

## WHAT IS THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND?

The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a national, nonprofit organization created in 1973 to provide long-range and systematic advocacy on behalf of the nation's children. We are funded by a number of private foundations and are staffed with lawyers, federal policy monitors, researchers and community liaison people dedicated to reforming institutions, policies and practices affecting the lives of children.

CDF's program rests on several assumptions about effective child advocacy. We believe that:

1. Advocacy must be specialized rather than global. For example, although we are concerned ultimately with broad goals, such as improving the quality of education for all children or reforming the juvenile justice system, our activities will pinpoint specific problems and reforms toward these more general goals.

2. Advocacy requires thorough homework and striking presentation. CDF has tried to pick indisputably harmful practices for initial challenge like, for example, school exclusion and jail detention of children, which affect large numbers of American children.

3. Advocacy techniques must be flexible. There is no one way to change things. We use a variety of change tactics including investigative reports, litigation, research, model legislation, publicity, negotiation, and public education, individually and in combination as required. Approaches will vary with the local situation and the issue.