

## 6. Comparisons Across Time of the Community Integration of Out-of-High School Youth With Disabilities

Although participating in postsecondary education and/or employment are critical steps on the road to adult independence for youth with disabilities after high school, the broader notion of “social inclusion” is increasingly used to characterize transition success. Social inclusion “rests on the principle that democratic societies are enriched by the full inclusion of their citizens in the ebb and flow of community affairs” (Osgood et al. 2005; p. 12). Being involved in one’s community has long been a valued outcome for youth with disabilities (Halpern 1985; National Center on Educational Outcomes 1993) and has been the focus of reports from both NLTS and NLTS2 (e.g., Newman 1991, Wagner 2005). This chapter adds to an understanding of the social inclusion of youth with disabilities who had been out of high school up to 4 years by addressing two dimensions of their community integration:

- **Participation in the community.** Taking part in community activities 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. Research has demonstrated that life satisfaction among adolescents with disabilities is higher when youth are more active in their neighborhood and community (Bramston, Bruggerman, and Pretty 2002). The ability of youth to participate in community activities is enhanced if they are able to get to locations in their community where such activities occur. Although mass transportation is available in some communities, being able to drive can be an important source of community mobility. An additional way to participate in one’s community that is available to U.S. citizens age 18 or older is the right to vote. This chapter reports findings from NLTS and NLTS2 regarding youth’s membership in organized community or extracurricular groups,<sup>64</sup> their participation in volunteer or community service activities,<sup>65</sup> youth having earned driving privileges,<sup>66</sup> and their voter registration rates.<sup>67</sup>
- **Criminal justice system involvement.** The actions of some youth may violate the laws or norms of their communities to such a degree that they become involved with the

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<sup>64</sup> NLTS respondents were asked, “In the past 12 months [have you/has *name of youth*] belonged to any social or community groups, like a sports team or church group?” NLTS2 respondents were asked, “During the past 12 months [have you/has *name of youth*] taken part in any group activities, such as scouting, church or temple youth group, or nonschool team sports like soccer or softball?”

<sup>65</sup> NLTS respondents were asked, “In the past 12 months [have you/has *name of youth*] done any volunteer activity?” NLTS2 respondents were asked, “During the past 12 months [have you/has *name of youth*] done any volunteer or community service activities?”

<sup>66</sup> NLTS respondents were asked, “[Do you/does *name of youth*] have a driver’s license?” NLTS2 respondents were asked, “[Do you/does *name of youth*] have a driver’s license or learner’s permit?” All NLTS2 youth were age-eligible for a driver’s license by Wave 3 of data collection.

<sup>67</sup> In both studies, respondents were asked for youth at least 18 years old, “[Are you/is *name of youth*] registered to vote?”

criminal justice system through arrest. Findings are reported regarding whether youth were reported ever to have been arrested.<sup>68</sup>

These findings from NLTS and NLTS2 are reported for youth with disabilities as a whole and for youth who differed in their primary disability classification, school-leaving characteristics, and selected demographic characteristics.

### Community Participation

Figure 19 presents the rates at which youth with disabilities who had been out of high school from 1 to 4 years had participated in organized community groups, volunteer activities, or either of these forms of community participation. Because the survey items that generated these findings 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.

