3. CHANGES IN THE HOUSEHOLD ARRANGEMENTS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

By Mary Wagner

For many youth, with and without disabilities, leaving high school is accompanied by a focus on the demands of postsecondary education and/or the workforce. However, work and schooling are not the only important aspects of the lives of youth; these also include the living arrangements of youth and their interpersonal relationships. The lives of many youth also intersect with their communities through participation in a variety of organized groups, such as a sports team, religious group, or professional association, and through community service or volunteer activities. These positive forms of involvement outside the home are offset for some, however, by actions that violate social norms or other rules to the extent that negative consequences result, such as disciplinary actions at school, being fired from a job, or being arrested.

This chapter examines changes between 1987 and 2003 in these aspects of the lives of youth with disabilities who had been out of high school up to 2 years, as measured in the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2).[1] Specifically, it addresses:

- **Household arrangements:** with whom youth lived and their marital status.
- **Social involvement:** participating in organized group activities outside of work or school, volunteering, and at some point experiencing negative consequences for behavior (i.e., disciplinary actions at school or being fired from a job or arrested).

These factors are described for youth with disabilities as a whole and for youth who differed in their disability category, high-school-exit status (i.e., those who completed high school and those who did not), age, gender, household income, and race/ethnicity, when significant.

Household Arrangements

Earlier comparisons of findings from NLTS and NLTS2 for youth with disabilities who were still in secondary school demonstrated that their living arrangements had not changed appreciably between 1987 and 2003 (Wagner, Cameto, et al., 2003). The same is true of youth with disabilities who had been out of secondary school up to 2 years at those two points in time. About three-fourths of youth with disabilities in both cohorts 1 and 2 (76% and 73%, respectively) were living with one or both parents, and 7% and 8%, respectively, were living with another family member or friend. About one in eight out-of-school youth with disabilities (11% and 15% of the two cohorts) were living independently (i.e., alone, with a spouse or roommate, in military housing as a service member, or in a college dormitory). Few youth (3% of cohort 1 and 1% of cohort 2) lived in an institution or facility, and 3% of each cohort had another living arrangement.

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[1] Youth for whom data are available for 1987 and 2003 are referred to as cohort 1 and cohort 2, respectively. For both groups of youth, 19% were 15 through 17, 31% were 18, and 50% were 19.

As might be expected, given the large majority of youth with disabilities who still lived with their families of origin, few youth (6% in each cohort) were married or living in a marriage-like relationship. In fact, about 9 of 10 youth with disabilities who were out of secondary school up to 2 years were single (92% and 88% of cohorts 1 and 2, respectively). Although few were reported to be engaged to be married, the 6% of cohort 2 youth who were represents a significant increase over time ($p<.05$).

Differential Changes Related to Disability Category

Although living arrangements did not change markedly over time for out-of-school youth with disabilities as a whole, significant changes were apparent for youth in some disability categories (Exhibit 3-1). Notably, cohort 1 youth with orthopedic impairments were significantly more likely than youth in many other categories to be living with parents (92% vs. 74% to 77% of youth with learning disabilities, speech impairments, mental retardation, or emotional disturbances and 58% of youth with multiple disabilities; $p<.05$ for all comparisons). However, a 17-percentage-point decrease over time ($p<.05$) resulted in cohort 2 youth with orthopedic impairments being no more or less likely to be living with parents (75%) than youth in other disability categories (64% to 80%). A corresponding increase of 12 percentage points in youth with orthopedic impairments living independently did not attain statistical significance.

A significant decrease was apparent in out-of-school youth with mental retardation living in an institution or facility (7 percentage points, $p<.05$). However, a 25-percentage-point decrease in living in an institution or facility among youth with multiple disabilities did not reach statistical significance for this small group of youth. Nonetheless, these decreases eliminated the differences across categories in the rates of living in an institution or facility that were apparent in cohort 1 (8% and 31% for youth with mental retardation and multiple disabilities vs. 1% or fewer of youth with learning disabilities or speech or visual impairments, $p<.05$ for all comparisons).

