

Juvenile Recidivism

Data Science and Analytics

2025-02-20

Executive summary

The Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) defines recidivism as a return to incarceration within three years of the offender's date of release from a state correctional institution.

This study looks at Juvenile offenders released in 2020 and follows the offender for three years from their release date to determine if the offender returned to incarceration in either a Juvenile or Adult Facility.

2023 Juvenile Recidivism Rate: 24.88%

- 406 Releases
- 101 Returns
- Of all juveniles released in 2020, 24.8% of males returned to IDOC while 25.64% of females returned
- Approximately 27.72% of African American juvenile offenders returned to the Department of Correction, a higher rate than any other major race or ethnicity. Caucasian youth were next highest with a 25.11% recidivism rate, followed by Multi-racial youth 21.88%).
- Approximately 51.3% of juveniles who recidivated were returned to IDOC for the commission of a new crime, compared to 100% of returns which were for a technical violation of post-release supervision.
- Juvenile offenders whose offense severity level was classified as 'Severity II' were most likely to return to incarceration 32.61%.
- Juvenile offenders released in 2020 who were identified as a sex offender returned to IDOC at a rate of 22.86%.

Recidivism Methodology

The Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) defines recidivism as a return to incarceration within three years of the juvenile's date of release from a state correctional institution. The current study analyzed all juvenile releases from an IDOC facility during calendar year 2020 to determine if there were any youths returned to incarceration, in either a juvenile or adult facility, within three years of their respective release date. It should be noted that, to accurately gauge recidivism, IDOC paid particular attention to the chronological order of each return to confinement. Specifically, if a juvenile was returned to a juvenile facility, he/she was counted as a juvenile-facility recidivist and not researched any further.

Success Rate Methodology

The rate of success for each student, which was calculated separately from the rate of recidivism, was established by determining if each juvenile released in 2020 was subsequently returned to incarceration in an adult facility only. In other words, recommitment to a juvenile facility was not counted as an unsuccessful release in this methodology. Students released from a state correctional facility who remained free of adult incarceration three years after their release were deemed to have successfully re-entered society.

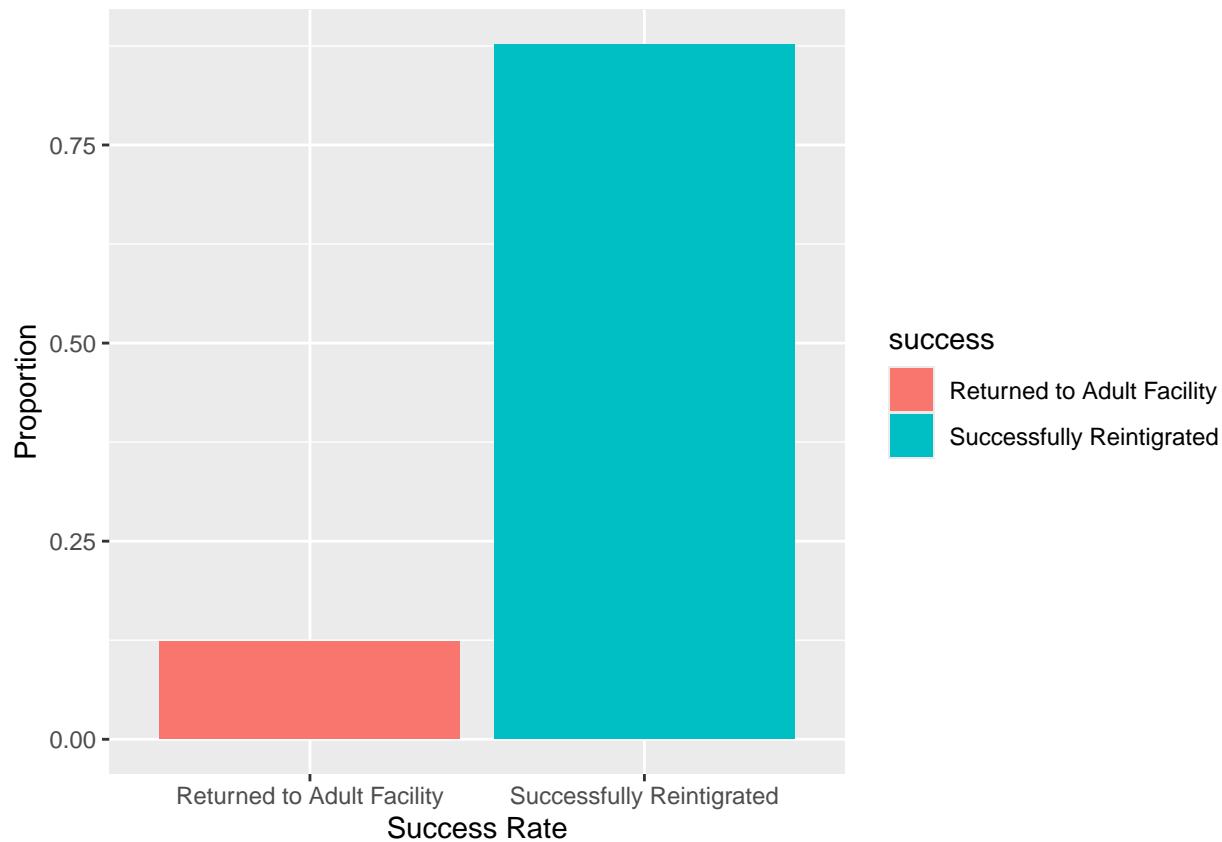


Figure 1: Success Rate

Overall Recidivism Rates

In 2020, the Indiana Department of Correction released 406 students. Of those juveniles released, 24.88% were re-incarcerated with the Indiana Department of Correction within three years of their release date. Table 1 details recidivism rates by the length of time until a student returned to incarceration in either a juvenile or adult facility. The percentage of returns for 2020 releases at the 1-year, 2-year, and 3-year milestones for males and females is illustrated in Figure 2

Table 1: Percent returned by Gender, 2020 Releases

Gender	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Female	39	12.8%	20.5%	25.6%
Male	367	10.4%	19.6%	24.8%
Total	406	10.6%	19.7%	24.9%