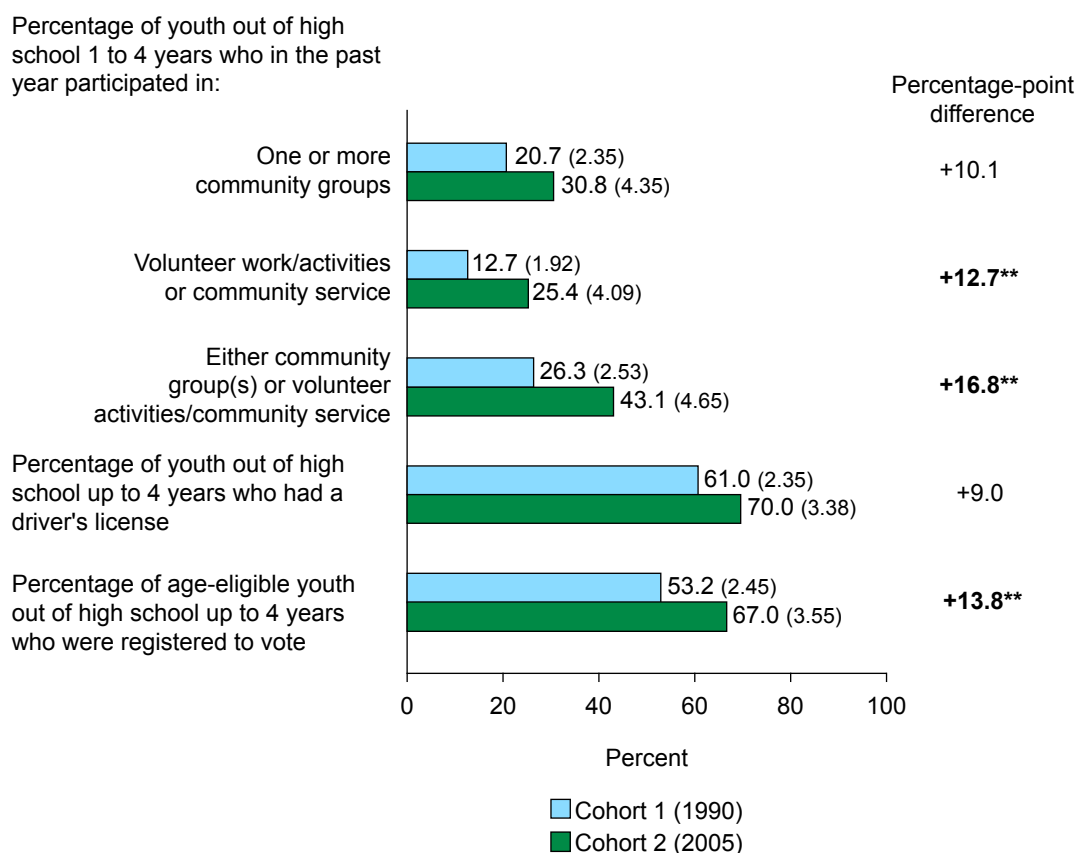
Rates of membership in organized community groups were not significantly different in 2005 than in 1990 (figure 19). Overall, 21 percent of cohort 1 youth who had been out of high school from 1 to 4 years were reported to have belonged to an organized group in the preceding year, compared with 31 percent of youth in cohort 2. However, the rate of volunteerism was 13 percentage points higher in 2005 than in 1990 (25 percent vs. 13 percent,  $p < .01$ ), and the likelihood of youth with disabilities taking part in either form of community activity also was higher in 2005, by 17 percentage points (43 percent vs. 26 percent,  $p < .01$ ).

The percentage of youth with disabilities who had been out of high school up to 4 years and had a driver's license did not differ significantly in 1990 compared with 2005. Overall, 61 percent of cohort 1 youth with disabilities were reported to have a driver's license, as were 70 percent of cohort 2 youth. There were however, significant differences in the percentage of students registered to vote. A total of 53 percent of youth with disabilities in 1990 were reported to be registered to vote, whereas 67 percent were reported to be registered to vote in 2005, a 14 percentage-point difference ( $p < .01$ ).

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<sup>68</sup> NLTS respondents were asked, "[Have you/has *name of youth*] ever been arrested?" For NLTS2, data that were collected in Wave 3 on arrests in the preceding 2 years were combined with reports of arrests in Waves 1 and 2 to construct variables measuring whether youth had ever been arrested.

Figure 19. Comparisons between 1990 and 2005 of the community participation of out-of-high school youth with disabilities



\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding group and volunteer participation are reported for youth with disabilities out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; findings regarding having a driver's license and being registered to vote are reported for youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,700 to 2,490 youth with disabilities across variables. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,310 to 2,250 youth with disabilities across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), Wave 2 parent/youth interview, 1990; 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.

### **Comparisons Across Time of Community Participation by Disability Category**

As was true of youth with disabilities as a whole, there were no significant differences in group membership rates between 1990 and 2005 for youth in any disability category (table 33). In contrast, youth in the speech/language and visual impairment categories had significantly higher rates of participation in volunteer or community service activities in 2005 than in 1990, with differences of 25 percentage points (35 percent vs. 10 percent,  $p < .01$ ) and 46 percentage points, (67 percent vs. 21 percent,  $p < .001$ ), respectively. Cohort 2 youth with visual impairments surpassed cohort 1 peers in the rate at which they participated in either organized groups or volunteer activities (76 percent vs. 35 percent,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 33. Comparisons between 1990 and 2005 of the community participation of out-of-high school youth, by disability category

