categories having been arrested and between 1 percent and 16 percent having been arrested in the preceding 2 years ( $p < .001$  for all comparisons except  $p < .01$  for any arrest and for a nonsignificant difference in arrests in the past 2 years compared with youth with traumatic brain injuries).

<sup>18</sup> Calculated from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, (Add Health), Wave 3, 2001–02, for out-of-high school 18- to 21-year-olds.

Table 71. Criminal justice system involvement of out-of-high school youth, by disability category

Criminal justice system involvement	Learning disability	Speech/language impairment	Mental retardation	Emotional disturbance	Visual impairment	Hearing impairment	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment	Autism	Traumatic brain injury	Multiple disabilities	Deaf-blindness
	Percent											
Stopped by police other than for a traffic violation												
Ever	52.0 (5.28)	42.0 (5.56)	33.7 (5.66)	81.8 (4.05)	36.9 (6.55)	31.2 (7.99)	17.3 (4.65)	54.4 (5.18)	28.6 (8.34)	63.3 (10.91)	31.1 (8.60)	29.5 (10.58)
In past 2 years	23.3 (4.69)	23.7 (4.94)	17.8 (4.65)	56.3 (5.62)	22.0 (5.79)	21.1 (7.20)	7.3 (3.24)	28.0 (4.95)	10.2 (5.70)	25.1 (9.83)	16.8 (7.18)	10.2 (7.02)
Arrested												
Ever	24.7 (4.61)	20.4 (4.61)	16.9 (4.48)	60.1 (5.18)	11.6 (4.38)	6.9 (4.40)	3.1 (2.12)	26.6 (4.67)	8.8 (5.17)	27.2 (9.88)	10.7 (5.72)	14.9 (8.13)
In past 2 years	12.8 (3.68)	10.4 (3.52)	9.3 (3.50)	36.7 (5.34)	7.5 (3.64)	5.7 (4.04)	1.5 (1.50)	12.4 (3.60)	0.9 (1.74)	16.3 (8.26)	3.0 (3.25)	3.7 (4.31)
Spent a night in jail												
Ever	11.2 (3.47)	7.8 (3.08)	14.3 (4.19)	39.4 (5.30)	5.9 (3.25)	5.7 (4.04)	1.5 (1.50)	18.1 (4.12)	2.1 (2.64)	11.8 (7.16)	3.9 (3.65)	3.7 (4.31)
In past 2 years	7.6 (2.92)	3.9 (2.23)	6.4 (2.95)	21.5 (4.63)	5.3 (3.10)	4.8 (3.72)	0.9 (1.17)	6.9 (2.78)	0.9 (1.74)	8.7 (6.30)	2.0 (2.67)	3.7 (4.31)
Been on probation or parole												
Ever	14.7 (3.83)	8.8 (3.25)	10.4 (3.67)	39.1 (5.26)	6.1 (3.30)	2.0 (2.44)	1.0 (1.23)	15.8 (3.89)	1.2 (2.01)	19.8 (8.86)	6.8 (4.71)	#
In past 2 years	6.4 (2.69)	3.1 (2.00)	3.3 (2.15)	13.6 (3.88)	2.7 (2.24)	2.0 (2.44)	0.3 (0.68)	4.8 (2.35)	0.9 (1.74)	3.8 (4.32)	2.4 (2.92)	#

# Rounds to zero.

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings are reported for youth who had been out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 2,290 to 2,420 youth across variables. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

Rates of overnight incarceration and being on probation or parole were both 39 percent for youth with emotional disturbances. Rates for youth in categories other than emotional disturbance ranged from 2 percent to 18 percent for overnight incarceration and from 1 percent to 20 percent for being on probation or parole ( $p < .001$  for all comparisons except  $p < .01$  for any arrest compared with youth with other health impairments or traumatic brain injuries and a nonsignificant relationship with ever being on probation or parole for youth with traumatic brain injuries). The rate of reported overnight incarceration in the past 2 years was 22 percent among youth with emotional disturbances, whereas rates ranged from 1 percent to 9 percent among youth in all other categories; only in the cases of youth with learning disabilities or traumatic brain injuries did these differences fail to reach statistical significance ( $p < .01$  compared with youth with mental retardation; hearing, visual, or other health impairments; or deaf-blindness;  $p < .001$  for other comparisons). Fourteen percent of youth with emotional disturbances were reported to have been on probation or parole in the past 2 years, compared with between less than 1 percent and 6 percent of youth in other categories ( $p < .01$  compared with youth with autism;  $p < .001$  compared with youth with orthopedic impairments; other relationships were not statistically significant).