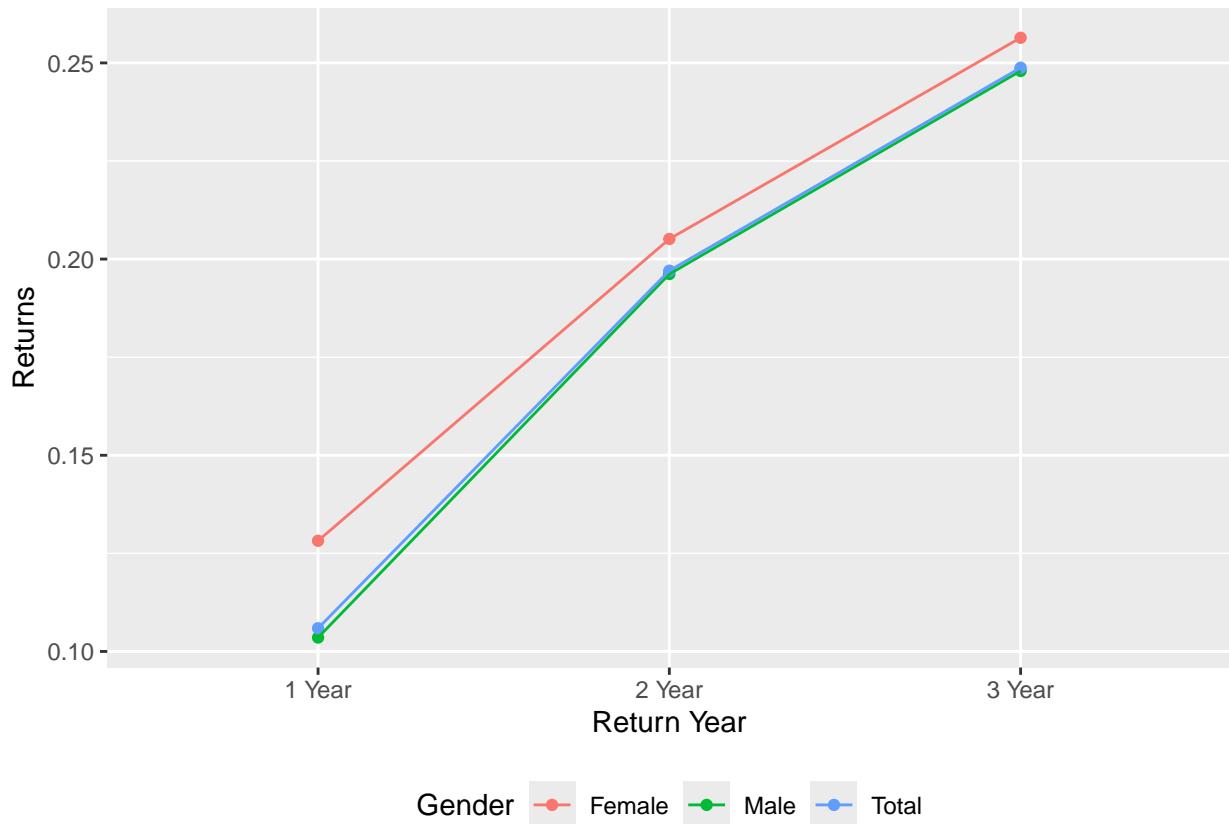


Figure 2: Percent returned by Gender, 2020 Releases

Recidivism Rates by Race and Ethnicity

Amongst racial categories, African American juveniles had the highest likelihood of recidivating amongst students in the 2020 release cohort (27.72%), followed closely by individuals Caucasian with 25.11%.

Table 2: Percent returned by Race, 2020 Releases

Race	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
BLACK	101	8.9%	20.8%	27.7%
MULTIPLE RACES, NOT HISPANIC	32	3.1%	12.5%	21.9%
OTHER	35	11.4%	11.4%	11.4%
UNKNOWN	3	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
WHITE	235	11.9%	20.9%	25.1%
Total	406	10.6%	19.7%	24.9%

