



For more than forty years, the Youth Law Center (YLC), a national nonprofit legal advocacy organization, has focused on improving the lives of children and youth involved in foster care and juvenile justice systems so they can thrive.



About Youth Law Center

YLC works tirelessly to ensure children and youth are not only protected from harm and dangerous conditions but also receive the support, opportunities, and love they need to grow up healthy and happy. We use litigation, policy reform, creative systems change projects, training and counseling, public education, and community engagement as tools for systems change.

YLC's advocacy is centered around listening to those directly impacted, including children, young adults, birth families, and foster families so that it is their lived experiences that drive change. As a leader in transforming systems to be truly child-focused and research-informed, YLC has advocated to improve the lives of children and youth nationally, in 38 states and the District of Columbia through:

- Protecting the rights of children and youth;
- Working to help child welfare systems achieve the goal of moving away from institutions so every child receives excellent quality parenting in a family;
- Ending incarceration, institutionalization, and the over-criminalization of children of color and those with disabilities;
- Incorporating developmental science research into child welfare and juvenile justice practices and policies; and
- Increasing supports to help youth succeed in adulthood with access to affordable housing, economic supports, and post-secondary education.

Support YLC's Advocacy Efforts

Together we can transform the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Your support extends our reach, amplifies our voice, and deepens our impact.

Support YLC's work: <https://www.ylc.org/support/>

Learn more: www.ylc.org | info@ylc.org | (415) 543-3379



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Youth Law Center's advocacy requires a range of systems change strategies. YLC uses all of the methods of change available to us as a public interest law firm to ensure that children and youth are both protected from harm and have the opportunity to thrive as adults. YLC's strategies include:

Litigation

Fair, humane and just treatment of children and youth in foster care and the juvenile justice systems requires legal strategies that end harmful practices, address dangerous conditions and protect children's rights. Our legal team uses litigation to drive system changes, hold systems accountable, and protect youths' well-being. Whenever possible, we ensure that litigation results in changes that are sustainable, increase the power of youth and families, and go beyond simply stopping harm.

Policy Reform

YLC leads federal, state and local legislative and regulatory reforms leading campaigns that lift up the issues most important to children and youth. Whether we are drafting legislation, testifying in front of Congress or State legislatures, creating opportunities for directly impacted youth and families to share their ideas for change with policy makers, holding elected officials accountable or challenging policy that is harmful to children, our goal is always to ensure policy is responsive to the most pressing needs of children and youth.

Technical Assistance and Training

Many child welfare and juvenile justice systems and stakeholders request YLC's expertise in the law, identifying problems, developing solutions, and managing the process of change. Our team supports the field on areas such as: sharing the latest developmental science so it can be applied to practice, offering support in implementing the law or addressing barriers to implementation, listening to and partnering with directly impacted youth and families, and taking a child-centered approach.

Mobilizing the Field

YLC works to mobilize others in our field such as civil legal aid lawyers, advocacy organizations, state and local public and private agencies, community-based coalitions and programs, foundation partners and those working to improve child welfare and juvenile justice systems to create a shared vision and agenda for change. YLC's thought leadership, deep systems change and policy expertise, and commitment to youth leadership and involvement has resulted in many successful local, state, and national campaigns and collaborative advocacy projects over the past decades.



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Public Education

YLC is a leading source of information about the issues facing children and youth in foster care and juvenile justice systems and the reforms necessary to ensure equitable futures for them. In addition to educating the public, media, legislators, advocates and the field on the law, best practices, and emerging research, we lift up the experiences of children, youth, and their families in order to frame public policy issues, shape public opinion, and ensure the field puts children's needs at the center of their work.



Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)

YLC's Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) is a national site based approach to child welfare systems change implemented by a national network of agency leaders and staff, resource families, community partners, youth and birth parents in ten states and 80 jurisdictions across the country. QPI is based on the core belief that consistent excellent parenting and meaningful relationships are the most basic needs and key rights of children and youth in foster care. YLC works with systems to ensure that every policy and practice enhances rather than undermines their ability to meet these needs. QPI sites rely on two practice principles in reviewing policies and practices and identifying and executing necessary changes: 1) Applying research on child and adolescent development to agency policy and practice and 2) Ensuring that the individuals most affected by policies and practices, including youth and families, take the lead in identifying, designing and implementing changes. QPI invests in the leadership and advocacy capacity of local leaders, "QPI Champions", who champion needed changes in their own communities. *Learn more about QPI here: www.qpi4kids.org*