



**Contact:**

Aparna Kumar, DC Action for Children  
202.210.5156  
akumar@dckids.org

**New D.C. KIDS COUNT Report Reveals Mixed Picture of Childhood Well-Being**  
TANF Receipts and Reports of Child Abuse Rise, While More Children Get a Strong  
Start in School and Life Through Head Start, Preschool and Pre-K

WASHINGTON, January 19, 2011 \_ Children born and raised in the nation's capital – where one in three live in poverty – face increasingly difficult odds, including rising rates of child abuse and neglect, according to the 17<sup>th</sup> annual fact book from the D.C. KIDS COUNT Collaborative. Substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect increased by 27 percent in fiscal year 2009, after a two-year decline, to 2,004 cases reported to the D.C. Child and Family Services Agency.

The grim picture reflects the fact that the recent recession has had lasting effects on struggling families with children, who are under increased stress that may compromise their health, stability and safety. For the third year in a row, more families with children applied for and received Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, with the 2010 caseload the largest since 2005. As of July 2010, 28,752 children in the District received TANF support. While the overall child poverty rate in the District has held fairly steady, the poverty rate for black children was 43 percent in 2009 – a sharp increase from 2008, when it was 36 percent, according to census statistics released in September.

The report, *Every Kid Counts in the District of Columbia*, is available online at <http://www.dcactionforchildren.org/content/research-resources>. It also highlights points of progress, including increased enrollment in the District's federally funded Head Start and public preschool and Pre-K programs. Over the past few years, efforts to boost school readiness through high-quality early care and education have brightened prospects for the District's youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

“Thanks to KIDS COUNT, the District has a wealth of data on the changing status of children across the city going back more than a decade,” said HyeSook Chung, executive director of DC Action for Children. “Most importantly, the 2010 report shows us where we are desperately failing our children. As we build on this well-established data, we need to ensure that we use it to drive changes that truly make an impact for children and families in our city.”

DC Action for Children, a nonprofit advocacy organization, has received a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to assume leadership of the District's KIDS COUNT project beginning in January 2011. To collect and analyze the data, DC Action is partnering with NeighborhoodInfo DC, an organization at the Urban Institute that provides data and analysis used to improve the quality of life in neighborhoods in the District and that has worked on KIDS COUNT since 2004. The Bivings Group, a D.C.-based Internet communications firm, will work with DC Action to leverage social media to engage all segments of the community.

DC Action is in the process of forming a KIDS COUNT advisory board representing individuals and organizations deeply invested in improving conditions for children, youth and families in the District.

"We are excited to continue the important work of providing data about the status of children and families in the District," said Jenn Comey, deputy director of NeighborhoodInfo DC. "We believe partnering with DC Action for Children and The Bivings Group is a great opportunity to address the pressing policy issues facing children and help ensure that data informs decisions."

DC Action for Children joins a nationwide network of KIDS COUNT grantees that collect data on and advocate for the well-being of children at the state and local levels. News and updates on the D.C. KIDS COUNT project will be made available at [www.dckids.org](http://www.dckids.org).

During this time of economic hardship it will be critically important for the District to focus on improving outcomes for its youngest citizens. DC Action for Children continues to expand its national and local funding base by remaining focused on its mission of producing results and accountability for the District's children, youth and families.

###

**DC Action for Children ([www.dckids.org](http://www.dckids.org))**

Founded in 1992, DC Action for Children is a nonprofit advocacy organization focused on improving conditions and outcomes for the District's children, youth and families through public awareness, policy, research and partnerships.

**NeighborhoodInfo DC ([www.neighborhoodinfodc.org](http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org))**

NeighborhoodInfo DC (NIDC) supports community organizations, residents, and government as they work to improve the quality of life for people throughout the District of Columbia. NIDC is housed at The Urban Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization started in 1968 that examines the social, economic, and governance challenges facing the nation.

**The Bivings Group ([www.bivings.com](http://www.bivings.com))**

The Bivings Group is a full service Internet communications firm, uniquely combining the strategic advisory expertise of a PR firm with the technical skills of a web development firm.