

# Children's Defense Fund

## Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/blog/i-am-a-child/>

## Public Facing Advocacy Writing

*You are acting like a child.*

*I am a child.*

Last week in [Rochester, New York](#), a family called for help during a mental health crisis. Instead of providing mental health support to the 9-year-old child in need, the police chased her down, handcuffed her, and pepper sprayed her as she continued to call out in distress and plead to see her father.

*You are gonna go to jail.*

*I just wanna see my dad. Please.*

No 9-year-old child should be handcuffed or pepper sprayed; no 9-year-old child should be arrested. Yet, this incident is not unique. Too often, Black children are [treated as adults](#) and their normal adolescent behaviors treated as delinquent.

This adultification and overcriminalization make Black children unsafe [at school](#) and [in their neighborhoods](#) and cause Black children to be unfairly pushed out of schools and overrepresented at every point in the criminal justice system. Black children were [2.4 times more likely](#) to be arrested than white children; Black children accounted for more than half of children prosecuted in adult criminal court; and Black children were nine times more likely to receive an adult sentence than white children. This policing and incarceration can have lasting harms on our children's physical and mental health, learning, and wellbeing.

We must treat all children like children and ensure our children can feel safe at school, at home, and in their communities.

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.