In 1990, there were fewer than 50 juveniles at the parish juvenile detention center for weapon violations.

By 1994, 251 were sent. Last year, the number was 105.

But Jailer Ronnie tracks a pattern of increasing violence.

In 1983, 43 percent of the 251 juveniles had no history of delinquency; none of these were arrested for weapons violations. But last year 50 percent were in detention centers, and of these, 87 percent had a weapons conviction.

The problem declined in the late 1980s, and during the 1990s, the department of justice began to focus on reducing the number of juveniles in detention centers.

Juvenile arrest trends

According to the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice, the number of juveniles in detention centers has declined in recent years.

A group of inmates waits television at a juvenile detention center.

Advocate graphic by Malanda Saxton

Advocate staff photo

“From what I can tell, he was just living on the street.”

- Don Wall, assistant district attorney, East Baton Rouge

Like Wilkerson, many juveniles are being sent to the parish juvenile detention center.

Last year, the number of juveniles transferred to the parish juvenile detention center was 105.

“Unless the situation and the causes are dealt with, youth crime will not be arrested, the pack a 9mm on their hips and think it’s nuts,” said Richey.

“Kids transfer to adult courts has doubled, said William Archambeault, an LSU criminologist.

“The large number of children who will be at risk in the future suggests youth crime is likely to decline or triple over the next decade,” he said.

Research into the links between demographics and crime indicates that there are more weapons in the hands of the youth.

The good news is that well-struc-