	Learning disability	Speech/ language impairment	Mental retardation	Emotional disturbance	Hearing impairment	Visual impairment	Orthopedic impairment	Other health impairment/ autism	Multiple disabilities/ deaf-blindness
In the past year, percentage of youth out of high school 1 to 4 years who:									
Belonged to a community group (e.g., sports team, hobby club, religious group)									
Cohort 1 (1990)	23.1 (3.64)	22.2 (5.65)	15.8 (3.90)	13.8 (3.88)	28.1 (3.29)	27.0 (4.72)	20.6 (5.15)	17.4 (6.02)	38.1 (10.02)
Cohort 2 (2005)	35.4 (6.92)	34.2 (7.41)	12.0 (5.80)	23.4 (5.90)	26.4 (8.04)	45.7 (11.22)	25.6 (6.80)	32.4 (6.10)	21.4 (11.58)
Percentage-point difference	+12.3	+12.0	-3.8	+9.6	-1.7	+18.7	+5.0	+15.0	-16.7
Participated in a volunteer or community service activity									
Cohort 1 (1990)	14.5 (3.02)	9.9 (4.04)	7.4 (2.78)	10.8 (3.45)	11.9 (2.39)	21.0 (4.36)	14.3 (4.48)	18.0 (6.10)	2.0 (2.86)
Cohort 2 (2005)	25.5 (6.27)	35.0 (7.50)	19.8 (7.12)	24.3 (5.94)	26.7 (8.05)	66.8 (10.68)	29.9 (7.13)	23.4 (5.55)	34.3 (13.40)
Percentage-point difference	+11.0	<b>+25.1**</b>	+12.4	+13.5	+14.8	<b>+45.8***</b>	+15.6	+5.4	+32.3
Participated in either of these									
Cohort 1 (1990)	28.7 (3.86)	27.2 (6.00)	21.8 (4.36)	19.0 (4.33)	30.4 (3.34)	35.1 (5.07)	27.4 (5.68)	23.7 (6.75)	37.6 (9.90)
Cohort 2 (2005)	46.8 (7.18)	50.9 (7.81)	26.5 (7.88)	35.2 (6.61)	42.5 (8.98)	75.7 (9.59)	42.5 (7.70)	41.6 (6.43)	45.2 (14.05)
Percentage-point difference	+18.1	+23.7	+4.7	+16.2	+12.1	<b>+40.6***</b>	+15.1	+17.9	+7.6
Percentage out of high school up to 4 years with a driver's license									
Cohort 1 (1990)	70.7 (3.25)	67.2 (5.21)	31.8 (4.15)	59.0 (4.67)	64.8 (2.82)	17.2 (3.15)	34.3 (4.92)	55.3 (6.22)	2.2 (2.17)
Cohort 2 (2005)	76.9 (4.65)	80.1 (4.64)	35.5 (5.90)	64.8 (5.40)	79.2 (5.65)	17.8 (6.75)	52.0 (5.79)	74.3 (4.55)	35.7 (8.55)
Percentage-point difference	+6.2	+12.9	+3.7	+5.8	+14.4	+0.6	+17.7	+19.0	<b>+33.5***</b>
Percentage of age-eligible youth out of high school up to 4 years who were registered to vote									
Cohort 1 (1990)	56.3 (3.60)	64.3 (5.40)	43.8 (4.52)	49.8 (4.89)	48.5 (3.05)	57.4 (4.21)	44.6 (5.20)	58.4 (6.28)	1.8 (1.96)
Cohort 2 (2005)	66.2 (5.31)	77.5 (4.93)	58.7 (6.22)	69.4 (5.47)	76.4 (6.12)	80.8 (7.08)	76.6 (5.00)	74.7 (4.60)	65.7 (8.69)
Percentage-point difference	+9.9	+13.2	+14.9	<b>+19.6**</b>	<b>+27.9***</b>	<b>+23.4**</b>	<b>+32.0***</b>	+16.3	<b>+63.9***</b>

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding group and volunteer participation are reported for youth with disabilities out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; findings regarding having a driver's license and being registered to vote are reported for youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,700 to 2,490 youth with disabilities across variables. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,310 to 2,250 youth with disabilities across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), Wave 2 parent/youth interview, 1990; 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.