In contrast, no category of youth experienced a significant change in the likelihood that they were living independently. Thus, the 15-percentage-point difference across categories in cohort 1 (1% of youth with multiple disabilities to 16% of those with visual impairments, $p<.05$) decreased by only 1 percentage point in cohort 2 (4% to 18% for youth with multiple disabilities and orthopedic impairments, respectively; not a significant difference). There are neither significant differences across groups nor significant changes over time in youth with disabilities living with another family member or friend or in a living arrangement classified as “other.”

Regarding the marital status of youth with disabilities, only one category of youth demonstrated a significant change over time. Youth with emotional disturbances experienced a 13-percentage-point decrease in the likelihood of being single (96% vs. 83%, $p<.05$); thus, they were significantly less likely to be single in cohort 2 than youth with speech impairments or multiple disabilities (99% and 98%, $p<.01$). There was a corresponding 8-percentage-point increase in the likelihood of out-of-school cohort 2 youth with emotional disturbances being engaged (1% vs. 9%, $p<.05$), a higher likelihood of being engaged than youth with orthopedic impairments or multiple disabilities (1%, $p<.05$). There were no significant differences across groups and no significant changes over time in youth with disabilities being married or in a marriage-like relationship (ranging from 1% to 8% across categories in both cohorts).

Exhibit 3-1
CHANGES IN THE LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH, BY DISABILITY CATEGORY

	Learning Disability	Speech/ Language Impairment	Mental Retardation	Emotional Disturbance	Hearing Impairment	Visual Impairment	Orthopedic Impairment	Other Health Impairment	Multiple Disabilities/ Deaf-Blindness
Percentage who lived:									
With a parent/guardian									
Cohort 1 (1987)	76.0	75.8	74.3	76.7	79.2	76.3	92.0	80.8	58.1
	(4.0)	(6.0)	(4.9)	(4.4)	(4.6)	(6.8)	(5.1)	(7.0)	(12.7)
Cohort 2 (2003)	74.8	77.7	72.9	67.2	77.5	80.5	75.1	64.4	76.9
	(5.0)	(8.9)	(7.0)	(5.2)	(6.1)	(7.8)	(6.9)	(12.3)	(10.9)
Percentage-point change	-1.2	+1.9	-1.4	-9.5	-1.7	+4.2	**-16.9***	-16.4	+18.8
Independently (alone, with a spouse or roommate, or in military housing or a college dormitory)									
Cohort 1 (1987)	13.0	15.5	4.4	8.8	15.6	15.8	6.2	5.1	1.3
	(3.2)	(5.5)	(2.3)	(3.0)	(5.2)	(5.9)	(4.5)	(3.9)	(2.9)
Cohort 2 (2003)	16.0	7.6	14.5	13.6	12.3	14.8	17.8	6.7	4.4
	(4.3)	(5.7)	(5.6)	(3.8)	(4.8)	(6.8)	(6.3)	(6.4)	(5.3)
Percentage-point change	+3.0	-7.9	+10.1	+4.8	-3.3	-1.0	+11.6	+1.6	+3.1
In an institution or facility									
Cohort 1 (1987)	.6	.4	7.5	4.0	1.6	.8	1.9	1.6	30.6
	(.7)	(.9)	(3.0)	(2.0)	(1.4)	(1.4)	(2.5)	(2.2)	(11.9)
Cohort 2 (2003)	.0	2.4	.5	3.4	.0	.0	.0	1.3	5.5
		(3.3)	(1.1)	(2.0)				(2.9)	(5.9)
Percentage-point change	-.6	+2.0	**-7.0***	-.6	-1.6	-.8	-1.9	-.3	-25.1

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following level: *p<.05.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Differential Changes Related to School-Exit Status

The distribution of living arrangements of out-of-school youth with disabilities did not change significantly over time for either youth who completed high school or those who left high school without graduating. However, at both points in time, high school dropouts were significantly less likely than completers to be living with parents (72% vs. 84% in cohort 1, 58% vs. 78% in cohort 2; p<.05 for both comparisons). Similarly, marital status did not change markedly over time for either group; however, high school dropouts with disabilities in both cohorts were significantly less likely to be single than their peers who completed high school (76% vs. 97% in cohort 1, p<.01; 76% vs. 92% in cohort 2, p<.05).

