



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on April 17, 2012

## Georgia Kindergartner Handcuffed, Arrested for Temper Tantrum

Assuming the allegations are true, Johnson's mother, Constance Ruff, offered up the understatement of the year when she called the incident "just one of her [Salecia's] bad days."

Police were called to the scene, whereupon an officer, according to the police report, tried to calm the child but was unsuccessful. Instead, the report says, she resisted the officer and was therefore handcuffed, after which she was taken to the police station, where she was charged with simple assault and damage to property. There she was placed, still tightly handcuffed, into a holding cell, the girl's aunt, Candace Ruff, told the [Associated Press](#).



"She said they were really tight. She said they really hurt her wrists," Candace Ruff told the news service. "She was so shaken up when we went there to pick her up."

While Johnson will not have to appear in court because of her age, she has been suspended from school until August.

Milledgeville's acting police chief, Dray Swicord, defended the decision to cuff and arrest Johnson. "Our policy is that any detainee transported to our station in a patrol vehicle is to be handcuffed in the back," he told WMAZ-TV. "There is no age discrimination on that rule."

He also "said the arresting officer is not under investigation for his actions," the TV station reports.

Johnson's family, however, "demanded" that Milledgeville "change its policy so that other children aren't treated the same way," the AP writes.

"We would not like to see this happen to another child, because it's horrifying. It's devastating," Candace Ruff told the AP.

Indeed it is. But it is a problem that extends far beyond Milledgeville.

Not long ago, a child throwing a temper tantrum in school would have been treated to some old-fashioned discipline on the spot: time spent in the corner, perhaps, or an encounter with a paddle. Today school administrators seem increasingly to rely on the heavy-handed tactics of security guards and police officers to keep order in schools.

Last year a five-year-old Stockton, California, student "was handcuffed with zip ties on his hands and feet, forced to go to the hospital for a psychiatric evaluation and was charged with battery on a police officer," Sacramento's [KCRA-TV](#) reported.

In 2008 an 11-year-old San Jose, California, student was handcuffed by an on-site local police officer for



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refusing to leave a physical education class in which he was being loud — like all the other students in the class. The student's mother told [KNTV-TV](#) that the officer told her that her son had threatened neither the officer nor any other students.

Several weeks ago another 11-year-old, this time in Colorado, "was handcuffed and taken to a juvenile holding facility when she became 'argumentative and extremely rude' with her school's assistant principal," according to the [Daily Mail](#).

Students have been handcuffed and, in some cases, arrested for such infractions as [burping in class](#), [violating a school dress code](#), and even [missing too many days of school](#).

Even if Milledgeville amends its policy to prevent little kids from being cuffed and stuffed for in-school temper tantrums, America's public schools will still have a long way to go to return to a reasonable disciplinary policy. It's no wonder that private schooling and homeschooling are becoming increasingly popular. Kids in such educational settings might get a rap on the rear to keep them in line, but they probably won't end up with a rap sheet before they're old enough to read it.

Photo: In this April 16, 2012 image made from video and provided by WMAZ-13 TV, kindergartner Salecia Johnson, 6, is shown at her home near Milledgeville, Ga : AP Images



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