Rates of earning driving privileges did not differ significantly between 1990 and 2005 for 8 of the 9 disability categories. Only youth with multiple disabilities or deaf-blindness registered a significantly higher rate of having earned driving privileges in 2005 than in 1990 (36 percent vs. 2 percent,  $p < .001$ ).

In 2005, youth in the following categories had voter registration rates that were significantly higher than rates in 1990: emotional disturbance (69 percent vs. 50 percent,  $p < .01$ ), and hearing (76 percent vs. 49 percent,  $p < .001$ ), visual (81 percent vs. 57 percent,  $p < .01$ ), or orthopedic impairments (77 percent vs. 45 percent,  $p < .001$ ). The rate for youth with multiple disabilities or deaf-blindness in 2005 exceeded the rate in 1990 by 64 percentage points (66 percent vs. 2 percent,  $p < .001$ ), a difference that was significantly higher than the differences between cohorts for youth in all other disability categories ( $p < .01$  compared with youth with hearing or orthopedic impairments,  $p < .001$  for all other comparisons).

### ***Comparisons Across Time of Community Participation by School-Leaving Characteristics***

Group membership rates did not differ significantly between 1990 and 2005 by the school-leaving status or in the length of time youth with disabilities had been out of high school (table 34). In contrast, high school completers were significantly more likely in 2005 than in 1990 to have participated in volunteer or community service activities (29 percent vs. 14 percent,  $p < .01$ ) and either to have taken part in volunteer or community service activities or to have belonged to one or more organized community groups (48 percent vs. 31 percent,  $p < .01$ ). Only with regard to either belonging to a community group or participating in a volunteer/community service activity did cohorts 1 and 2 differ significantly on the basis of years out of high school. Cohort 2 youth with disabilities who had left high school from 2 to 4 years earlier had a 23 percentage-point higher rate of participation in one or both of these activities than cohort 1 (49 percent vs. 26 percent,  $p < .01$ ). No significant differences were noted in any form of community participation for youth with disabilities who had been out of high school up to 1 year or from 1 up to 2 years.

There were no significant differences between cohorts in their rates of having earned driving privileges for either high school completers or noncompleters (table 34). In both cohorts, completers were significantly more likely to have a driver's license or learner's permit than noncompleters ( $p < .001$  for both comparisons). There also were no significant differences between 1990 and 2005 in the rate at which youth with disabilities had a driver's license for youth who had been out of high school different lengths of time.

Only high school completers demonstrated a significant difference in voter registration rates between cohorts (table 34); 72 percent of high school completers in 2005 were reported to be registered to vote, a 15 percentage-point higher rate than the 57 percent of completers in 1990 ( $p < .01$ ). Rates for 1990 and 2005 were 43 percent and 38 percent, respectively, for noncompleters. No significant differences between cohorts in voter registration rates were apparent for youth with disabilities who differed in the number of years since leaving high school.

Table 34. Comparisons between 1990 and 2005 of the community participation of out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by school-leaving status and years since leaving high school

	Leaving status		Years since leaving high school		
	Completers	Non-completers	Less than 1 year	1 up to 2 years	2 up to 4 years
In the past year, percentage of youth out of high school 1 to 4 years who:					
Belonged to a community group (e.g., sports team, hobby club, religious group)					
Cohort 1 (1990)	24.0 (3.06)	14.8 (3.52)	†	21.3 (3.43)	20.3 (3.23)
Cohort 2 (2005)	34.4 (4.87)	11.8 (7.73)	†	25.6 (5.64)	35.4 (6.49)
Percentage-point difference	+10.4	-3.0		+4.3	+15.1
Participated in a volunteer or community service activity					
Cohort 1 (1990)	13.9 (2.48)	10.6 (3.02)	†	12.2 (2.73)	13.1 (2.70)
Cohort 2 (2005)	28.5 (4.63)	8.8 (6.67)	†	23.7 (5.50)	26.8 (5.97)
Percentage-point difference	<b>+14.6**</b>	-1.8		+11.5	+13.7
Participated in either of these					
Cohort 1 (1990)	30.5 (3.27)	18.9 (3.82)	†	26.8 (3.67)	25.9 (3.49)
Cohort 2 (2005)	47.6 (5.11)	19.2 (9.28)	†	36.8 (6.23)	48.5 (6.73)
Percentage-point difference	<b>+17.1**</b>	+0.3		+10.0	<b>+22.6**</b>
Percentage out of high school up to 4 years with a driver's license					
Cohort 1 (1990)	67.4 (2.71)	45.7 (4.39)	56.0 (4.17)	62.5 (4.04)	66.1 (3.77)
Cohort 2 (2005)	75.2 (3.48)	39.2 (8.96)	66.0 (5.75)	67.5 (6.05)	76.5 (5.60)
Percentage-point difference	+7.8	-6.5	+10.0	+5.0	+10.4
Percentage of age-eligible youth out of high school up to 4 years who were registered to vote					
Cohort 1 (1990)	57.4 (2.90)	42.8 (4.49)	45.4 (4.27)	58.7 (4.18)	58.1 (4.02)
Cohort 2 (2005)	71.9 (3.70)	38.4 (9.20)	60.0 (5.96)	72.8 (5.87)	69.9 (6.34)
Percentage-point difference	<b>+14.5**</b>	-4.4	+14.6	+14.1	+11.8