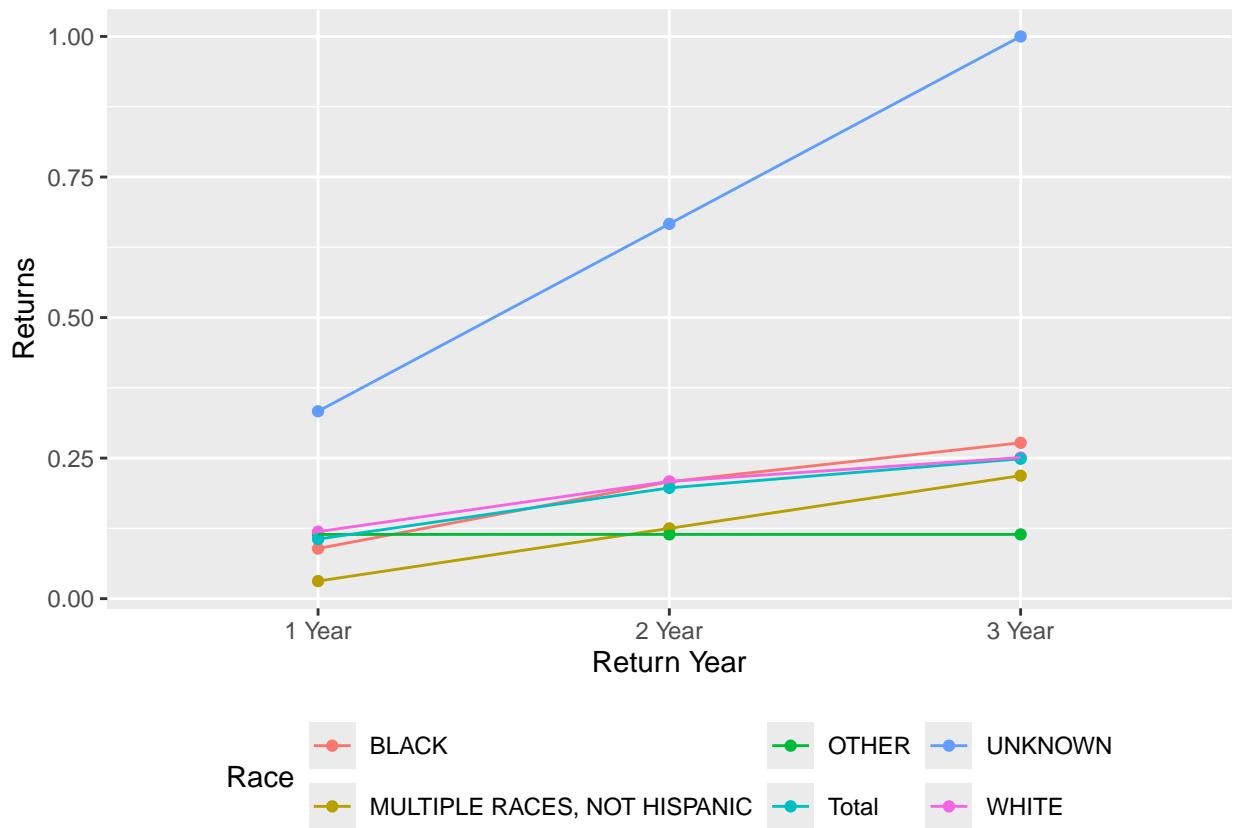


Figure 3: Percent returned by Race, 2020 Releases

Recidivism Rates by Type of Release

As has been common in many years of this study, students who were released from a juvenile facility to parole in 2020 were more likely to recidivate (33.33%) than those who were discharged (24.75%).

Table 3: Percent returned by Release type, 2020 Releases

Release Type	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Discharge from DOC	400	10.2%	19.5%	24.8%
Transfer to Parole	6	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Total	406	10.6%	19.7%	24.9%

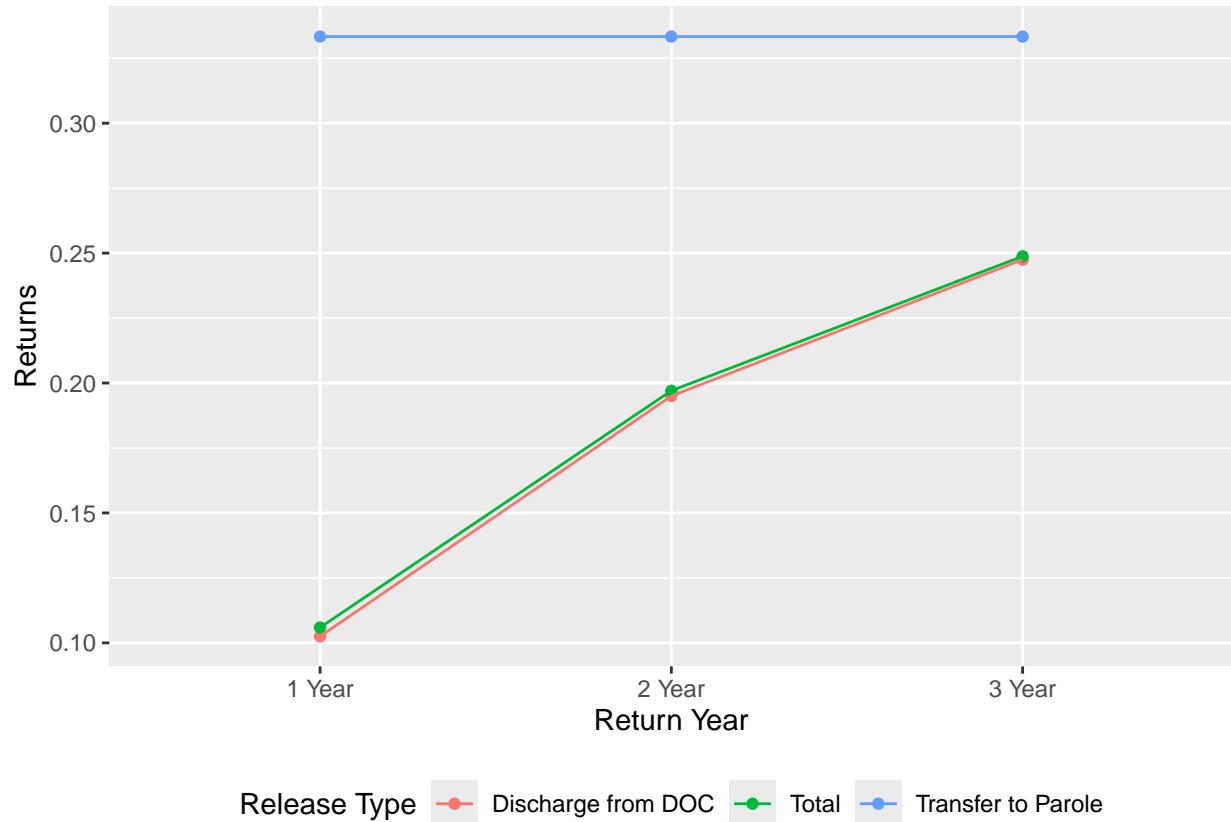


Figure 4: Percent returned by Release type, 2020 Releases

Recidivism Rates by Type of Return

For the 2020 juvenile release cohort, the percentage of students whose returns were due to new charges was significantly larger than for returns due to technical violations (Figure 6).

Table 4: Percent returned by Admission type, 2020 Releases

Admission Type	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
New Commit	193	22.3%	41.5%	51.3%
Technical	2	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	406	10.6%	19.7%	24.9%

