



## PROMISE 1

# Children and youth will be safe in their homes and communities

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All too often in the District of Columbia, young people are abused or neglected by their parents or caregivers. Violence in our communities and homes also threatens the physical and emotional well-being of children and youth. There is much the government can and should do to build and cultivate safe, healthy and caring communities, communities that support and protect children and youth.

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The new administration and City Council can take decisive action in their first 100 days to keep the “safe children” promise by

- **Creating and implementing a child abuse and neglect prevention plan that is comprehensive and has an impact that can be measured.**
- **Implementing a proven substance abuse prevention strategy that is youth-focused.**
  - > The city spends very little in local funds to prevent young people from experimenting with or using drugs.
- **Expanding the city's capacity to serve women with children at residential substance abuse treatment facilities.**
  - > Fewer than 20 slots exist in the District of Columbia.
  - > About 80% of all child abuse and neglect cases involve parental substance abuse. Currently, there are no vouchers for caregivers known to the child welfare agency.
- **Making detoxification services available on demand.**
  - > The current average wait of three days to enter detox is contrary to the nature of addiction and as a result prevents use of services.
- **Ensuring that out-of-school time programs are safe, accessible, appealing and responsive to young people.**

**These recommendations are achievable.** To date, DC Action for Children has done its part to support the fulfillment of this promise by successfully advocating for

- The development and implementation of a city-wide positive youth development strategy.
- Dedicated funding for services for older youth under the care of the Child and Family Services Agency.
- Shifting the focus from improving the child welfare system to improving outcomes for children involved in the child welfare system.