

**ACTIONS SPEAK  
LOUDER.**

**CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN OF NEW YORK**

# ACTIONS

New York's future rests in the hands of its children. But that future is only as bright as the opportunities children are given to get the health care, education, housing, and child care they need to grow up safely and grow into responsible adults.

Right now, thousands of New York City children are being denied those opportunities. They are failing in school. They live in poverty or are homeless. They are home alone while their parents work. They are neglected or abused. And they are exposed to environmental toxins or health hazards that threaten their lives.

When the future of children is jeopardized, the future of all New Yorkers is jeopardized.

# SPEAK

**But you can change that.**

You can join with thousands of other caring and concerned New Yorkers who are committed to making our city a better place for children. Community by community, these New Yorkers are transforming their desire to do something and sense of urgency into action. And they are making a difference.

Citizens' Committee for Children (CCC) of New York is helping them take action. Action that gets results and solves problems. Action that promotes positive change. And action that gives children and their families a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

# LOUDER

Citizens' Committee for Children understands that when it comes to children's future, talk is not enough. Actions are what count.

**You can take action right now on behalf of New York City children.** This guide will tell you how. Read it over. Get busy. Contact CCC for help.

Working together, we can make New York City a better place to be a child. Children's future—and the future of our city—depend on it.

## Here Are the Facts:

Everyday in New York City:

- At least 182 babies are being born into poverty. Nearly a third of these children are born to teen parents or to mothers with inadequate prenatal care.
- 760,000 children are living in poverty.
- Nearly 8,000 children are living in shelters for the homeless.
- 146 children are reported as being neglected or abused.
- Nearly half of all elementary and middle school students are reading below grade level.
- Three out of ten children are receiving public assistance.
- 60% percent of schoolchildren are learning in overcrowded buildings.
- 30 young people are arrested

## Now Let's Change Them

Think one person can't possibly make a difference? Think again.

For more than 54 years, Citizens' Committee for Children has been working with thousands of ordinary New Yorkers who share a commitment to children. Together, we're changing lives.

But we need your help—and the help of every parent, grandparent, professional, businessperson, neighbor—anyone who cares about children—to show that there is strength in numbers and that child advocacy is alive and well in New York City.

# ONE: What can you do?

**GET INVOLVED.** Making the decision to get involved in protecting children's well-being is the hardest step. It's easier to assume that "someone will take care of it." That "someone" is you—and the thousands of other New Yorkers who care about children, our city's most precious resource. Like you, these New Yorkers understand that the cost of not getting involved now, is higher costs later—for all of us.

**GET INFORMED.** The first step toward improving conditions for children is learning the facts about the problems that keep children from reaching their fullest potential. Find out more about programs and services available to children and families. Look around your community to see how well or poorly it deals with children's needs, addresses risks to child well-being, and allocates available resources. Compare it with other communities. Learn what local parent, community, religious, and business groups are doing to help children.

**GET BUSY.** Perhaps the most important step is taking the knowledge and information you've gathered and using it to advocate on children's behalf. Whatever the issue—health care, education, employment, juvenile justice, or housing—your voice counts.

**GET IN THE LOOP.** Need help getting started? This Citizen Guide can help. Need more information? Just call CCC at (212) 673-1800 and ask for a list of resources, including our educational publications, data, budget, and policy analyses on a wide range of issues affecting children.

You can also reach us at our Web site: <http://www.kidsfirstnewyork.org>.

**LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT LIFE FOR NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN. SHARE THESE FACTS WITH OTHERS AND ENLIST THEM IN THE EFFORT TO MAKE NEW YORK CITY A BETTER PLACE TO BE A CHILD.**

A well-informed advocate for children inspires others and encourages them to get involved. No matter whom you are trying to reach—policymakers, parents, community leaders, the media, neighbors, friends, or others—it is essential to know the facts. The more you know, the more you will be taken seriously and the more your message will be heard.

There are numerous resources available to New Yorkers like you who are interested in learning all they can about life for children in New York City. CCC can keep you informed about important children's issues through our policy briefings, newsletters, periodic reports and analyses, database, and Speakers Bureau.

CCC's *Keeping Track of New York City's Children* is jam-packed with factual data about quality of life for children in every New York City neighborhood. Health care, schools, environmental issues, safety, and child care are just a few of the many issues covered in-depth in *Keeping Track*. CCC also maintains an up-to-date, in-house database on virtually every issue affecting New York City children and their families.

Newspapers, television and radio news shows, and the Internet also are excellent sources of information that can help you learn more about the issues. Libraries have books, journals, magazines, and computer databases that can add depth to your knowledge about children.

