

Can Children Be Arrested for Child Pornography or Other Sex Crimes?

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You may be surprised to find that juveniles *can* be charged with sex crimes like promotion of [child pornography](#) or [aggravated sexual assault](#) of another child. However, not only can kids be arrested for sex crimes, the numbers of such cases nationwide are shocking. Parents in these cases are confronted with a difficult legal challenge and with ensuring their child's rights and best interests are protected.

Topics covered on this blog:

How do children become perpetrators of sex crimes? In some cases, children who have been sexually assaulted can themselves later become sexual attackers. Child victims who become perpetrators are in an especially terrible situation. They're trying to cope with being sex crime victims *and* they are now in horrible circumstances immersed in the juvenile justice system, because they have repeated the cycle of sexual abuse they have experienced.

If your teenager has been charged with a sex crime, you need to contact the [best juvenile lawyer Utah](#) has available to you. You should work with a [juvenile attorney who specializes in sex crimes defense](#), to help ensure that *all* your child's legal rights are *fully* protected throughout the trial process in the Utah juvenile court system.

The Utah Juvenile Justice System

In Utah, the goal of the juvenile justice system is to help a child learn from mistakes made. Judges are thinking in terms of rehabilitative opportunities, instead of merely punishment. A big difference in the way things work in the [Utah juvenile justice system](#), compared to the courts for adult trials, is that there are no juries. All cases are heard by a judge alone, so children do not have to face a jury (unless a child is charged and tried as an adult.)

Note: Depending on the nature of the alleged sex crime, the Romeo and Juliet laws in the Utah statutes may apply, permitting some legal protection for teens of certain ages who have sex, if there is a small age difference between them.

The Nature of Juvenile Sex Offenses

With today's proliferation of adult print materials and social communications technologies, kids can be exposed to sexual content in magazines and on cell phones, computers, and TVs. Kids learn and sometimes may mimic what they have read or seen, without fully comprehending the effects of such acts or the consequences for committing them. For example posting sexually explicit pictures or messages on social sites can lead to state and/or federal sex crime charges, although the vast majority of teens don't know that it's a crime.

CDC Statistics on Juvenile Sex Crimes

By the time teens reach 18 years of age, 25 percent of girls and 7.5 percent of boys have been sexual abuse victims. Over a third (35.6 percent) of the sex offenders who victimize juveniles are other juveniles, and more than a fourth (25.8 percent) of *all* U.S. sex offenders are juveniles.

According to U.S. Department of Justice research, police reported that the number of youth sex offenses rises sharply among 12-year-olds, then levels off at age 14. Law enforcement identifies adolescents as the group committing the greatest percentage of sex offenses victimizing younger children.

What May Happen in the Juvenile Court System

In all U.S. States, pretrial detention of juveniles is legal. Teens from 16 to 17 years old who are charged with a serious crime such as aggravated sexual assault are sent to trial in the Utah adult criminal court system. However, in some situations, a judge may find that it is more appropriate for the defendant to be tried in the juvenile system. Even a child of age 14 who is charged with a felony can be tried in the adult court system, if a juvenile court judge approves a prosecutor's request to transfer the case.

Juvenile Sex Offender Registry

When a juvenile has been found guilty of a sex crime, registration in the Juvenile Sex Offender Registry may be required. Unlike the [Sex Offender Registry for adults](#), the registry for minors is not published publicly. The child may also be incarcerated and may

be ordered by the court to receive therapy.

Note: If a juvenile who is entered in the registry is convicted of sex crime after becoming an adult, life-long registration as an adult is typically required.

If Your Child is Charged with a Sex Crime in Utah

Facing sex crime charges as a child is a frightening and highly stressful experience to go through for the everyone involved. Juvenile sex offense cases are inherently highly complex. They also require very careful handling due to the sensitive nature of the situation. If your child is charged with a sex crime in Utah, you will need a Salt Lake City criminal defense attorney who is both aggressive and thoughtful.

If the charges against a juvenile are false, the consequences to the child can be extremely damaging and long-lasting. If your child has been charged with a sex offense, you will need to contact the best sexual assault defense lawyer Utah has to offer you. Having the best juvenile defense lawyer helps ensure that *all* your child's rights and best interests are *fully* protected throughout the legal process in the Utah Juvenile court system.

Wasatch Defense Lawyers, Salt Lake City Utah

We are criminal defense lawyers specializing in sex crimes cases. We provide compassionate and powerful representation that makes your child's best interest our top priority. We understand how frightening the juvenile justice system can seem to a child, and we know that going through the legal process is tough for the child facing charges and for the whole family.

Our reliable and highly responsive defense attorneys work quickly to have charges reduced or dropped, and to keep your child from being placed in juvenile detention and off the juvenile sex offender registry.

Call Wasatch Defense Lawyers, Salt Lake City UT at (801) 980-9965, or use our online contact form to schedule a free review of your child's case, so you can decide how best to proceed.
