

FACT SHEET: RAISE THE AGE OF ARREST TO 12

KIDS UNDER 12 DON'T BELONG IN POLICE STATIONS OR COURTS

Connecticut children as young as 7 can be and are arrested and sent to court. In 2019 there were [just under 100](#) very young children arrested and sent to court.

The vast majority of very young children are arrested for misdemeanors and the majority of cases involving very young children are dismissed, discharged, or not prosecuted. This wastes time and resources, while also creating unnecessary trauma of police and court involvement for a young child.

THIS IS NOT COMMON PRACTICE

The United States is an international outlier in the fact that it subjects very young children to police and courts. In fact, the United Nations has determined that the minimum age for court involvement should be *at least* 12. There is a current movement in the U.S. to raise the minimum age. California and Massachusetts [recently passed legislation](#) to make their minimum age of arrest 12.

INVOLVING YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM CAUSES HARM

Research shows that involvement with the courts can negatively impact young children, making them more, rather than less likely to become court involved in the [future](#).

Very young children are immature in their decision-making. Their level of brain development means that they don't fully understand their actions or the legal or court process. This means they are not "competent" to stand trial.

THIS IS A RACIAL JUSTICE ISSUE

Connecticut's data shows that [57%](#) of the children under 12 arrested in 2019 were children of color, mostly from urban areas.

RAISE THE MINIMUM AGE OF ARREST FROM 7 TO 12

1. We support the Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Committee recommendation to raise the minimum age of arrest to 12.
2. We further support calls to ensure funding and cooperative relationships are in place to make sure children can get services from the appropriate educational, mental health, or family support systems when necessary. These services need to be accessible, trauma-informed and age-appropriate.