As you become more informed, share what you have learned with as many people as you can. Speak out about the issues affecting the children you know. At social gatherings, tell people why it is important to be a "voice for children." Ask your pastor, rabbi, cleric, or religious director to focus a service on children and family life. Encourage other parents to start a "children's advocacy" group. Attend school board meetings and persuade other parents to join together to improve local schools.

At any gathering you attend, distribute CCC's easy-to-understand educational materials—including fact sheets, brochures, newsletters, and flyers—to friends, neighbors, co-workers, and others. Don't forget that the most powerful messages about children are based on personal experience. Don't be afraid to use your own and your child's experiences to make your point.



PHOTO BY NITA WINTER

# TWO: Register to vote

## MAKE YOUR CONCERNS KNOWN TO POLICYMAKERS AND HELP INFLUENCE THEIR DECISIONS ABOUT PRIORITIES AND POLICIES AFFECTING NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN.

One of the most important ways you can show your concern for children is by participating in the electoral process. At election time, get educated about the positions of the candidates—including local school board candidates, the mayor, Governor, City Council members, State legislators, Comptroller, Public Advocate, and Borough President—on issues affecting children. Review candidates' voting records to see how well their promises match their actions. If their voting records or positions are not available, ask them:

### WHAT WILL YOU DO TO ENSURE THAT NEW YORK'S CHILDREN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW TO REACH THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL?

- What is your position on: public school, child care, youth services (and other issues)?
- How will you help prevent child abuse and neglect?
- How will you help New Yorkers make their neighborhoods more child-friendly?

Vote in every election—and after you vote, monitor your elected officials to make sure they act on their commitment to children. Communicate your concerns for children to policymakers at all levels and enlist their support by writing letters, sending postcards and/or telegrams. When writing:

- Be brief and to the point. State why you are writing in the first sentence.
- Be personal in making your case. Include personal anecdotes or stories about how children including your own are faring in New York City.
- Provide a convincing rationale for why the policymaker should make children a priority and why this is important to you and your community.
- Tailor your arguments and points to the policymaker's personal background and/or interests.
- Don't shy away from controversial topics. Provide reasonable arguments for your position without apologies.
- Provide examples of how the policies or programs you would like the policymaker to support have worked previously or elsewhere.
- Offer to provide the policymaker with additional information or materials. CCC can provide you with specific information about legislation, budgets, programs, and policies.
- Join CCC's postcards to policymakers campaign and receive pre-written postcards with timely messages for you to sign and mail to your legislators.



PHOTO BY NITA WINTER

You can also visit policymakers (elected and appointed officials) and/or members of their staff, who often meet with constituents, especially groups. Before you go, make sure you familiarize yourself with the facts and with the individuals you are trying to reach. What are their voting records on your issue? Are they favorable to your issue or position? If not, is there an indication that they might support your view in the near future? Familiarize yourself with policymakers' staff people.

When making personal visits:

- Praise the policymaker for past support.
- Keep comments brief and get to the point since time is limited. Provide strong arguments for your position.
- Be personable.
- Be prepared to provide clear answers to questions. Don't dodge tough questions. If you don't know the answer, say so and then volunteer to call back with the information requested.
- Leave information about children's issues with the policymaker. Local issues or examples affecting children in his/her district are especially helpful.
- Treat staff members as you would their boss. Meet with them as well. They are your link to the policymaker and can help you present a strong case. Leave information with them.
- Send thank you notes to the policymaker and/or staff members after meetings.
- At budget time, join Citizens' Committee for Children and meet with policymakers to tell them how important it is to fund vital children's programs and services. Learn how your tax dollars are spent. Call or write for a copy of CCC's annual budget analyses. Write a letter to your city and state representatives voicing your concerns before budgets are finalized.

# Who to contact in public office

## NEW YORK CITY

### MAYOR

The City of New York – City Hall  
New York, NY 10007 (212) 788-3000

### SPEAKER OF THE CITY COUNCIL

City Hall  
New York, NY 10007 (212) 788-7210

### NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

City Hall  
New York, NY 10007 (212) 788-7100

### BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Bronx (718) 590-3500  
Brooklyn (718) 802-3700  
Manhattan (212) 669-8300  
Queens (718) 286-3000  
Staten Island (718) 816-2000

COMMUNITY BOARDS (212) 788-7418

## ALBANY

### GOVERNOR

Executive Chamber, State Capital  
Albany, NY 12224 (518) 474-8390

### SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

New York State Senate, Legislative Office Building, Rm. 909  
Albany, NY 12247 (518) 455-2800