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

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding group and volunteer participation are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; findings regarding having a driver's license and being registered to vote are reported for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,700 to 2,490 youth across variables. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,310 to 2,250 youth across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), Wave 2 parent/youth interview, 1990; 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.

### ***Comparisons Across Time of Community Participation by Demographic Characteristics***

Similar to analyses reported thus far, there were no significant differences in group membership rates between 1990 and 2005 for youth with disabilities by race/ethnicity or gender (table 35). In contrast, there was a significant difference in the highest income group between the two cohorts in the likelihood of youth with disabilities belonging to a community group; 49 percent had been group members in 2005, a 32-percentage-point higher rate than the 17 percent in 1990 ( $p < .01$ ). No other significant differences by income level were found.

Rates of volunteerism did not differ significantly between 1990 and 2005 for any of the demographic groups of youth with disabilities. Rates of participating in volunteer activities in 1990 ranged from 10 percent of youth with disabilities in the lowest income group to 19 percent in the highest; in 2005 rates ranged from 21 percent of youth with disabilities in the middle income group to 47 percent in the highest. Considering youth's race/ethnicity, volunteerism rates ranged from 8 percent Hispanic youth with disabilities to 16 percent of White youth with disabilities in 1990; in 2005, rates ranged from 25 percent of White youth with disabilities to 31 percent of Hispanic youth with disabilities. Fifteen percent of males and 7 percent of females were reported to volunteer in 1990, compared with 27 percent and 21 percent, respectively, in 2005.

Youth with disabilities in the highest income group and those who were male both registered significantly higher rates of participating in either community groups or volunteer or community service activities in 2005 than in 1990. Differences between the cohorts were 36 percentage points for youth in the highest income group (65 percent vs. 29 percent,  $p < .01$ ) and 17 percentage points for male youth with disabilities (46 percent vs. 29 percent,  $p < .01$ ).

There were no significant differences between cohorts in rates of youth with disabilities having a driver's license by their household income or racial/ethnic background or for males and females. In both cohorts, youth with disabilities in the middle and highest income categories were significantly more likely to have a driver's license (70 percent and 80 percent in 1990, 80 percent and 88 percent in 2005) than youth with disabilities in the lowest income group (52 percent and 55 percent of the two cohorts, respectively;  $p < .001$  comparing lowest and highest income groups,  $p < .01$  comparing lowest and middle income groups).

Similarly, there were no significant differences between cohorts in the likelihood of youth with disabilities having a driver's license for youth from different racial/ethnic groups or by gender. However, the significant difference that existed between genders in 1990 (67 percent for males, 47 percent for females,  $p < .001$ ), no longer was apparent in 2005 (73 percent vs. 65 percent, n.s.).

Table 35. Comparisons between 1990 and 2005 of the participation in community activities of out-of-high school youth with disabilities, by household income, race/ethnicity, and gender

