



FACT SHEET

The Essentials

CT can't afford to send so many kids to the juvenile justice system.

Most are there for minor, non-violent behaviors. They could be held accountable more effectively and cheaply in their own communities. (It's about \$500 a day to keep a kid in a secure facility!) We also know that any involvement in the system puts kids at risk of more involvement.

Why is this happening?

Kids get arrested more frequently in schools.

A Connecticut fifth grader was arrested for giving another child a wedgie. Two students were arrested after they each threw a french fry and spit at each other. School discipline is often ruled by so-called "zero tolerance" policies that won't allow educators to use their own common sense.

Kids get arrested because of who they are – not because of what they do.

Children who are minority, low-income or learning disabled are more likely to enter the system.

We're missing opportunities to help kids before they get in trouble.

Truancy is a strong predictor of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Because it usually starts in elementary school, we could be intervening early to help kids and families succeed.

What can I do?

Speak up. Tell your neighbors, school administrators and state and local elected officials that you care about these issues. Encourage them to watch the documentary. You'll find sample letters to the editor or to public officials on the project website ctjja.org/forum.

Sign up. Sign the Education, Not Incarceration petition, a non-partisan way to let policymakers know you believe in prevention.

Read up. Visit the project website at (ctjja.org/forum) to learn more and find other ways to get involved. You'll find ways to connect with others in your local community who care about these issues, and how-to information on community projects like tracking police referrals by your own school, legislative initiatives to reduce racial disparity and model discipline programs that are working in Connecticut.