



Youth and Disability

Addressing the challenges our youth face means taking disability into account. A strong region requires the equal opportunity, inclusion, and full participation of all residents.

Disability is a natural part of the human experience. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Disabilities are both **visible** and **invisible**.

Our Regional Challenge

In the Chicago region,* over **800,000** residents—approximately 11% of the total population—report having a disability. More than **41,000** are aged 16-24, and **13,000** of these are “opportunity youth” who are neither in school nor at work. Creating a path to economic self-sufficiency and success simply will not happen if we do not address how our systems can use best practices to support youth with disabilities.



Education System Failures

Increased Suspension Rates

2X

Students with disabilities are suspended at a rate almost **double** that of students without disabilities.

Disproportionate Discipline

3X

Youth with emotional and behavioral related disabilities are **three times** more likely to be arrested before leaving school, compared to all other students.

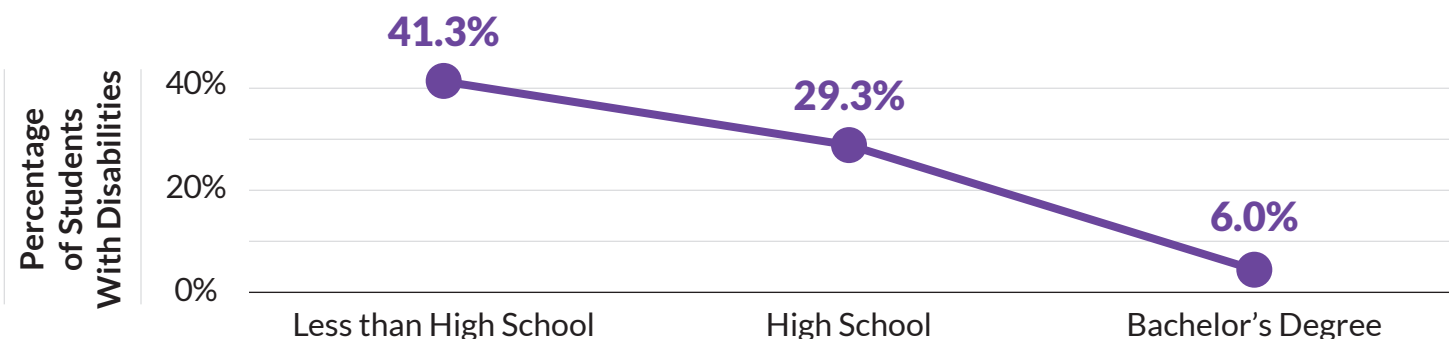
Higher Dropout Rates

25% HIGHER

In Chicago Public Schools, the dropout rate for students with disabilities is **25% higher** than students without disabilities.

Higher educational attainment is tied to long-term success in terms of income and employment; yet, **less than 30%** of youth with disabilities graduate from high school, and an even smaller percentage obtain a college degree.

Low Educational Attainment for Youth With Disabilities (16-24)



Employment Gaps

While mounting evidence demonstrates that hiring this overlooked talent pool can increase productivity and reduce costly turnover, barriers persist both when seeking employment and while on the job. For job seekers across the U.S., barriers include **low educational attainment** (see above), **stigma**, **lack of transportation access**, and **lack of employer knowledge** about how to provide specific accommodations at the job location.

Lower Employment Rates for Youth With Disabilities (16-24)



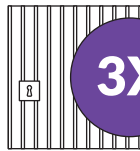
Justice Inequities

Higher Rates of Incarceration

3X

Youth with disabilities are **incarcerated at three times the rate** of those without disabilities, making them most likely to be part of the school-to-prison pipeline.

Higher Rates of Recidivism



After release, youth with learning disabilities are **almost three times more likely to return to the juvenile justice system after six months** than those without learning disabilities.

Victims of Violence



People with disabilities are especially likely to be the **victims of violent crimes, and in particular, police violence**. In the U.S., **one third to one half of all people killed by law enforcement officers** are people with disabilities.

Your Next Step: Inform and Act.

Take disability into account when addressing the challenges facing our youth. For a list of resources that can help expand empowerment, promote equal opportunity, and increase the inclusion and full participation of diverse youth with disabilities, **visit cct.org/disabilitiesfund**.

* The Chicago region includes the Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Will, and McHenry counties. All the information presented is based on the Chicago region, unless stated otherwise. For more information regarding the original source material for the data presented, visit cct.org/disabilitiesfund