	Household income			Race/ethnicity			Gender	
	Low	Middle	High	White	African American	Hispanic	Male	Female
In the past year, percentage of youth out of high school 1 to 4 years who:								
Belonged to a community group (e.g., sports team, hobby club, religious group)								
Cohort 1 (1990)	14.9 (3.35)	30.5 (4.95)	17.2 (4.80)	21.5 (2.89)	19.5 (5.71)	18.1 (8.59)	22.3 (2.93)	17.4 (3.90)
Cohort 2 (2005)	23.2 (5.81)	28.5 (8.49)	49.4 (10.35)	33.5 (5.61)	25.5 (8.79)	30.2 (12.32)	34.5 (5.58)	23.3 (6.64)
Percentage-point difference	+8.3	-2.0	<b>+32.2**</b>	+12.0	+6.0	-12.1	+12.2	+5.9
Participated in a volunteer or community service activity								
Cohort 1 (1990)	10.3 (2.85)	15.8 (3.87)	18.9 (5.00)	15.9 (2.58)	3.6 (2.64)	7.6 (5.82)	15.3 (2.51)	6.8 (2.60)
Cohort 2 (2005)	23.9 (5.86)	21.4 (7.64)	46.5 (10.33)	24.8 (5.11)	25.7 (8.82)	30.8 (12.39)	27.3 (5.22)	21.3 (6.39)
Percentage-point difference	+13.6	+5.6	+27.6	+8.9	+22.1	+23.2	+12.0	+14.5
Participated in either of these								
Cohort 1 (1990)	19.2 (3.66)	36.4 (5.10)	29.1 (5.77)	28.5 (3.16)	19.2 (5.51)	23.2 (9.26)	28.6 (3.13)	21.0 (4.16)
Cohort 2 (2005)	36.8 (6.62)	41.2 (9.16)	64.8 (9.88)	44.0 (5.86)	38.0 (9.79)	52.1 (13.41)	46.0 (5.84)	37.0 (7.53)
Percentage-point difference	+17.6	+4.8	<b>+35.7**</b>	+15.5	+18.8	+28.9	<b>+17.4**</b>	+16.0
Percentage out of high school up to 4 years with a driver's license								
Cohort 1 (1990)	51.9 (3.92)	69.8 (4.11)	80.2 (4.27)	73.2 (2.61)	34.6 (5.69)	43.6 (9.56)	67.1 (2.75)	47.3 (4.24)
Cohort 2 (2005)	55.8 (5.55)	80.4 (5.80)	87.5 (5.19)	79.6 (3.71)	49.2 (7.57)	56.6 (11.43)	72.6 (4.18)	64.8 (5.63)
Percentage-point difference	+3.9	+10.6	+7.3	+6.4	+14.6	+13.0	+5.5	+17.5
Percentage of age-eligible youth out of high school up to 4 years who were registered to vote								
Cohort 1 (1990)	54.4 (3.96)	54.5 (4.58)	60.6 (5.39)	52.0 (3.01)	63.7 (5.89)	51.7 (9.69)	56.9 (2.97)	44.9 (4.27)
Cohort 2 (2005)	65.8 (5.46)	60.3 (7.20)	80.9 (6.27)	67.4 (4.40)	74.3 (6.84)	61.8 (11.45)	67.0 (4.51)	66.9 (5.66)
Percentage-point difference	+11.4	+5.8	+20.3	<b>+15.4**</b>	+10.6	+10.1	+10.1	<b>+22.0**</b>

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings regarding group and volunteer participation are reported for youth out of high school from 1 to 4 years so as not to include high school experiences; findings regarding having a driver's license and being registered to vote are reported for youth out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,700 to 2,490 youth across variables. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on samples that range from approximately 1,310 to 2,250 youth across variables.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), Wave 2 parent/youth interview, 1990; 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.

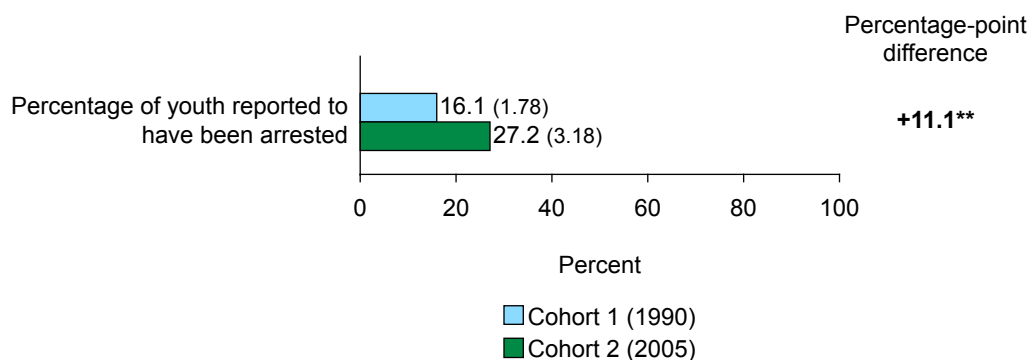


None of the three household income groups demonstrated significant differences between 1990 and 2005 in their voter registration rates (table 35). When examining race/ethnicity, only among White youth with disabilities was there a significant difference between 1990 and 2005 in their voter registration rates; 67 percent were reported to be registered in 2005, a rate 15 percentage points higher than the 52 percent who were reported to be registered in 1990 ( $p < .01$ ). Among youth with disabilities in 2005, both males and females had voter registration rates of 67 percent; this constituted a significantly higher rate than in 1990 for females (vs. 45 percent,  $p < .01$ ), a difference not observed for males.