Youth with other health impairments, the disability category that includes youth whose primary disability category is attention deficit or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), were significantly more likely than youth in several disability categories to have been involved with the criminal justice system. They were reported to have higher rates of ever experiencing each form of criminal justice system involvement (54 percent, 27 percent, 18 percent and 16 percent for ever being stopped by police, arrested, jailed over night, and on probation or parole, respectively) than youth with orthopedic impairments (17 percent, 3 percent, 2 percent, and 1 percent, respectively;  $p < .001$  for all comparisons). Youth with other health impairments also had significantly higher rates of police stops, overnight incarcerations, and probation or parole than youth with autism (29 percent, 9 percent, and 1 percent, respectively;  $p < .001$  for probation or parole,  $p < .01$  for other comparisons). Youth with other health impairments had a higher rate of arrest and probation or parole than youth with visual impairments (27 percent and 16 percent, respectively, vs. 12 percent and 6 percent;  $p < .01$  for both comparisons), a higher rate of ever having been involved in police stops than youth with mental retardation (54 percent vs. 34 percent,  $p < .01$ ), and a higher rate of overnight incarceration than youth with multiple disabilities (18 percent vs. 4 percent,  $p < .01$ ). Regarding involvement with the criminal justice system in the preceding 2 years, the only differences between youth with other health impairments and youth in other categories that attained statistical significance involved police stops for youth with orthopedic impairments (28 percent vs. 7 percent,  $p < .001$ ) and arrests for both youth with orthopedic impairments and those with autism (12 percent vs. 2 percent and 1 percent,  $p < .01$  for both comparisons).

Youth with learning disabilities were significantly more likely than youth with orthopedic impairments ever to have experienced police stops, arrest, or probation or parole (52 percent, 25 percent, and 15 percent, respectively, vs. 17 percent, 3 percent, and 1 percent;  $p < .001$  for all comparisons). The rates of police stops and arrests in the preceding 2 years also were significantly higher for youth with learning disabilities than for youth with orthopedic impairments (23 percent and 13 percent, respectively, vs. 7 percent and 2 percent;  $p < .01$  for both comparisons). Youth with learning disabilities also were reported to be more likely than youth with autism ever to have been on probation or parole or to have been arrested in the preceding 2 years (15 percent and 13 percent vs. 1 percent for each experience,  $p < .01$  for both comparisons). Additionally, youth with learning disabilities were more likely than youth with visual impairments ever to have been arrested or on probation or parole (25 percent and 15 percent, respectively, vs. 12 percent and 6 percent;  $p < .01$  for both comparisons). Finally, youth with speech/language impairments were more likely than those with orthopedic impairments both ever to have been stopped by police or to have been arrested (42 percent and 20 percent, respectively vs. 17 percent and 3 percent;  $p < .001$  for both comparisons).

### ***Differences in Criminal Justice System Involvement by High School-Leaving Characteristics***

On three of the indicators of criminal justice system involvement, youth who had not finished high school were significantly more likely than those who had to have violated the law sufficiently to have required police response (table 72). Seventy-three percent of noncompleters were reported to have been stopped by police other than for a traffic violation at some point, compared with 48 percent of completers ( $p < .01$ ), and 49 percent of noncompleters reportedly had been arrested at some time, compared with 22 percent of completers ( $p < .01$ ). Similarly, 33 percent of high school noncompleters had spent a night in jail, three times as many as the

Table 72. Criminal justice system involvement by out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by secondary-school-leaving status and years since leaving high school

	Completers	Non-completers	Less than 1 year	1 up to 2 years	2 up to 4 years
	Percent				
Stopped by police for other than a traffic violation					
Ever	48.4 (4.05)	73.2 (7.09)	52.0 (5.70)	54.3 (6.25)	52.0 (6.20)
In the past 2 years	23.4 (3.55)	46.2 (8.85)	25.0 (5.15)	26.3 (5.67)	28.2 (6.08)
Arrested					
Ever	22.2 (3.39)	48.7 (8.21)	22.3 (4.82)	27.0 (5.63)	33.5 (5.87)
In the past 2 years	13.3 (2.82)	23.6 (7.52)	12.8 (3.96)	16.3 (4.75)	15.8 (4.83)
Spent a night in jail					
Ever	11.0 (2.58)	32.6 (7.89)	9.3 (3.40)	13.8 (4.40)	22.4 (5.38)
In the past 2 years	7.0 (2.13)	18.3 (6.85)	5.9 (2.80)	10.0 (3.86)	10.9 (4.17)
On probation or parole					
Ever	13.4 (2.80)	30.5 (7.68)	11.9 (3.78)	14.0 (4.43)	23.9 (5.39)
In the past 2 years	5.2 (1.86)	12.9 (5.89)	4.8 (2.54)	8.2 (3.53)	6.9 (3.37)