Differential Changes Related to Demographic Characteristics

Several demographic characteristics of youth with disabilities were associated with differences in their living arrangements or marital status or in the extent to which they changed over time.

Age. As was true for youth with disabilities as a whole, there was no significant change over time in the living arrangements of out-of-school youth with disabilities across the 15- through 19-year-old age range. However, among cohort 2 youth, 19-year-olds were significantly more likely than their 15- through 17-year-old peers to be living independently (15% vs. 2%, p<.01). The difference among cohort 1 youth (12% vs. 6%) was not significant. There were no significant differences by age in the marital status of out-of-school youth with disabilities or in changes over time in that status.

Gender. Boys and girls with disabilities who had been out of school up to 2 years neither differed in the likelihood of having various living arrangements nor in significant changes in living arrangements over time. Changes in marital status over time also were not apparent for either gender. However, both cohorts 1 and 2 girls with disabilities were less likely than their male counterparts to be single (80% vs. 98% in cohort 1, p<.01; 78% vs. 93% in cohort 2, p<.05).

Household income. There were no significant differences between youth with disabilities in the lowest, middle, or highest third of the household income spectrum in their living arrangements or marital status in either cohort 1 or 2. Similarly, there were no significant changes over time for any household income group on these factors.

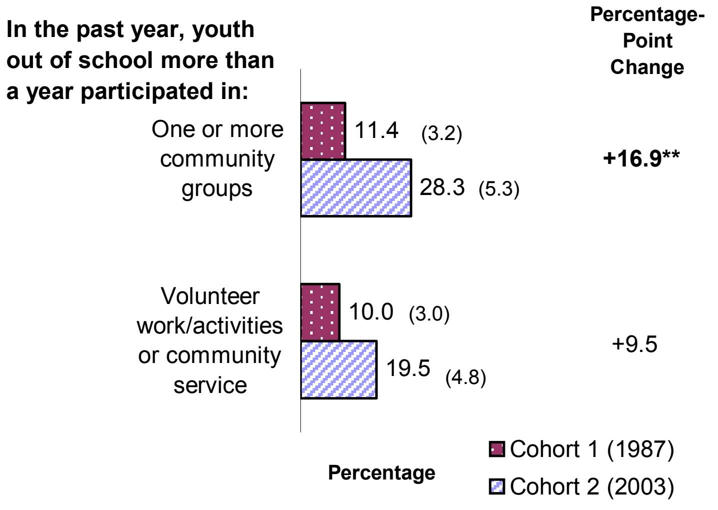
Race/ethnicity. Although there were no significant changes over time in living arrangements for any racial/ethic group, cohort 2 white youth with disabilities were significantly more likely than their African-American peers to be living independently (19% vs. 4%, p<.05). Other living arrangements did not differ between groups. Youth with disabilities who differed in their racial/ethnic background did not differ in marital status in either cohort, and no groups experienced significant changes over time in this factor.

Social Involvement

Participation in community activities is a valued outcome that shapes the quality of life of youth with disabilities (National Center on Educational Outcomes, 1993). Participation in organized group activities, with their generally prosocial norms and expectations for membership, has been found to be associated with other positive outcomes for youth with disabilities after high school, including an increased likelihood of pursuing postsecondary education and living independently (Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, & Newman, 1993). Earlier comparisons of findings from NLTS and NLTS2 for youth with disabilities who were still in secondary school demonstrated that their involvement in organized group activities did not change appreciably between 1987 and 2003; however, the rate at which youth participated in volunteer or community service activities more than doubled (Wagner, Cameto, et al., 2003).