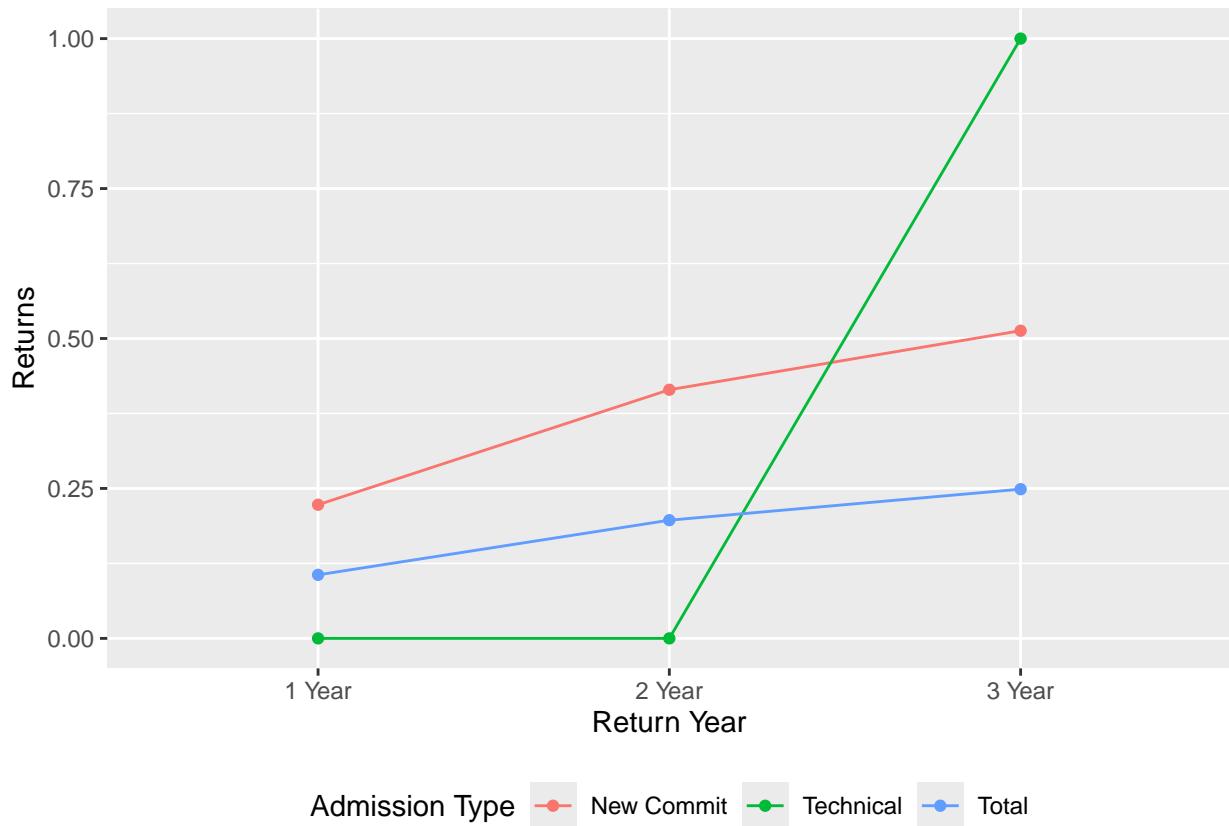


Figure 5: Percent returned by Admission type, 2020 Releases

Recidivism Rates by Offense Category

There was relatively little difference in recidivism rates between offense categories for students released in 2020, especially amongst the top three (Figure 7). The highest rate of recidivism was among those in the Person offense category (32.6%), followed by Other (28.2%).

Table 5: Percent returned by Gender, 2020 Releases

Category	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
CONTROL SUB	14	14.3%	21.4%	21.4%
OTHER	71	15.5%	21.1%	28.2%
PERSON	135	14.1%	27.4%	32.6%
PROPERTY	106	2.8%	11.3%	17.9%
SEX OFFENSE	35	11.4%	20.0%	22.9%
WEAPON	45	8.9%	13.3%	15.6%
Total	406	10.6%	19.7%	24.9%

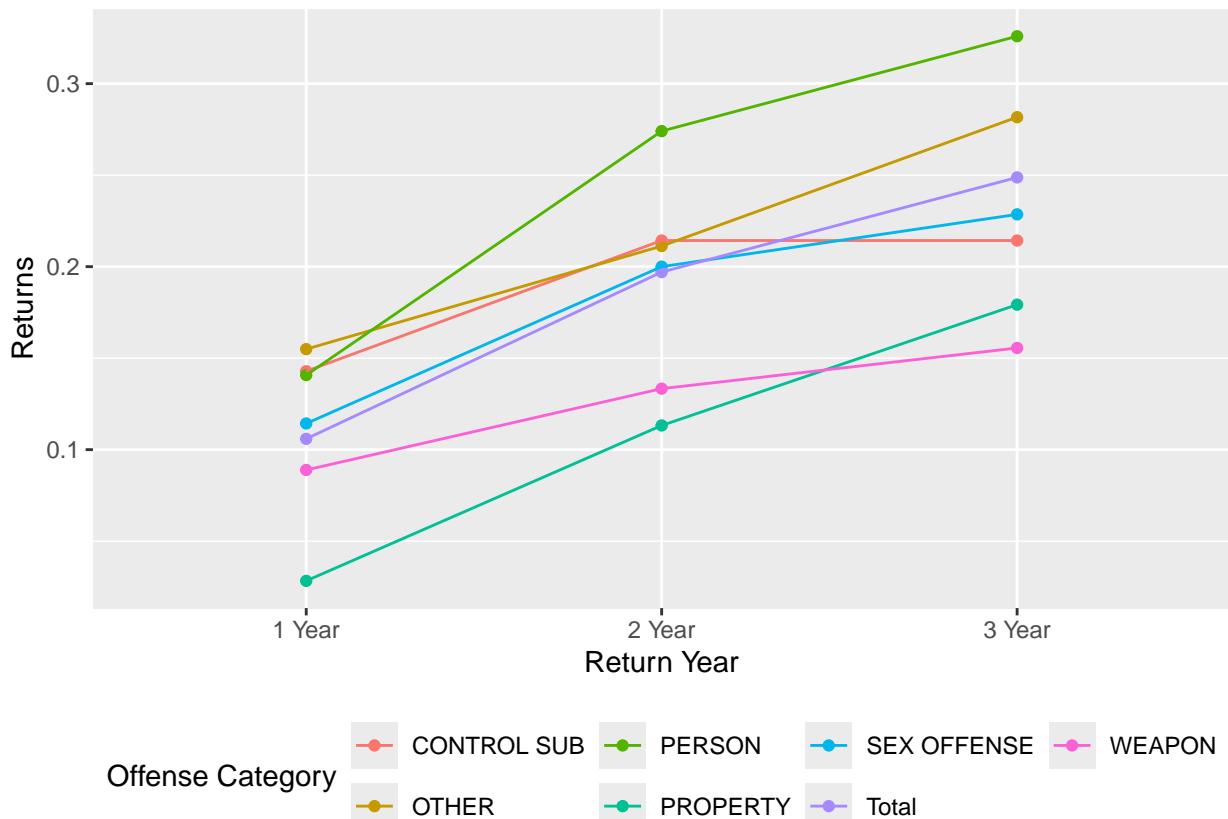


Figure 6: Percent returned by Offense Category, 2020 Releases

Recidivism Rates by Age at Release

Recidivism rates by the age of each student at the time of their release from IDOC are illustrated in Table 7. The data seem to indicate, as illustrated in Figure 8 below, a relationship between the juvenile's age at release and the likelihood they will return to incarceration. Generally speaking, the younger the student is at the time he/she is released, the more likely they are to return to IDOC, albeit with a small rate spike among students over 18 at the time of release.