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings are reported for youth who had been out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 2,290 to 2,420 youth across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

11 percent of school completers who had done so ( $p < .01$ ). However, reported rates of ever having been on probation or parole and rates of all forms of criminal justice system involvement in the preceding 2 years were not significantly different for the two groups. Neither was any measure of criminal justice system involvement, either ever or in the preceding 2 years, significantly different by length of time since leaving high school.

### **Demographic Differences in Criminal Justice System Involvement**

There were no statistically significant differences in reported criminal justice system involvement between out-of-high school youth with disabilities from households with different income levels or those who differed in their racial/ethnic backgrounds (table 73). However, on two measures of criminal justice system involvement, significant gender differences were apparent. Males were more likely than females ever to have been stopped by police other than for a traffic violation (59 percent vs. 38 percent,  $p < .01$ ) and to have been arrested (33 percent vs. 17 percent,  $p < .01$ ). Reported rates also were more than twice for males than for females regarding having spent a night in jail (19 percent vs. 8 percent) and having been on probation or parole (20 percent vs. 9 percent); however, these differences were not statistically significant. No differences between genders in their rates of involvement in the criminal justice system in the preceding 2 years were significant.

Table 73. Criminal justice system involvement by out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by household income, race/ethnicity, and gender

	\$25,000 or less	\$25,001 to \$50,000	More than \$50,000	White	African American	Hispanic	Male	Female
	Percent							
Stopped by police for other than a traffic violation								
Ever	54.7 (6.01)	58.4 (7.07)	48.0 (5.57)	50.4 (4.35)	56.6 (7.22)	51.6 (11.26)	59.4 (4.30)	38.4 (5.64)
In the past 2 years	26.9 (5.58)	29.5 (7.02)	23.6 (4.97)	21.8 (3.81)	37.2 (7.26)	19.1 (9.15)	31.2 (4.32)	16.4 (4.39)
Arrested								
Ever	27.4 (5.40)	35.3 (6.95)	23.4 (4.76)	26.1 (3.87)	34.5 (6.79)	20.1 (9.07)	32.8 (4.16)	16.5 (4.29)
In the past 2 years	15.0 (4.45)	16.2 (5.55)	14.7 (4.14)	12.1 (2.98)	23.4 (6.27)	8.5 (6.41)	17.6 (3.54)	9.1 (3.36)
Spent a night in jail								
Ever	16.9 (4.54)	15.3 (5.36)	14.1 (4.02)	12.5 (2.99)	24.1 (6.13)	12.5 (7.55)	18.6 (3.53)	7.6 (3.09)
In the past 2 years	6.1 (3.00)	10.6 (4.66)	9.9 (3.49)	7.0 (2.33)	15.8 (5.47)	5.0 (5.01)	10.8 (2.90)	4.5 (2.43)
On probation or parole								
Ever	13.6 (4.16)	23.8 (6.27)	15.6 (4.13)	17.2 (3.36)	21.6 (5.96)	6.6 (5.63)	20.2 (3.61)	9.3 (3.37)
In the past 2 years	3.4 (2.28)	8.1 (4.11)	8.6 (3.28)	5.3 (2.05)	13.4 (5.11)	3.7 (4.36)	7.5 (2.46)	4.4 (2.40)

NOTE. Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings are reported for youth who had been out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 2,290 to 2,420 youth.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), Wave 3 youth interview/survey, 2005.