A different picture emerges for youth with disabilities who were out of secondary school up to 2 years at those two points in time (Exhibit 3-2). A17-percentage-point increase in group membership (p<.01) resulted in more than twice as many cohort 2 youth (28%) as their cohort 1 peers (11%) belonging to a community group. In contrast, there was no significant increase in out-of-school youth with disabilities participating in volunteer or community service activities.

Exhibit 3-2
CHANGES IN ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES



Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Statistical significance: **p<.01.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Unfortunately, the prosocial activities of organized community groups and community service are offset for some youth with disabilities by activities that generate negative consequences, including disciplinary actions at school, being fired from a job, or being arrested. NLTS and NLTS2 have investigated the extent to which youth with disabilities had ever experienced any of these negative consequences. A 21-percentage-point increase in ever experiencing any of these negative consequences for behavior occurred between 1987 and 2003. Among cohort 1 youth, 34% had at some time been subject to disciplinary actions at school, fired from a job, or arrested; that rate rose to 56% among cohort 2 youth (p<.001).

Differential Changes Related to Disability Category

The significant increase over time in the likelihood that out-of-school youth with disabilities belonged to an organized community group that was noted for youth with disabilities as a whole was not apparent for the smaller group of youth in any disability category (Exhibit 3-3). Nonetheless, the spread across disability categories in group membership rates narrowed somewhat from cohort 1; with cohort 2 rates ranging from 19% of youth with emotional disturbances to 44% of those with visual impairments (p<.05). Although there was no significant increase among youth with disabilities as a whole in their likelihood of doing volunteer work or community service, significant increases did occur among youth with hearing or visual impairments (35 and 42 percentage points, respectively; p<.01 and p<.05). In both cohorts, youth with emotional disturbances were among the least likely to participate in organized community groups or in volunteer or community service activities.

Exhibit 3-3
CHANGES IN ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH, BY DISABILITY CATEGORY

	Learning Disability	Speech/ Language Impair-ment	Mental Retar-dation	Emo-tional Distur-bance	Hearing Impair-ment	Visual Impair-ment	Ortho-pedic Impair-ment	Other Health Impair-ment	Multiple Disabilities/ Deaf-Blindness
In the past year, percentage of youth out of school more than a year who participated in:									
One or more community groups									
Cohort 1 (1987)	13.2	21.8	4.0	5.5	33.3	36.6	--	--	--
	(5.1)	(10.3)	(4.0)	(3.9)	(10.9)	(13.7)			
Cohort 2 (2003)	29.4	24.7	--	18.7	44.5	43.3	32.1	36.9	13.3
	(7.6)	(14.2)		(6.0)	(10.1)	(13.3)	(10.4)	(9.0)	(10.5)
Percentage-point change	+16.2	+2.9		+13.2	+11.2	+6.7			
Volunteer work/activities or community service									
Cohort 1 (1987)	12.8	13.1	3.7	4.2	12.5	11.9	--	--	--
	(4.0)	(6.8)	(4.6)	(3.7)	(5.8)	(8.0)			
Cohort 2 (2003)	19.1	20.8	--	14.1	47.2	53.8	29.2	21.4	36.4
	(6.7)	(13.4)		(5.5)	(10.3)	(13.8)	(10.4)	(7.9)	(15.3)
Percentage-point change	+6.3	+7.7		+9.9	**+34.7****	**+41.9***			
Percentage who ever had experienced negative consequences for behavior									
Cohort 1 (1987)	32.2	22.8	30.0	55.9	15.0	7.9	5.5	14.7	45.8
	(4.5)	(5.8)	(5.6)	(5.4)	(4.2)	(4.5)	(4.5)	(7.0)	(13.8)
Cohort 2 (2003)	49.8	41.7	46.5	88.9	28.6	14.6	29.1	67.1	35.8
	(5.8)	(11.2)	(8.0)	(3.4)	(6.7)	(7.2)	(7.5)	(12.4)	(12.8)
Percentage-point change	**+17.6***	+18.9	+16.5	**+33.0*****	+13.6	+6.7	**+23.6****	**+52.4*****	-10.0

