

As an African American woman, hair has always been an important aspect of my life. Being well groomed by society's standards has been taught to me and many other black women and men since we were children. I learned at a very early age that being considered presentable could get me the part in the school play, friends, favor from teachers and ultimately the right housing or jobs. In the military, when I served I was told that braids were unkept and not allowed. As I climbed the corporate ladder I had countless conversations with my hair stylist about choosing the "right" styles so that I could get or keep the job. Unfortunately, I had to share this information with my daughters 10 years ago. At this point our natural hair as black women and men must be embraced. We were born this way, beautiful and curly haired. We are no longer willing to alter it (unless we choose) to make others feel we are acceptable. Every child should be able to go to school and play sports without any unreasonable expectations being placed on them that they change who they are and this includes their hair.

Thank you.

Camille Applin-Jones
Concerned parent and professional

Jack and Jill of America is a national and local mothers' organization which exists to help black children grow to be the best versions of themselves.