

# DC Action for Children

Shaping Policy for DC's Youngest Citizens



**DC Action for Children is a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all children in the District of Columbia have the opportunity to reach their full potential. In the nation's capital, nearly one in three children live in poverty and too few enter school prepared to learn and thrive. By focusing on effective and sustainable policies that prepare our youngest for success, we can help break the cycle of poverty for families and build a brighter future for our city.**

## Key Programs

### D.C. KIDS COUNT

With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, DC Action is the primary source of data on conditions and outcomes for vulnerable children, youth and families in D.C. We work closely with city agencies, the school system and providers to get the most accurate and timely data and make it clear and accessible to all on our website. The data from KIDS COUNT drives our advocacy.

### Birth to Eight Quality Initiative

With a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, DC Action launched the Birth to Eight Quality Initiative in 2010 to create a citywide system of support to ensure that ALL children enter school ready to succeed. We work to raise public awareness and educate policy makers on the importance of school readiness and with providers and advocates to define quality benchmarks in early care and education.

## Impact

We measure success in terms of clear outcomes for children, youth and families.

### Budget Advocacy

In the fall of 2010, DC Action was instrumental in rallying supporters and partners through the High 5 for DC's Kids campaign to call and email D.C. Council members to preserve funding for critical programs. Through this collective action, funding was largely restored for the following programs: The Healthy Schools Act, which provides free, fresh and nutritional meals to children in public schools; the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives, an important front-line defense against child abuse and neglect; and child care subsidies, which allow parents to work while knowing their children are safe and in a high-quality learning environment.

### Technical Assistance

DC Action provided communications and outreach assistance to support the launch of blended Head Start/Pre-K classrooms in DC Public Schools (DCPS), reaching nearly double the number of children with comprehensive early care and education (from an estimated 1,782 to 4,860). We worked with the media to ensure that parents were aware of this innovative program and funded public service posters and bus ads during the school lottery period, contributing significantly to boost enrollment for the 2011-2012 school year.

### Legislative Outreach

In January 2011, DC Action worked with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), Council Chairman Kwame Brown's office and partners to reconcile a critical discrepancy in family child care regulations. DC Action's swift intervention helped ensure that nearly 100 children and families would not lose critical child care overnight.