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interview and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

-- Too few to report separately.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

The large increase in youth with disabilities experiencing negative consequences for their behavior was evident for four disability categories: learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and orthopedic and other health impairments. Increases ranged from 18 percentage points for youth with learning disabilities to 52 percentage points for those with other health impairments. At both points in time, youth with emotional disturbances had the highest rates of negative consequences of any disability group. More than half (56%) of cohort 1 youth with emotional disturbances and 89% of those in cohort 2 had had such experiences (p<.01 and p<.001 compared with youth with learning disabilities).

Differential Changes Related to School-Exit Status

Neither youth with disabilities who completed high school nor those who dropped out experienced significant changes in participation in organized community groups or in volunteer or community service activities. However, larger changes among dropouts ameliorated the significant differences between the two groups that had existed among cohort 1 youth. Whereas

33% of cohort 1 school completers had participated in an organized community group, only 9% of dropouts were group members (p<.001). By cohort 2, these rates were 32% and 20%, respectively, not a significant difference. Similarly, 21% of cohort 1 school completers and 8% of dropouts had taken part in volunteer or community service (p<.01); those rates were 26% and 20% among cohort 2 youth.

Both youth with disabilities who finished high school and those who did not had significant increases in experiencing negative consequences for their behavior, with the largest increase being among high school completers. Cohort 1 youth who finished high school were dramatically less likely to have been subject to negative consequences for their behavior than were peers who dropped out (11% vs. 62%, p<.001). A 34-percentage point increase among high school completers brought the rate to 46% for cohort 2. Although dropouts had a smaller, 18-percentage-point increase in cohort 2, they still were more likely to have had negative consequences for their behavior than school completers (80% vs. 46%, p<.001).

Exhibit 3-4
CHANGES IN ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, BY AGE

	15 through 17	18	19
In the past year, percentage of youth out of school more than a year who participated in:			
One or more community groups			
Cohort 1 (1987)	9.5 (7.4)	15.3 (6.9)	10.0 (4.0)
Cohort 2 (2003)	27.3 (15.4)	24.4 (8.3)	29.8 (7.1)
Percentage-point change	+17.8	+9.1	**+19.8***
Volunteer work/activities or community service			
Cohort 1 (1987)	1.5 (3.2)	9.5 (5.7)	13.0 (4.5)
Cohort 2 (2003)	22.4 (14.6)	19.1 (7.7)	19.2 (6.2)
Percentage-point change	+20.9	+9.6	+6.2
Percentage who ever had experienced negative consequences for behavior			
Cohort 1 (1987)	73.0 (8.1)	34.4 (5.2)	22.8 (3.6)
Cohort 2 (2003)	64.3 (9.5)	56.3 (5.9)	51.9 (6.0)
Percentage-point change	-8.7	**+21.9****	**+29.1*****

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interview and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Differential Changes Related to Demographic Characteristics

Age. Although only 19-year-olds experienced a significant increase in membership in a community group (20 percentage points, p<.05; Exhibit 3-4), cohort 2 rates of membership were quite similar for the three age groups, as were rates of participation in volunteer work or community service. Both 18- and 19-year-old youth with disabilities had significant increases in experiencing negative consequences for their behavior (22 and 29 percentage points, respectively, p<.01 and p<.001). Although their rates of negative consequences in cohort 1 were much lower than that of 15- through 17-year-olds (34% and 23% vs. 73%, p<.001 for both comparisons), increases for older youth resulted in cohort 2 rates that were not significantly different across age groups.

