



## Get to Know Us

### Every child deserves a strong beginning and a limitless future.

Early childhood researchers say a child's first three years will shape their lives. The District's early educators and parents agree and are now organizing to give our city's youngest residents the best possible start.

They are joining a growing community of early childhood and health professionals, neighborhood-based organizations, and nonprofit advocacy groups known as Under 3 DC. Together, they are working as a coalition to ensure local elected officials fund the Birth-to-Three For All DC law.



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#### Investing in Early Learning Pays Off

Almost 72 percent of the District's 3-year-olds and 86 percent of 4-year-olds attend Pre-K.<sup>2</sup> But glaring inequalities still exist in early education because of cost and access, especially for Black and Latinx families.

Under 3 DC believes that a zip code should not determine a child's healthy start in life. By the time many families of color reach the point of deciding on child care, they are far behind white families and find themselves disconnected from available resources.

#### Affordable Child Care is Essential

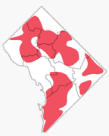
The District's economy won't recover if we don't close the gaps in access, affordability, and quality of care. Under 3 DC believes that making child care more affordable for everyone is one way to solve this problem.

This position calls on policymakers to increase the rate it pays child care centers and homes to cover the cost of educating lower-income children, including raising pay for early educators. This rate increase will grow the number of affordable child care seats because it will make care available to more District families.

#### Accessible Early Childhood Programs Benefit All

The District's programs that serve young children and families are hard to navigate and hard to find. Many families are unaware of their existence. Under 3 DC wants to fix this by advocating for proper funding for early childhood health and education programs to finally give them the resources to communicate and connect with families.

Healthy Futures, Healthy Steps, Help Me Grow, and the Lactation programs are evidence-based, early childhood programs that support young children's social and emotional development and their caregivers—parents and early educators.



More than 1 in 4 families live in areas with no or few child care options.<sup>4</sup>

## We Made a Difference in 2020

### Under 3 DC Connects the Dots: 2020 Impact

- Preserved early childhood funding
- Won emergency public funding
- Amplified “Child Care is Essential”
- Reversed proposed budget cuts

The coronavirus pandemic shook the District to its core in 2020, but Under 3 DC persisted. The community came together and fought to preserve funding for critical health and education services for children and families.

Protecting funding for health and the child care programs was the most important victory.

### Looking Ahead: Will child care businesses survive COVID-19?

The District faced a child care shortage before the pandemic that is getting worse as the crisis continues. Operating expenses for child care businesses have risen at least 54%<sup>5</sup>, and many are struggling to stay open. Any loss of child care and any cuts to successful health programs puts the well-being of the District's youngest children at risk.

### Join Under 3 DC's expanding umbrella of parents and educators.

Fight to make sure early childhood education and health programs remain a priority as the city recovers from the pandemic.

### Contact Us!

Contact Under 3 DC Organizer's Jamar Day [jday@dckids.org](mailto:jday@dckids.org) and Natasha Riddle Romero [nriddleromero@dckids.org](mailto:nriddleromero@dckids.org) to join the community!

### Endnotes:

1 - 4: Under 3 DC 2020 Impact Report. <https://Under3DC.org>

5. The Status of DC Child Care During COVID19 (Policy Brief). <https://www.wearredcaction.org/sites/default/files/covid-19%20childcare%20survey-final.pdf>