

Pine Lake suspends choice for police chief

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***CORRECTION:** 8/28/99, Page A/2: Joseph T. William II: A Local News article Friday incorrectly reported on a 1981 incident involving Joseph T. Williams II, suspended this week from the **Pine Lake** police force. He was charged with child molestation but was not indicted.*

Pine Lake suspended its recently hired head police officer Thursday after learning he was accused of molesting a child 18 years ago. According to his personnel file at the Atlanta Police Department, Joseph T. Williams II acknowledged in 1981 that he had sexual contact with a child, but blamed the 7-year-old girl. He was not criminally charged. On the day he gave a statement to investigators about the incident with the girl, he resigned from the police force, where had been an officer since 1975. The personnel file says he "resigned while under criminal investigation." The 1981 investigation was reported Wednesday night by WXIA. **Pine Lake** Mayor Alfred Fowler announced the suspension Thursday morning. In a statement, he said former police Chief Mac MacGlamery had performed a "thorough background check" before hiring Williams. Williams was a police officer in Lithonia for two years before **Pine Lake** hired him Aug. 3 to help bring credibility to a department accused by protesters of targeting black people for traffic tickets. Williams did not list his employment with the APD on his resume, and he did not tell **Pine Lake** officials that he had worked with APD, **Pine Lake** officials said. Jerome Woods, Lithonia's police chief, said Thursday his department also was unaware Williams had worked for Atlanta. Williams did not return telephone calls Thursday.

Soon after Williams was hired as a **Pine Lake** police officer, he was appointed "officer in charge." That put Williams in line to become the police chief for the DeKalb County city of 800 people once he completed the state's certification process. In the 1981 statement to Atlanta police, Williams, then 25, was quoted as saying the girl approached him while he was using the bathroom. According to the file, Williams said the child made contact with him and he cooperated briefly and then stopped. Woods said that Williams' only infraction in Lithonia was failing to report his whereabouts while working an off-duty job.