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## Children's Advocacy Institute



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## Children's Advocacy Institute Statement on Racial Injustice

We at the Children's Advocacy Institute are heartbroken and outraged alongside the nation as we reckon with the racism laid bare across the country over the last days. We grieve with the families of the victims of these vile acts, we stand in support of protesters exercising their free speech rights, and we decry the senseless destruction of small businesses by outliers of this movement. The dual disproportionate impact of COVID-19 and police brutality on African Americans is devastating. Like the viral pandemic rocking the nation, racism is highly contagious, complex, and as we continue to see, often deadly.

As a child advocacy organization working for over 30 years to ensure the safety and improve the lives of children and youth across the country, the Children's Advocacy Institute is well-acquainted with the racial injustice that saturates children's lives. Our child welfare system has long been rightfully criticized for disproportionately targeting African American, Latino, and Native American families. The impact of racism on our systems of education, justice, health care, and housing is dreadful. Poverty and inequality rooted in our shameful history of slavery is still very much with us. Although much of our work at CAI serves to rectify injustices already experienced by the children and youth we serve, we are also dedicated to the fundamental reform of these flawed systems.

There are no easy answers to these problems. Every individual, organization, and community must reflect upon their role in perpetuating racial injustice, and commit to serious action to combat it. This is the time to harness our collective outrage productively. The Children's Advocacy Institute will continue to listen and learn, especially from youth, as we continue our own journey to achieve greater equity at all levels.

We will continue to unapologetically push policy makers and legislators to prioritize the safety and well-being of children of color and their families. We will work to increase opportunity for transition age foster youth, disproportionately youth of color, to achieve self-sufficiency and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. We will fight for access to justice and due process for court-involved children. We will work to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children. We will fight the victimization of young students of color by predatory private for-profit institutions. We will not rest until there are no longer any babies or children killed by abuse and neglect.

Guided by love and fortified by indignation at the racial injustice pervading society, we rededicate ourselves to ensuring that every American child can grow up safe, loved, and free to thrive.

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