

The California Department of Justice (DOJ) is dedicated to protecting the rights of California's youth, some of the state's most vulnerable residents. DOJ's Bureau of Children's Justice (BCJ), part of the Civil Rights Enforcement Section (CRES), works to address systemic issues that impact children and youth in the state through investigations, litigation, and advocacy.

DOJ IS PROTECTING CALIFORNIA'S CHILDREN BY:

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO HIGH QUALITY, EQUITABLE EDUCATION

From fighting for equal access to funding and resources and high quality education for all students regardless of race, color, national origin, immigrant status, sex, gender, or wealth, to ensuring that students are not subjected to harassment or discrimination and that school meal nutrition rules are based on the best health science, DOJ works to ensure that all California students can thrive in high-performing schools and are on track to meet their full potential.

SAFEGUARDING KIDS FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Across the country, one in four children are estimated to experience abuse or neglect, which can impose deep and lasting harm on victims. DOJ conducts investigations, participates in litigation and issues guidance to ensure that local educational agencies and child welfare authorities protect children and youth in California from abuse and neglect.

DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Millions of children in California are from underserved and marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ children, children with disabilities, youth of color, and immigrant children. A central pillar of DOJ's work is addressing and defending their rights. DOJ investigates public and private entities serving children, files amicus briefs, and publishes guidance for various agencies to ensure equal treatment of all California students and safeguard them from harassment and discrimination.

PROTECTING FOSTER CHILDREN

Over 50,000 children and youth are in foster care in California. Children in foster care have often experienced abuse and neglect, and are more likely to be chronically absent and graduate high school at lower rates. Working to ensure that the rights of this vulnerable group are respected is a critical piece of DOJ's work.

CONDUCTING JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

Incarceration can cause immense mental, physical, and emotional harm to youth, and often leads to higher rates of re-arrest and criminal justice involvement as an adult. DOJ works to protect the several thousand youth confined in California's juvenile facilities and ensure that they are safe, treated with respect and dignity, and have access to legally required services, including medical care, rehabilitative programs, outside recreation, and education, which are essential to prevent recidivism and help them on the path to success.

CHAMPIONING DIVERSITY IN SCHOOLS

Allowing students to see diverse perspectives and ways of life reflected in their school staffing, classrooms, and curriculum is essential to their well-being, educational outcomes, and to California's future economic and social success. DOJ engages in litigation and advocacy to ensure that schools enact policies that foster greater diversity and provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for students.



REFORMING SCHOOL DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Suspensions and expulsions significantly increase the possibility that a student may later drop out of school or be involved in the juvenile justice system. Using investigations, guidance, and litigation, DOJ works to protect students from discriminatory and excessive discipline and push for research-based alternatives for schools to use.

RESOURCES

To view the full scope of the work carried out by the Bureau of Children's Justice, visit oag.ca.gov/bcj



To file tips or complaints related to the rights of children, visit **oag.ca.gov/bcj/complaint** *Important note: BCJ focuses on systemic issues or issues that impact a significant number of children or youth.*



To view all legal guidance issued by BCJ, visit oag.ca.gov/bcj/legal



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