### Criminal Justice System Involvement

Data regarding this negative form of community participation indicate that youth with disabilities in 2005 were more likely to report having been arrested than those in 1990. A total of 16 percent of youth with disabilities who had been out of high school up to 4 years in 1990 were reported to have been arrested at some time in the past (figure 20). The rate in 2005 was 11 percentage points higher (27 percent,  $p < .01$ ).

Figure 20. Comparisons between 1990 and 2005 of ever having been arrested among youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years



\*\*  $p < .01$ .

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings are for youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS percentages are weighted population estimates based on a sample of approximately 2,470 youth with disabilities. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on a sample of approximately 2,340 youth with disabilities.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), Wave 2 parent/youth interview, 1990; 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.

### Comparisons Across Time of Criminal Justice System Involvement by Disability Category

Across disability categories, the significantly higher arrest rate for youth with disabilities in 2005 compared with 1990 only was seen among youth with emotional disturbances (table 36). Cohort 2 youth in this category demonstrated a 25 percentage-point higher rate than their cohort 1 peers (61 percent vs. 36 percent,  $p < .001$ ). Differences between cohorts for all other disability categories ranged from 2 percentage points for youth with hearing impairments to 12 percentage points for youth in the category of other health impairment and autism. In both cohorts, youth with emotional disturbances had significantly higher rates of arrest than youth in all other disability categories ( $p < .001$  for all comparisons).

Table 36. Comparisons between 1990 and 2005 of the arrest rates of youth out of high school up to 4 years, 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 ever arrested									
Cohort 1 (1990)	15.5 (2.59)	11.6 (3.57)	9.5 (2.62)	36.0 (4.54)	8.7 (1.67)	3.3 (1.50)	2.9 (1.74)	13.0 (4.22)	6.3 (3.63)
Cohort 2 (2005)	24.1 (4.61)	19.7 (4.60)	17.0 (4.56)	60.7 (5.24)	11.0 (4.34)	6.9 (4.42)	6.2 (2.77)	25.2 (4.35)	9.8 (5.14)
Percentage-point difference	+8.6	+8.1	+7.5	<b>+24.7***</b>	+2.3	+3.6	+3.3	+12.2	+3.5

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings are for youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS percentages are weighted population estimates based on a sample of approximately 2,470 youth with disabilities. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on a sample of approximately 2,340 youth with disabilities.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), Wave 2 parent/youth interview, 1990; 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.

### ***Comparison Across Time of Criminal Justice System Involvement by High School-Leaving Characteristics***

Regarding school leaving characteristics, only among high school completers did the arrest rates between cohorts differ significantly (table 37). Among school completers in 2005, 23 percent had reportedly been arrested, compared with 10 percent in 1990 ( $p < .001$ ). Despite not demonstrating a significantly higher rate in 2005 than in 1990, high school noncompleters had a significantly higher arrest rate at both points in time (32 percent and 50 percent) than completers ( $p < .001$  for 1990,  $p < .01$  for 2005). Differences between cohorts were not apparent for youth with disabilities who were differentiated by the length of time they had been out of high school.

Table 37. Comparisons between 1990 and 2005 of the arrest rate of youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years, by school-leaving status and years since leaving high school

	Leaving status		Years since leaving high school		
	Completers	Non-completers	Less than 1 year	1 up to 2 years	2 up to 4 years
Percentage ever arrested					
Cohort 1 (1990)	9.6 (1.71)	31.7 (4.09)	14.2 (2.94)	17.5 (3.16)	17.5 (3.04)
Cohort 2 (2005)	22.7 (3.29)	50.4 (8.59)	21.0 (4.82)	27.1 (5.67)	33.8 (5.88)
Percentage-point difference	<b>+13.1***</b>	+18.7	6.8	9.6	+16.3

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings are for youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS percentages are weighted population estimates based on a sample of approximately 2,470 youth with disabilities. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on a sample of approximately 2,340 youth with disabilities.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), Wave 2 parent/youth interview, 1990; 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.

