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DID POLICE USE EXCESSIVE FORCE WHEN RESTRAINING AN 11 YEAR OLD GIRL?

How much force must police officers use to control an unarmed eleven year old girl? Three videos captured an incident which took place in Bidwell Park on July 5, 2019 between Chico police and an 11 year old child. The videos show the police throwing the child to the ground and handcuffing her, raising significant concern about how the police handled the situation.

View the videos at: <https://cc4j-chico.wixsite.com/website/video-and-photos>

Concerned Citizens for Justice (CC4J) is committed to building a partnership between the police and the community. Concerned Citizens for Justice wants a police culture that reduces the use of force and that respects the dignity of all. We believe that utilizing both de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques are essential.

CC4J attempted to get a copy of the police report to clarify the facts of the situation but were told that the report is available only to those involved in the incident. Without all the information it is a challenge to fully understand the police conduct. Concerned Citizens for Justice asks the following questions:

- 1) Was the child a danger to herself or others? Was restraint essential for her protection or the protection of the officers or public?
- 2) What effort was made by the police to defuse the situation? What de-escalation techniques were used? Did they talk to the child? Did they talk to her friends?
- 3) Did the Police Department contact the Behavioral Health team or Child Protective Services for their expertise?
- 4) Were the law enforcement officers sufficiently trained in de-escalation techniques?

This incident is similar to another detention of a child that occurred in Chico in October 2018, when Butte County Deputy Sheriffs placed an eight year old boy in handcuffs. The child's distressed cries are distinctly audible in video footage that can be viewed at the link above. CC4J is dismayed to learn that another incident has occurred in our community where law enforcement officers used force to subdue a child. It is critical that law enforcement personnel are trained in de-escalation techniques and that de-escalation is a first response in every crisis. Use of force should only occur when absolutely necessary and when other alternatives have been exhausted. Practicing de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques will help minimize injury to the public and the police. It will build trust and respect between the community and law enforcement.