



PROMISE 2

Children and youth will have the resources to meet life's challenges

Adults have a responsibility to support and nurture children and youth so they have the opportunity to thrive. We can change the current trajectory of many of the District's young people so that the city no longer leads the nation in adolescent drug use, teen pregnancy, teen violence, and school drop-out rates. The District government is obligated to meet the critical needs of young people and provide adequate and quality resources for children and adolescents to transition into successful adults.

The new administration and City Council can take decisive action in their first 100 days to keep the "youth opportunity" promise by

- **Implementing all components of the youth development strategy and directing funding to support it.**
 - > In FY 2006, only the "Safety First!" components of the strategy are being implemented.
 - > Currently, there are no mandatory program standards for young people over age 13.
- **Fully implementing a comprehensive strategy to prepare older youth who will exit foster care without a permanent family so they have the tools to live well independently.**
 - > As of June 2006, 37% of 2,554 youth in foster care were 15 years of age or older. As many as 700 of these youth will not go home or be adopted.
- **Dramatically increasing the number of children and youth with Serious Emotional Disorders who receive mental health treatment.**
 - > The Department of Mental Health served only 5% of young people with this debilitating disorder in FY 2005.
- **Fully implementing the Department of Health's School Health Plan.**
 - > The law requires all public and public charter schools to have at least part-time nursing services; presently, not all schools have nurses.

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

- Increased funding for the School Mental Health Program. The Committee on Health dedicated \$4.1 million to improve the capacity of the program in FY 2007.
- Greater attention paid to the unique needs of older youth, especially those in the child welfare system and those who are not engaged in school or productive out-of-school time activities.



DC Action for Children

DC ACTION FOR CHILDREN

1616 P St NW, Suite 420 • Washington, DC 20036
(202) 234-9404 • (202) 234-9108 fax
aroach_powell@dckids.org • www.dckids.org