### ***Comparison Across Time of Criminal Justice System Involvement by Demographic Characteristics***

Significant differences between cohorts were not noted for youth with disabilities by their household income levels or their racial/ethnic backgrounds (table 38). However, gender differences were apparent, with males exhibiting a significantly higher arrest rate in 2005 than in 1990 (32 percent vs. 20 percent,  $p < .01$ ). At both points in time, these arrest rates for males were significantly higher than rates for females, among whom 9 percent and 17 percent had been arrested in 1990 ( $p < .001$ ) and 2005 ( $p < .01$ ), respectively.

Table 38. Comparisons between 1990 and 2005 of the arrest rate of youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years, by household income, race/ethnicity, and gender

	Household income			Race/ethnicity			Gender	
	Low	Middle	High	White	African American	Hispanic	Male	Female
Percentage ever arrested								
Cohort 1 (1990)	15.9 (2.86)	15.8 (3.29)	17.1 (4.07)	16.0 (2.16)	16.5 (4.44)	26.8 (8.59)	19.5 (2.32)	8.5 (2.39)
Cohort 2 (2005)	24.3 (4.68)	32.3 (6.55)	21.8 (6.25)	25.4 (3.88)	34.9 (6.84)	19.9 (9.08)	32.3 (4.20)	16.6 (4.34)
Percentage-point change	+8.4	+16.5	+4.7	+9.4	+18.4	-6.9	<b>+12.8**</b>	+8.1

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

NOTE: Standard errors are in parentheses. Findings are for youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years. NLTS percentages are weighted population estimates based on a sample of approximately 2,470 youth with disabilities. NLTS2 percentages are weighted population estimates based on a sample of approximately 2,340 youth with disabilities.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), Wave 2 parent/youth interview, 1990; 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.

## Summary

This chapter has presented findings related to comparisons of the community participation and criminal justice system involvement of youth with disabilities who had been out of high school up to 4 years in 1990 and in 2005. The participation of youth with disabilities in organized, extracurricular community groups did not differ between the two cohorts; 21 percent were reported to be group members in 1990, and 31 percent were group members in 2005. Neither were there significant differences between cohorts for youth who differed in their primary disability category or school-leaving or demographic characteristics.

In contrast, reported rates of youth with disabilities participating in volunteer or community service activities were higher in 2005 than in 1990 by 13 percentage points (25 percent vs. 13 percent). Reflecting this difference, the rates of youth with disabilities participating in either or both of these ways also was higher in 2005, by 17 percentage points (43 percent vs. 26 percent). Rates of volunteerism were significantly higher in 2005 than in 1990 for youth with speech/language or visual impairments (25 and 46 percentage points) and high school completers (15 percentage points). The likelihood of youth with disabilities either belonging to an extracurricular community group or volunteering was higher in 2005 than 1990 for youth with visual impairments (41 percentage points), high school completers (17 percentage points), youth with disabilities in the highest income group (36 percentage points), and males (17 percentage points).

The rates at which youth with disabilities were reported to have a driver's license were not different between the two cohorts overall (61 percent and 70 percent for 1990 and 2005, respectively), but a significantly higher rate was reported for youth with multiple disabilities or deaf-blindness (34 percentage points). Youth with disabilities as a group did register a higher reported rate of voter registration in 2005 than in 1990 (67 percent vs. 53 percent). Significantly higher voter registration rates in 2005 also were reported for youth with hearing, visual, or orthopedic impairments (28, 23, and 32 percentage points, respectively); emotional disturbances (20 percentage points); or multiple disabilities or deaf-blindness (64 percentage points). High school completers also demonstrated a higher voter registration rate in 2005 than in 1990 (15 percentage points), as did White and female youth with disabilities (15 and 22 percentage points, respectively).

The one negative form of community participation that can be compared between NLTS and NLTS2 is the rate at which youth with disabilities out of high school up to 4 years were reported to have been arrested at some time in their lives. This rate was 11 percentage points higher in 2005 than in 1990 (27 percent vs. 16 percent). The only disability category to mirror this higher 2005 rate was youth with emotional disturbances, who showed a 25-percentage-point higher rate in 2005 than in 1990. Higher arrest rates in 2005 also were reported for high school completers and males with disabilities (13 percentage points for both groups).