

# Children's Defense Fund

## Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/blog/this-yjam-act-to-end-the-cradle-to-prison-pipeline/>

## Public Facing Advocacy Writing

**October is Youth Justice Action Month (YJAM).** The youth criminal justice system is far from just young people remain over-policed and over-criminalized, pushing Black children and other children of color into a system proven to cause long-lasting harm. YJAM is an opportunity to connect virtually, learn more about the harms of our current systems, and take action to support our young people!

**The cradle-to-prison pipeline targets Black children and other children with marginalized identities, and it must be disrupted.** The prioritization of police and harsh discipline over student supports in schools often leads to the criminalization of typical adolescent behavior and fuels the cradle-to-prison pipeline. During the 2015-2016 school year alone, there were over [61,000 school arrests and 230,000 referrals to law enforcement](#), largely overrepresented by Black students, Indigenous students, and students with disabilities.

Because of the cradle-to-prison pipeline and other forms of inequities, Black children and other children of color are overcriminalized and overrepresented at every point of the system from school discipline and arrest to sentencing and post-adjudication placements. Indigenous children were 1.5 times more likely to be arrested and Black children were 2.4 times more likely to be arrested than white children.

**To address these inequities, we must end school policing and exclusionary discipline and invest in student supports instead.** School policing and harsh, exclusionary discipline practices do not make school safer; they negatively impact [educational achievement](#) and have long-lasting, traumatizing consequences. Despite this evidence, thousands of students are still [subjected to over-policing and dangerous discipline methods](#) like corporal punishment or restraint. We must protect students from these harmful policies and encourage schools to [shift their priorities from criminalization to care for students](#).

**This summer, CDF Freedom Schools scholars across the country organized in their communities to raise awareness about the cradle-to-prison pipeline.** [At Lit City Freedom Schools, scholars hosted a rally](#) to highlight how Black youth are disciplined and pushed out of the classroom at higher rates than white students. At the rally Bryson Barr, a scholar, noted that despite research and people across the country shedding light on the issue, Black children continue to be criminalized at an alarming rate. Another scholar, Jaylen Moore, voiced Not only do we want to bring awareness to this issue, we want change.

**Now it's our turn to get involved and take action to support our young people!**

A gift today helps children get the help they need

The Children's Defense Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our Federal Tax ID number is 52-0895622.

Let us know how you're using this resource



**Count me in!**

Be a champion for every child. Sign up for updates about our work to fight for children and ways you can help.

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Fight for children, stay informed and know when to act.