Exhibit 3-5
CHANGES IN ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, BY GENDER

	Boys	Girls
In the past year, percentage of youth out of school more than a year who participated in:		
One or more community groups		
Cohort 1 (1987)	12.1 (4.1)	9.9 (5.1)
Cohort 2 (2003)	30.4 (6.6)	23.5 (8.6)
Percentage-point change	**+18.3***	+13.6
Volunteer work/activities or community service		
Cohort 1 (1987)	13.2 (4.3)	3.4 (3.1)
Cohort 2 (2003)	15.0 (5.3)	29.2 (9.3)
Percentage-point change	+1.8	**+25.8****
Percentage who ever had experienced negative consequences for behavior		
Cohort 1 (1987)	39.1 (3.7)	23.6 (4.9)
Cohort 2 (2003)	60.6 (4.8)	46.4 (6.8)
Percentage-point change	**+21.5*****	**+22.8****

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Gender. Out-of-school boys with disabilities experienced an 18-percentage-point increase in community group membership over time (p<.05; Exhibit 3-5), whereas an increase of 14 percentage points did not reach statistical significance for the smaller group of girls. In contrast, girls had the only significant increase in participation in volunteer or community service activities (26 percentage points, p<.01). Despite the genders having similar increases in experiencing negative consequences for behavior (22 and 23 percentage points, respectively; p<.001 and p<.01), the significant gap between them in cohort 1 (39% for boys, 24% for girls; p<.05) was no longer apparent in cohort 2.

Household income. Only youth in the lowest income group experienced a significant increase in community group membership over time (16 percentage points, p<.05; Exhibit 3-6). However, none of the groups had a significant change in participation in volunteer or community service activities, despite the 20-percentage-point increase noted for the lowest income group. The likelihood of being subject to negative consequences for their behavior increased for youth in both the middle and upper income groups (33 and 18 percentage points, respectively; p<.001 and p<.05). With this sizable increase among youth in the middle income group, their rate of negative consequences was significantly higher in cohort 2 than youth in the highest income group (p<.05), a difference that was not apparent in cohort 1.

Race/ethnicity. The increase in community group membership over time occurred largely among Hispanic youth (25 percentage points, p<.05; Exhibit 3-6). An increase of 31 percentage points in volunteer or community service activities for that group did not reach statistical significance, although the 18-percentage-point increase among white youth with disabilities did (p<.05). Both white and African-American youth with disabilities had sizable increases in having been subject to negative consequences for their behavior (23 and 24 percentage points, p<.001 and p<.05), an increase not apparent among Hispanic youth. Despite the different changes noted for the three groups, in neither cohort were rates of negative consequences significantly different across them.

Exhibit 3-6
CHANGES IN ASPECTS OF THE SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, BY INCOME AND RACE/ETHNICITY

	Income			Race/Ethnicity		
	Lowest	Middle	Highest	White	African-American	Hispanic
In the past year, percentage of youth out of school more than a year who participated in:						
One or more community groups						
Cohort 1 (1987)	13.7	19.7	35.7	22.8	24.3	1.9
	(4.2)	(4.8)	(4.8)	(3.2)	(5.6)	(3.6)
Cohort 2 (2003)	29.2	25.9	29.0	31.1	19.1	27.2
	(6.6)	(7.3)	(6.9)	(4.9)	(6.8)	(11.2)
Percentage-point change	**+15.5***	+6.2	-6.7	+8.3	-5.2	**+25.3***
Volunteer work/activities or community service						
Cohort 1 (1987)	9.2	8.4	22.7	11.4	17.1	1.7
	(5.4)	(5.2)	(7.5)	(4.0)	(7.5)	(4.7)
Cohort 2 (2003)	29.1	17.2	33.0	29.5	19.2	33.4
	(9.0)	(9.1)	(10.3)	(6.9)	(8.5)	(17.7)
Percentage-point change	+19.9	+8.8	+10.3	**+18.1***	+2.1	+31.7
Percentage who ever had experienced negative consequences for behavior						
Cohort 1 (1987)	40.6	37.0	25.0	31.5	41.0	39.5
	(6.5)	(6.0)	(4.4)	(3.6)	(6.7)	(14.0)
Cohort 2 (2003)	58.5	69.6	43.4	54.6	65.3	47.0
	(7.0)	(7.3)	(7.3)	(5.0)	(7.8)	(12.3)
Percentage-point change	+17.9	**+32.6*****	**+18.4***	**+23.1*****	**+24.3***	+7.5