Table 6: Percent returned by Release Age, 2020 Releases

Release Age	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
13	4	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
14	13	15.4%	30.8%	38.5%
15	27	22.2%	37.0%	51.9%
16	57	17.5%	35.1%	38.6%
17	102	12.7%	17.6%	22.5%
18	138	3.6%	8.7%	13.0%
19	53	9.4%	22.6%	28.3%
20	7	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
21	5	0.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Total	406	10.6%	19.7%	24.9%

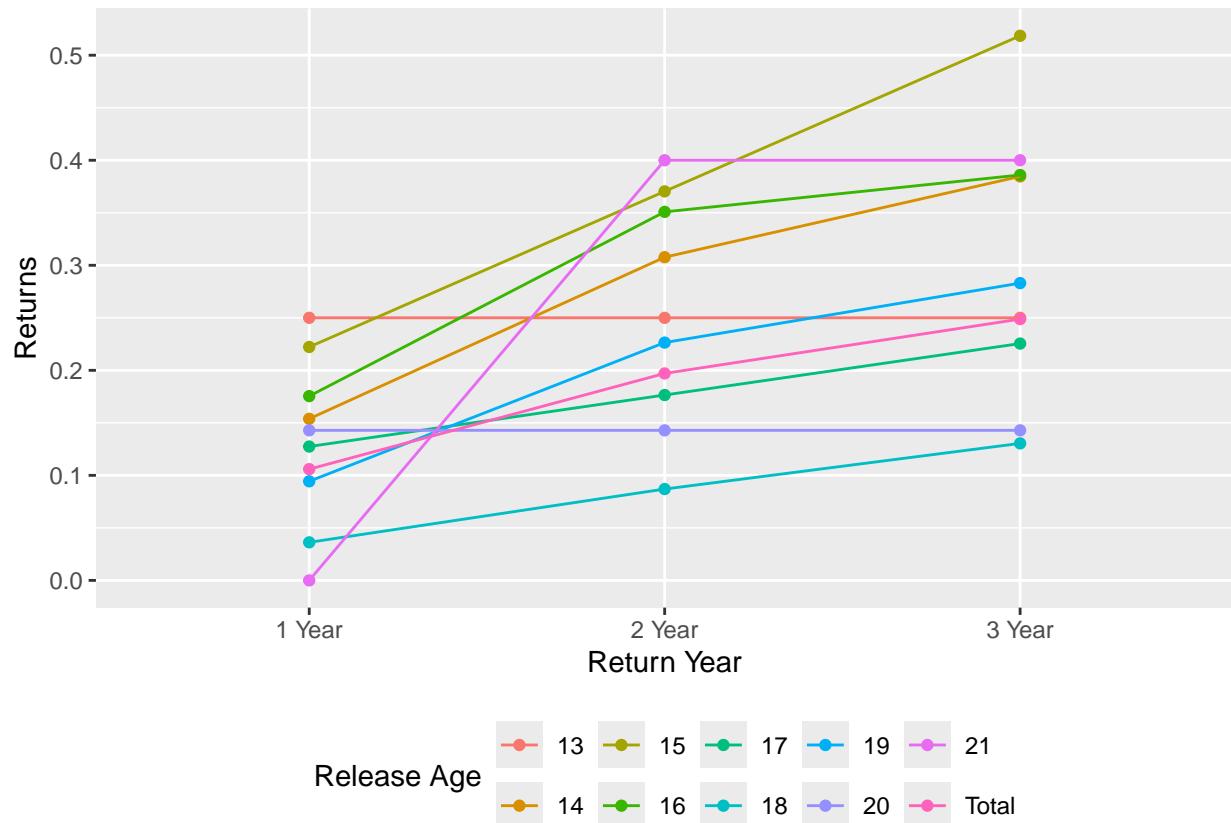


Figure 7: Percent returned by Release Age, 2020 Releases

Recidivism Rates by Length of Stay

In general, the longer students were incarcerated in an IDOC facility, the higher their likelihood of recidivating within three years. This trend is less observable in the higher end of stays (2 - 3 Years), perhaps due to the limited number of releases in those categories.

Table 7: Percent returned by Length of stay, 2020 Releases

Length of Stay	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
< 1 Year	277	10.8%	18.8%	24.2%
> 4 Years	4	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
1 - 2 Years	92	6.5%	17.4%	20.7%
2 - 3 Years	20	20.0%	35.0%	50.0%
3 - 4 Years	13	15.4%	30.8%	30.8%
Total	406	10.6%	19.7%	24.9%