## Summary

This chapter has examined the friendship interactions, community participation, and negative forms of community involvement of youth with disabilities who had been out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS2 findings suggest that these youth had active friendships—87 percent were reported to see friends outside of organized activities at least weekly. Some also used electronic forms of communication (e-mail, instant messaging, or chat room)—48 percent communicated by computer at least once a week, and 24 percent did so once a day or more. In addition to these informal friendship interactions, reported participation rates in three types of extracurricular activities—lessons or classes outside of school, volunteer or community service activities, and organized school or community groups—ranged from 22 percent to 31 percent of youth, with 49 percent participating in at least one of them. Two-thirds of youth had driving privileges, and 69 percent of age-eligible youth were reported to be registered to vote. However, some youth with disabilities did not take part in relationships or activities in these ways. For example, 6 percent of youth were reported never to see friends outside of organized activities, and 51 percent did not take part in any of the three extracurricular activities mentioned above.

In contrast to these generally positive forms of social and community involvement, several negative forms of participation or involvement also characterized the out-of-high school experiences of some youth with disabilities. For example, 21 percent reported having been in a

physical fight in the past year, 11 percent reported carrying a weapon in the past 30 days, and 2 percent reported being gang members. Fifty-three percent of out-of-high school youth with disabilities reported they had at some time been stopped and questioned by police for reasons other than a traffic violation, and 28 percent had been arrested. Spending a night in jail and being on probation or parole had been experienced by 15 percent and 17 percent of youth with disabilities, respectively.

Many significant differences were apparent across disability categories in youth's social and community involvement in the early years after high school. For example, the rate at which youth saw friends weekly ranged from 33 percent of youth with multiple disabilities to 92 percent of youth with learning disabilities; the likelihood of having earned driving privileges ranged from 17 percent among youth with visual impairments to 82 percent for those with traumatic brain injuries. Youth in some categories participated at higher rates in some forms of social and community activities but participated at lower rates in others. For example, youth with learning disabilities were significantly more likely than those with orthopedic impairments to see friends at least weekly (92 percent vs. 65 percent), whereas those with orthopedic impairments were much more likely than their peers with learning disabilities to communicate at least daily by computer (46 percent vs. 25 percent).

Youth in some categories demonstrated a consistent pattern of participation across measures. For example, those with visual impairments demarcated the high point in the disability category distribution of each of the three forms of extracurricular activities investigated in NLTS2: 52 percent had taken lessons or classes in the past year, compared with 9 percent to 37 percent of youth in other categories; 67 percent had participated in volunteer or community service activities, compared with 16 percent to 35 percent of youth in other categories; and 46 percent had been members of a community group, compared with 12 percent to 35 percent of others. In contrast, youth with emotional disturbances consistently reported higher rates of involvement in violence-related activities and with the criminal justice system than youth in most other categories. For example, youth with emotional disturbances had significantly higher rates of been stopped by police in the past 2 years (56 percent), ever arrested (60 percent), and arrested in the past 2 years (37 percent) than youth in all other categories (7 percent to 28 percent, 3 percent to 27 percent, and 1 percent to 16 percent, respectively).

High school completers and noncompleters differed significantly from each other in some forms of social and community involvement, but not all. For example, they did not differ in their likelihood of seeing friends frequently, participating in volunteer or community service activities, or being involved in violence-related activities. However, school completers were significantly more likely than noncompleters to take part in other kinds of community activities. For example, 26 percent of completers took lessons or classes outside of school, compared with 4 percent of noncompleters. Those who finished high school also were more likely to have driving privileges (75 percent vs. 38 percent) and to be registered to vote (72 percent vs. 38 percent). In contrast, noncompleters were significantly more likely than completers to have been involved with the criminal justice system in each of the four ways investigated in NLTS2; for example, 49 percent of noncompleters had been arrested, and 31 percent had been on probation or parole, compared with 22 percent and 13 percent of completers, respectively. None of the forms of social and community involvement addressed in this chapter differed significantly with the length of time youth with disabilities had been out of high school.

Demographic factors generally did not distinguish youth with disabilities in their post-high school social and community participation. Exceptions were that youth from the highest income group were significantly more likely to communicate frequently by computer than those in the lowest income group (33 percent vs. 13 percent) and youth in both the highest and middle income groups were more likely to have earned driving privileges than youth in lowest group (83 percent and 75 percent vs. 51 percent). White youth with disabilities also were more likely than African American youth to have a driver's license or learner's permit (79 percent vs. 49 percent). A gender difference was apparent with regard to the proportion of youth who reported having carried a weapon in the past 30 days, with higher rates reported for males (17 percent vs. 1 percent). Males also were more likely than females to have been stopped by police other than for a traffic violation (59 percent vs. 38 percent) and to have been arrested (33 percent vs. 17 percent).