

Children's Rights

Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensrights.org/makhia-bryant/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

By Sandy Santana



The story of the tragic death of 16-year-old [MaKhia Bryant](#) is a stark reminder of why we do the work we do to protect and defend the rights of children in state care.

MaKhia was shot and killed by a Columbus, Ohio police officer during an altercation at the foster home where she was living. An investigation is still underway, but one thing we do know is that the foster care system responsible for keeping MaKhia safe failed her in critical ways.

MaKhia, who is remembered by family and teachers as a quiet, diligent and caring child, had spent two years shuttling through at least five Ohio foster homes after their mother was found to be negligent despite efforts by their grandmother to reunite the family. Too often children in foster care who can live safely with relatives are denied this opportunity. Instead, as [MaKhia Bryants brief life](#) shows, they're exposed to further trauma in state care.

Placement with loving relatives is the best possible outcome for a child who has been removed from their home, but cases of relatives being prevented from taking in children due to financial barriers are all too common particularly in Ohio. Ohio provides far less financial support to a child in state custody who is placed with a relative than it gives to a child placed in a licensed foster care setting.

This is also a racial justice issue. In Ohio and across the U.S., Black children are disproportionately removed from their homes and placed into foster care. Black children in Ohio comprise 12% of the general population under age 18 and 30% of children in foster care. Black children make up 24% of the states kinship foster families, and those families carry an unequal and unfair burden when the state fails to pay required foster care maintenance payments.

That is why last year Childrens Rights [filed a lawsuit](#) on behalf of 4,500 children against the state of Ohio for violating a federal law mandating that children placed with approved family members are given financial support using the same payment rate as children in a licensed foster care setting.

Our case is about holding the state accountable for providing equitable support to all foster care parents, including relatives like MaKhias grandmother. If she had had the support she needed, MaKhias journey through foster care may not have ended in her death.

Children deserve a safe, stable, supportive home. That is why we do the work we do and why we will not stop until that is a reality for every child.

You can read more about MaKhia Bryants life in this NYT article, [MaKhia Bryants Journey Through Foster Care Ended With an Officers Bullet](#).

###

First Name Last Name

Email Address