Sources: NLTS Wave 1 parent interviews and NLTS2 Wave 2 parent/youth interviews.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05; ***p<.001.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Summary

Although the living arrangements of youth with disabilities as a whole were stable over time, with about three-fourths of youth in both cohorts 1 and 2 living with parents, participation in their communities in the form of membership in organized community groups more than doubled, so that 28% of cohort 2 youth were group members. In contrast to this positive aspect of social involvement, there was a large increase in the proportion of youth with disabilities who had ever experienced negative consequences for their behavior—being subject to disciplinary action at school, fired from a job, or arrested. More than half of cohort 2 youth had had such experiences, compared with about one-third of youth in cohort 1.

As with most aspects of their lives, youth with disabilities with different primary disabilities had different experiences with living arrangements and social involvement. For example, there were indications that youth with mental retardation were more likely to be participating in their communities in 2003 than in 1987; they had a significant reduction in the proportion who were living in an institution or facility. Increased community participation also was apparent for youth with hearing or visual impairments in the form of volunteer or community service activities. Large increases for those two groups resulted in about half taking part in such activities in cohort 2, the highest rates of participation of any disability category.

Unfortunately, the experience that makes youth with emotional disturbances stand out from peers with other kinds of disabilities is the large increase in and high rate of experiencing negative consequences for their behavior. More than half of cohort 1 youth with emotional disturbances had been subject to disciplinary action at school, fired from a job, or arrested, experiences that had occurred to 9 in 10 cohort 2 youth with emotional disturbances. Youth with learning disabilities and orthopedic or other health impairment also had large increases in this negative aspect of social adjustment.

Other findings in this chapter underscore the variety of challenges in the early postschool years that face youth with disabilities who do not finish high school. In both cohorts, dropouts were both less likely than those who finished high school to be living with parents and less likely to be single. The lower rates of participation in organized community groups and volunteer or community service activities that were apparent for cohort 1 dropouts compared with those who finished high school were ameliorated over time. However, this positive development was offset by the fact that in both cohorts, dropouts were significantly more likely than high school completers to have experienced negative consequences for their behavior; 6 in 10 had done so in cohort 1, a rate that increased to 8 in 10 in cohort 2.

As expected, 19-year-olds differed from their 15- through 17-year-old peers in several respects, including being more likely to live independently and demonstrating a large increase in belonging to an organized community group. Unfortunately, both 18- and 19-year-old youth with disabilities also had large increases in the likelihood of experiencing negative consequences for their behavior, so that a lower rate in cohort 1 relative to younger peers was eliminated.

Living arrangements were stable for both boys and girls with disabilities, whereas only boys had a significant increase in community group membership, and only girls had an increase in participation in volunteer or community service activities. This pattern of changes resulted in cohort 2 boys and girls having very similar experiences, with the exception that girls were less likely than boys to be single.

Household income was unrelated to the living arrangements of youth with disabilities in both cohorts and to changes in arrangements over time. The racial/ethnic background of youth also was unrelated to changes in living arrangements over time; however, cohort 2 white youth were more likely than their African-American peers to be living independently. Increases in community group membership occurred largely among the lowest income group and Hispanic youth with disabilities. In contrast, only white youth experienced an increase in volunteer or community service activities. Increases in the receipt of negative consequences for behavior were shared by white and African-American youth and by those in both the middle and upper income groups, with the increase being twice as large for the middle as for the upper income group.

These findings demonstrate that most youth with disabilities still had access to the supports available from their families when they had been out of high school up to 2 years, many actively participated in positive ways in their community, but for somewhat more than half of youth, their behavior had resulted in negative consequences for them at school or in their community.