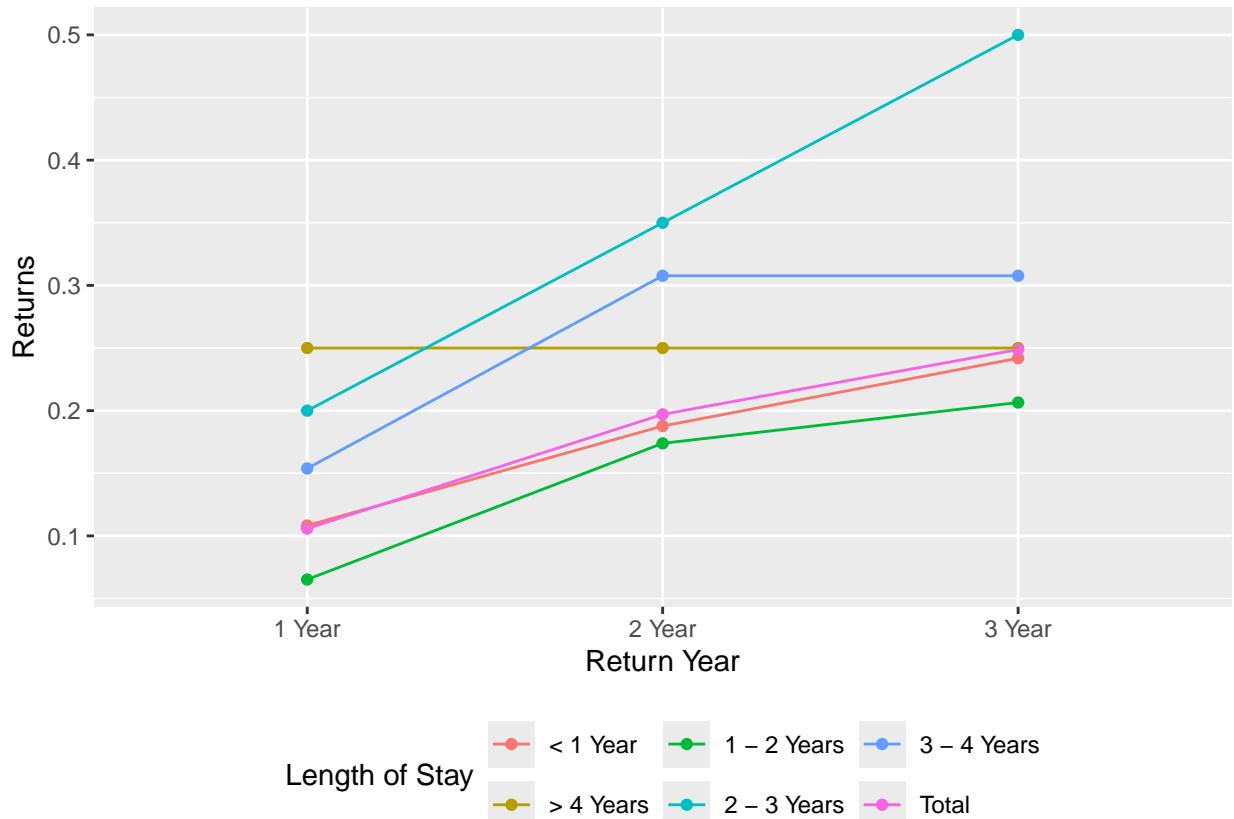


Figure 8: Percent returned by Length of stay, 2020 Releases

Recidivism Rates for Students Adjudicated for a Sex Offense

Race

Recidivism rates by the race of juveniles adjudicated for a sex offense are detailed in Table 9. African American students exhibited the largest percentage of returns in the 2020 release cohort (33.3%). It should be noted that release counts for all other groups were very small and that, while Figure 10 illustrates rate comparisons, these should be interpreted with caution (and should not be used to generalize to the population).

Table 8: Percent Sex Offender returned by Race, 2020 Releases

Length of Stay	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
BLACK	6	16.7%	33.3%	33.3%
MULTIPLE RACES, NOT HISPANIC	2	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%
OTHER	7	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
UNKNOWN	1	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
WHITE	19	15.8%	21.1%	21.1%
Total	35	11.4%	20.0%	22.9%

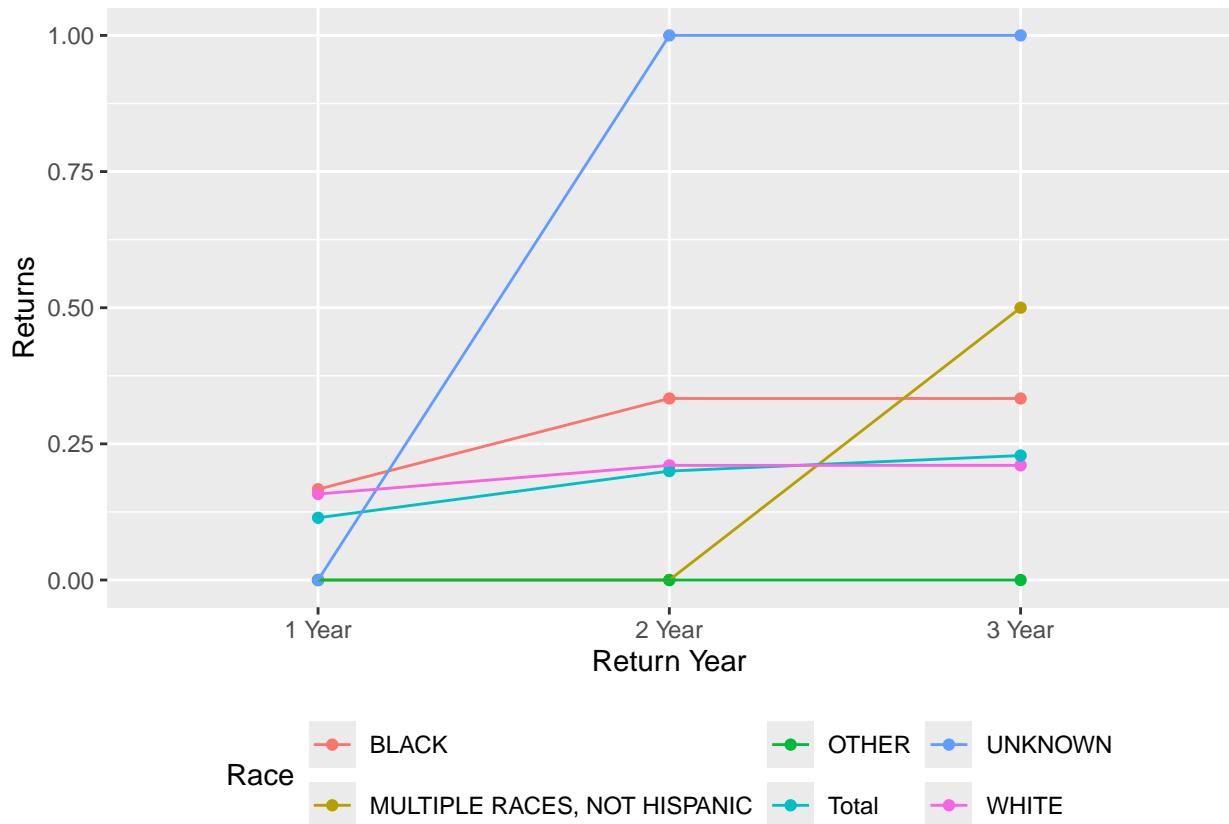


Figure 9: Percent Sex Offenders returned by Race, 2020 Releases

Type of Release

The opposite pattern observed among the 2020 cohort in general is present among students adjudicated for a sex offense—namely, individuals released to parole are less likely to recidivate than those discharged.

