

# Human Rights Watch

## Children's Rights

**<https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/02/18/juveniles-shouldnt-be-detained-adults>**

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By Michael Bochenek and Javier Stauring

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The deaths of two children found hanging in their cells at the Preston Youth Correctional Facility in January provide another reason for public outrage at a juvenile justice system that is designed only to punish young offenders without also rehabilitating them. Worst of all is the current trend toward trying children in adult courts and housing them in adult facilities, where they are eight times more likely to attempt suicide.

At Men's Central Jail in downtown Los Angeles, nine children still remain locked in their cells for up to 23 hours at a stretch, despite a unanimous decision by the Board of Supervisors to relocate the children and even though a parallel California Youth Authority facility has been constructed and staffed to accommodate the Men's Central juveniles.

The Board of Supervisors and the Sheriff's Department must fulfill their promise to close Men's Central Jail to juveniles immediately before any more lives are lost to suicide or missed opportunities to educate and rehabilitate.

*Michael Bochenek is Counsel to the Children's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch, New York. Javier Stauring is the Co-Director of Detention Ministries, Archdiocese of Los Angeles.*

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