

# CCHR: Record Numbers of Children are Taken into Custody for Involuntary Psychiatric Examinations in Florida

*More than 36,000 Baker Acts were initiated on children in 2018, this is one every 15 minutes.*

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, February 11, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The mental health law in Florida, commonly known as the [Baker Act](#), allows for individuals of all ages to be sent against their will for involuntary examination at psychiatric wards known as Baker Act Receiving Facilities and held for up to 72 hours during which time, those being held may be drugged without their consent if an emergency treatment order is issued. [1]



Involuntary examinations are being initiated on children without parental knowledge. The parent finds out AFTER their child has been Baker Acted.

Children may also be taken into custody under a Baker Act and the recent story of a 6-year-old girl sent for an involuntary psychiatric examination in Jacksonville, for what is allegedly a temper tantrum, highlights the abusive use of this law. [2]

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In Florida a child is taken into custody for an involuntary psychiatric examination every 15 minutes and in the vast majority of cases these children could have been helped by a parent.”

*Diane Stein, President CCHR Florida*

According to the Baker Act Reporting Center, there were over 200,000 involuntary psychiatric examinations initiated in 2018 more than doubling over the past 17 years. Even more alarming is that more than 36,000 of these initiations were on children, some as young as 2-5 years old and in the vast majority of cases the parent was never brought into the process. This equates to one Baker Act initiation on a child every 15 minutes of every day in Florida. [3]

This dramatic increase is indicative of abuse says the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR), a mental health watchdog that investigates and exposes human rights violations in the mental health industry.

“This child was Baker Acted from school, for apparently a temper tantrum, on a Tuesday and her mother did not see her again until she was released on Thursday per reports in the media,” said Diane Stein, President of the Florida chapter of CCHR.

The solution according to CCHR is to bring parents, guardians and caregivers into the process. CCHR believes that parents should be given the opportunity to help their children due to the fact that the law as it is currently written allows for a willing family member or friend to help the

person in crisis and that less restrictive treatment alternatives are ruled out before a Baker Act.

However, this is not happening. Instead children are being taken into custody and transported to psychiatric facilities without the parent, guardian or caregiver even knowing the child has been removed from school grounds.

“Giving parents the opportunity to help their child would not prevent emergent care from occurring in those instances where it is needed,” said Stein. “Just as in the case of a child being injured and needing immediate medical care, a child in crisis would receive the same help.”

In order to help address violations of human and civil rights under the mental health law, CCHR mans this Psychiatric Abuse Hotline so that individuals who need assistance have someone they can call and have logged thousands of calls over the past few years. During this same time period, CCHR has helped to secure the safe release of more than 1,200 people being held illegally in psychiatric wards and almost half of those helped were children. All assistance provided is free of charge and those manning the Hotline are trained and certified on the mental health law through the Department of Children and Families.

CCHR encourages anyone who is aware of abuse within the mental health industry to fill out an abuse report form on their website by clicking here to [REPORT PSYCHIATRIC ABUSE](#).

About CCHR: Initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR’s mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: “Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the ‘free world’ tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of ‘mental health,’” he wrote in March 1969. For more information please visit [www.cchrflorida.org](http://www.cchrflorida.org).

Sources:

[1] Emergency Treatment Orders for the Administration of Psychotropic Medications <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?ID=65E-5.1703>

[2] Jacksonville mom upset over her 6-year-old being taken to mental facility <https://www.actionnewsjax.com/news/local/jacksonville-mom-special-needs-child-put-handcuffs->



The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater.



Florida law allows for a child of any age to be taken into custody and sent for an involuntary psychiatric examination.

[taken-mental-facility/KKBSVFTZEREALNSVWJMPI5VB7E/?fbclid=IwAR1YF8505cNTI6LJL7Agulw mOJlyseCav5xUc6t4-o2uNqQgHECeTCbEkFg](https://www.jacksonville.com/news/2020/02/10/mother-wants-answers-after-she-says-6-year-old-in-duval-school-ordered-to-mental-health-facility)

Mother wants answers after she says 6-year-old in Duval school ordered to mental health facility  
<https://www.jacksonville.com/news/2020/02/10/mother-wants-answers-after-she-says-6-year-old-in-duval-school-ordered-to-mental-health-facility>

Mother wants answers after 6-year-old daughter was involuntarily committed at school  
<https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/2020/02/10/mother-wants-answers-after-6-year-old-daughter-was-involuntarily-committed-at-school/>

Jacksonville girl taken to mental health center, mother wants answers  
<https://www.nbc-2.com/story/41682389/jacksonville-girl-taken-to-mental-health-center-mother-wants-answers>

Mother wants answers after she says 6-year-old in Duval school ordered to mental health facility  
<https://www.jacksonville.com/news/2020/02/10/mother-wants-answers-after-she-says-6-year-old-in-duval-school-ordered-to-mental-health-facility>

Florida mother wants answers after she says 6-year-old ordered to mental health facility following 'temper tantrum'  
<https://www.theledger.com/news/2020/02/11/florida-mother-wants-answers-after-she-says-6-year-old-ordered-to-mental-health-facility-following-temper-tantrum>

Florida mother wants answers after she says 6-year-old ordered to mental health facility following 'temper tantrum'

<https://www.newschief.com/news/20200211/florida-mother-wants-answers-after-she-says-6-year-old-ordered-to-mental-health-facility-following-temper-tantrum>

<https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectiousdisease/publichealth/84814>

[3] Baker Act Report [https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/baker-act/documents/ba\\_usf\\_annual\\_report\\_2017\\_2018.pdf](https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/baker-act/documents/ba_usf_annual_report_2017_2018.pdf)

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The Florida chapter of CCHR is a non-profit mental health watchdog dedicated to the protection of children.



### Who Speaks for the Child?

**INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT of MINORS**  
Parents or legal guardians should be given the opportunity to take full responsibility for their child, as stated in the Baker Act criteria, for the purpose of obtaining consent for a voluntary examination **prior** to Baker Acting.  
The Baker Act Criteria clearly allows for a person to be assisted through the help of willing family members or friends or the provision of other services **instead** of being Baker Acted.  
It's the parent's right to be a voice for their child. This is **NOT** being done. The parent finds out **AFTER** their child has been Baker Acted.



**Protect Children's Rights and Ensure Parental Involvement**  
Citizens Commission On Human Rights  
Call 800.782.2878, for more information  
[www.cchrflorida.org](http://www.cchrflorida.org)

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