Table 9: Percent Sex Offender returned by Type of release, 2020 Releases

Length of Stay	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Discharge from DOC	34	11.8%	20.6%	23.5%
Transfer to Parole	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	35	11.4%	20.0%	22.9%

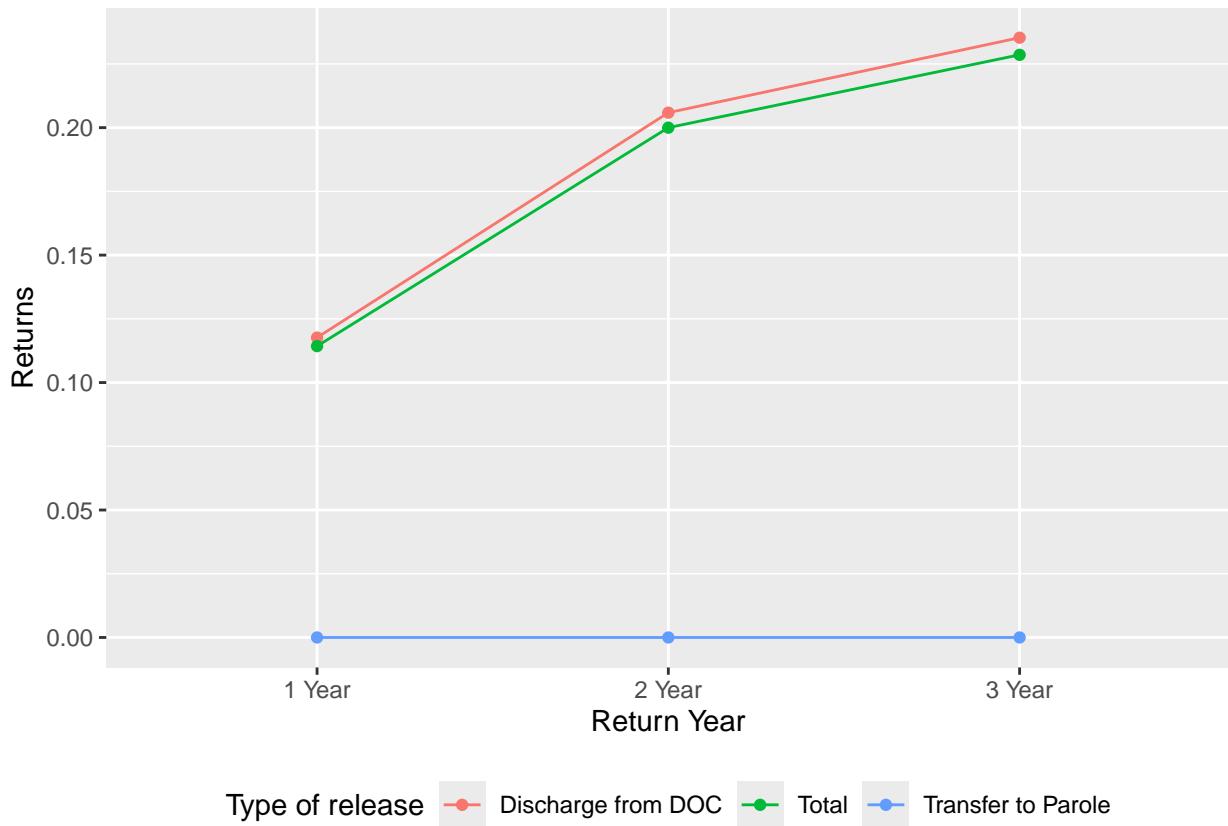


Figure 10: Percent Sex Offenders returned by type of release, 2020 Releases

Type of Return

Students adjudicated for a sex offense who were released in 2020 were re-incarcerated for technical violations at a rate comparable to juveniles adjudicated for a sex offense who were returned for a new offense. Again, the low count limits generalizability of estimates observed here.

Table 10: Percent Sex Offender returned by admission type, 2020 Releases

Length of Stay	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Missing	24	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
New Commit	11	36.4%	63.6%	72.7%
Total	35	11.4%	20.0%	22.9%

