

Ending the **UNNECESSARY INSTITUTIONALIZATION** of Children

At any given time, there are **nearly 43,000 children unnecessarily housed** in institutions and other group facilities instead of loving homes. Congregate care settings are known pipelines to tragic outcomes for children including homelessness, interaction with the criminal justice system, and sex trafficking. Early in 2021 Children's Rights published Families Over Facilities, a call to action and a blueprint for change.

Because the time is now.



**RACIAL JUSTICE
DEMANDS IT**



**COVID SAFETY
DEMANDS IT**



**NEW FEDERAL LAW
DEMANDS IT**



**CHILDREN'S SAFETY
DEMANDS IT**

**We are working with advocates across the
country to put pressure on states to**

- 1** Prevent youth from entering foster care.
- 2** Increase the placement of children with family members when youth absolutely must enter care.
- 3** Depopulate existing institutions and group facility placements for youth.

"Group homes felt like punishment for being born in the wrong place at the wrong time to the wrong people and I treated myself like someone who didn't deserve anything good because that's what I believed. Group homes created an environment that encouraged and normalized crime, violence, aggression, pain, and isolation. **You can't heal in group homes."**

—Dea Sumrall, advocate for kids who spent time in group homes a child.

THE COST OF DOING NOTHING IS TOO HIGH

Housing children in institutions and group facilities causes physical, mental, and emotional harm and typically costs seven to ten times more than supporting a child in a family—costing a single state as much as \$95 million each year.

ONE STUDY FOUND THAT THE RATE OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES WAS

ALMOST DOUBLE

THAT OF FAMILY FOSTER CARE AND

TRIPLE

THAT OF THE GENERAL POPULATION OF TEENS OF THE SAME AGE.



NEARLY HALF

OF RESIDENT YOUTH WERE PRESCRIBED AT LEAST ONE PSYCHOTROPIC DRUG.



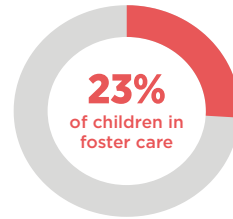
\$4.1 BILLION

IN COSTS WOULD BE AVOIDED IF YOUNG PEOPLE AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE HAD OUTCOMES SIMILAR TO THEIR PEERS IN THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

Black children are over-represented

in foster care, generally, as well as in institutional and group care.

The human cost falls heavily on youth of color, especially Black children, who are disproportionately **investigated** by child protective services, **unnecessarily removed** from their families, and **placed in institutions**.



Nationally, Black children represent 14% of the general population of children, 23% of children in foster care, and 26% of children in institutions and other group facilities.

Change That Can Happen

Connecticut, for example, has dramatically reduced its use of institutional care by providing preventive services that keep families together and kids out of foster care in the first place and dramatically increasing the number of children in the system living with relatives.

Children's Rights is building a movement to end this practice once and for all. We can **stop the physical mental and emotional harm** done to children unnecessarily housed in institutions. We can **stop wasting the billions of taxpayer dollars** it costs to keep them there. And we can **put an end to practices that violate** civil and human rights laws.

Now is the time to end the institutionalization of children and dismantle the persistent racism that exists within child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Connecticut dramatically reduced its use of group care to **under 300 children**, while also increasing the number of children able to live with relatives by **almost 50%**.

“We have the radical imagination to solve this issue. The time is now.”

—Rafael López, Families Over Facilities Champion