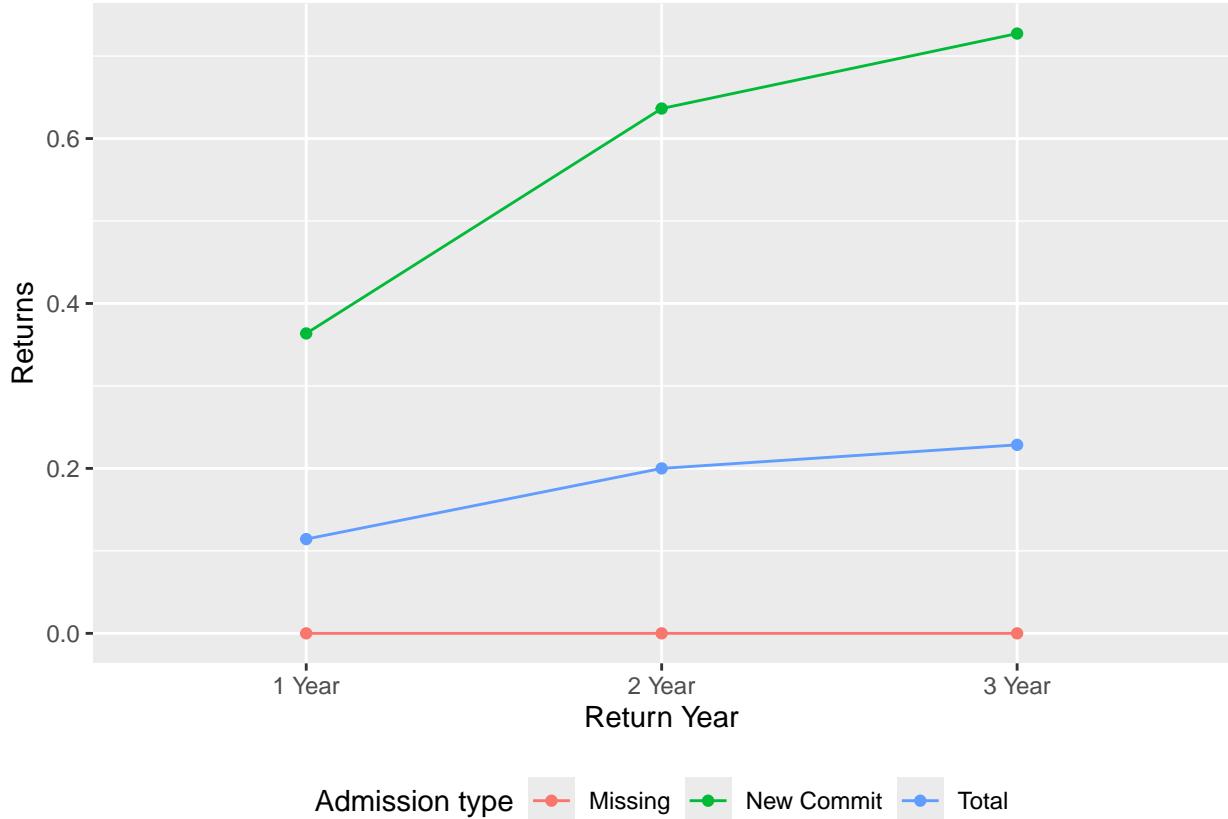


Figure 11: Percent Sex Offenders returned by admission type, 2020 Releases

New Sex Offense

Data indicate that students adjudicated for a sex offense in the 2020 cohort rarely return to IDOC due to a new sex offense (see Table 12). This is one of the most common trends observed throughout the years of IDOC juvenile recidivism studies. As illustrated in Figure 13, only 11.4% of all students adjudicated for a sex offense who were released in 2020 returned to IDOC due to a conviction for a new sex offense.

Table 11: Percent Sex Offender returned by New Offense type, 2020 Releases

New Offense type	Released	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
OTHER	28	10.7%	10.7%	14.3%
PERSON	3	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
SEX OFFENSE	4	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Total	35	11.4%	20.0%	22.9%

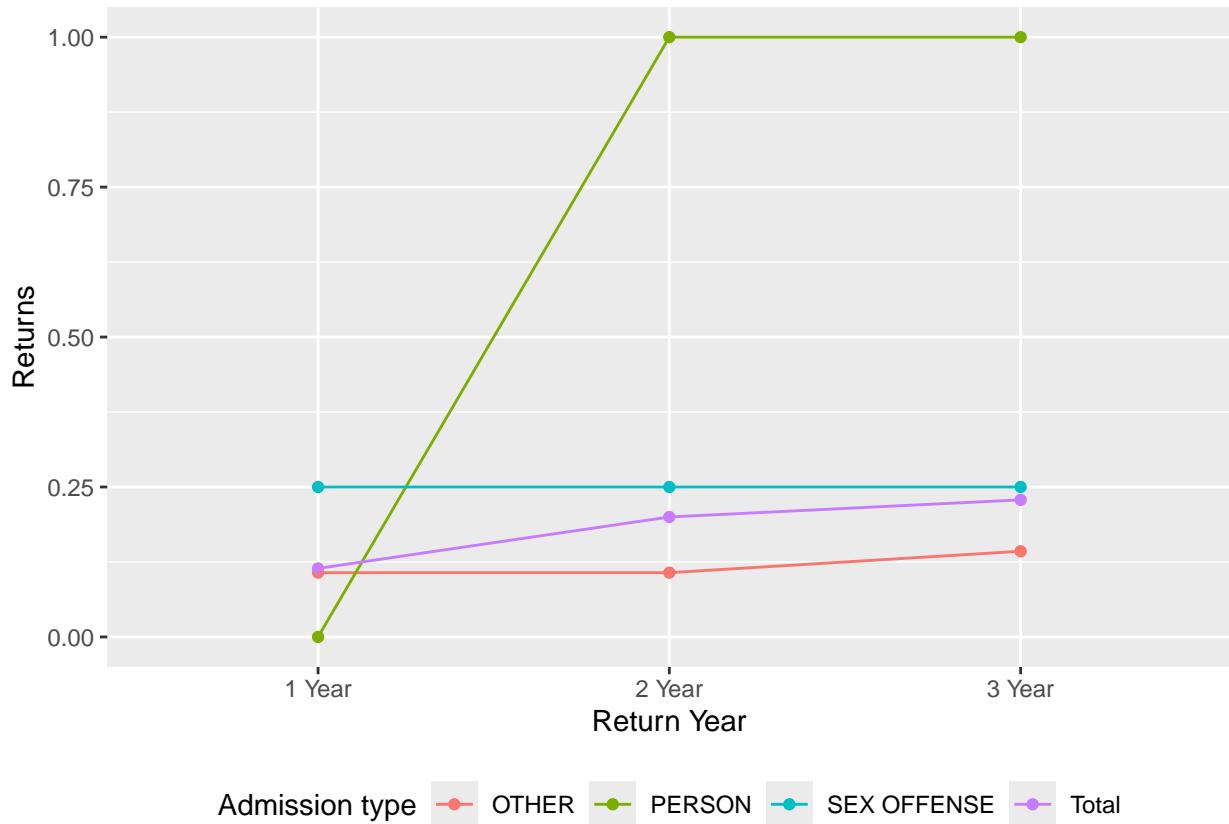


Figure 12: Percent Sex Offenders returned by New Offense type, 2020 Releases