### ASSEMBLY SPEAKER

New York State Assembly, Rm. 932, Legislative Office Building  
Albany, NY 12248 (518) 455-4100

## WASHINGTON, DC

### THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The White House, Washington, DC 20500 (202) 456-1414

### SENATOR

United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510 (202) 224-3121

### CONGRESSPERSON

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515 (202) 224-3121

# THREE: Use your local news media

## LEARN ABOUT, CALL ATTENTION TO, AND ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN'S ISSUES.

New York City has many news outlets covering stories about children. Subscribe to a newspaper and clip articles that explore children's issues. Make copies of the articles and pass them around to friends, colleagues, and policymakers. Send copies to your state and local legislators with a letter saying why you think that issue is important. Get your friends to sign the letter with you.

If you find that news coverage about children is lacking—or if you learn about an important story in your own community and want to get the word out—contact the media yourself. Find out who reports on children's issues, and tell them what is going on. Ask these reporters to do a story.

Write letters to the editor of your local newspaper when you want to attract attention to a children's issue or to respond to an article that was already printed. You should provide additional information that may not have been included in the original article, stating your agreement or disagreement with the piece, and/or substantiating your position with facts and figures. Letters to the editor have the greatest chance of being published if they are concise, clearly thought out, and timely.

### CONTACTING

MEDIA OUTLETS	PHONE	FAX
New York Times	(212) 556-1234	Call for number
Wall Street Journal	(212) 416-2000	(212) 416-2658
New York Daily News	(212) 210-2100	(212) 643-7831
New York Newsday	(212) 251-6600	(212) 696-0396
New York Post	(212) 930-8000	(212) 930-8546
Village Voice	(212) 475-3300	(212) 475-8944
El Diario	(212) 807-4600	(212) 807-4705
Amsterdam News	(212) 932-7400	(212) 222-3842
New York Magazine	(212) 508-0700	Call for number
New York One News	(212) 465-0111	(212) 563-7154
CBS affiliate	(212) 975-4321	(212) 975-9387
NBC affiliate	(212) 664-4000	(212) 664-4444
Fox affiliate	(212) 452-5555	(212) 249-1182
ABC affiliate	(212) 456-1000	(212) 456-2381
Telemundo	(212) 492-5500	(212) 492-5629

# FOUR : Make Your Neighborhood a Better Place for Children.

LOOK AROUND YOUR COMMUNITY, TALK WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS, AND SEE WHICH RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN AND WHICH ARE MISSING.

Is/Are there:	Yes	No	Is/Are there:	Yes	No
Parks and playgrounds			Child health programs		
Fire house			Child abuse/neglect prevention services		
Schools			Mental health programs		
After-school and summer programs			Police precinct		
Child care programs			Community development agency		
Parent, civic and religious associations			Income support/Job center		
Youth employment opportunities			Medicaid enrollment office		

Advocate for children's services or programs that are missing in your community. Write to policymakers. Talk to friends, neighbors, and young people about what your community needs to do to be child-friendly. If there are environmental hazards in your neighborhood, overcrowded, dilapidated school buildings, or other health hazards or dangerous conditions, contact your Community Board, Community School District, Borough President's office, or City Council representative to report them. Set up meetings with community leaders and public officials to discuss possible solutions. Get policymakers to commit to developing a workplan and timeline to address your concerns.

You can also develop new programs or activities for children in your community. Hold a street or health fair or family event. Organize a sports team league or after-school

program. Turn a vacant lot into a playground or garden. Arrange a clean-up day at the park. Start a day care program. Start a Block-Watch to keep children safe.

Support children's organizations in your neighborhood. Make a contribution—of money, used toys and clothing, or just a pair of helping hands—to a local program that helps children. Encourage your neighbors and friends to join you. If you are a professional—a lawyer, accountant, teacher, health worker, plumber, or other—with expertise in a skill that might benefit a children's organization, offer technical assistance.

## RESOURCES

If you are not sure how you can help, call the **Mayor's Voluntary Action Center** at (212) 788-7550 or **New York Cares** at (212) 228-5000 and ask them.

# FIVE: Make children a priority at your workplace.

Help make your office more responsive to children's needs by asking your employer to consider giving families with children workplace options such as flexible hours, telecommuting, job-sharing, emergency child care, and/or by establishing a parental leave policy. Explore the possibility of establishing an on-site day care center at work or a subsidy to help employees defray the cost of child care. Make sure the company you work for offers health insurance coverage for children.

Your company can do a lot for children. Find out about the corporate philanthropy program and ask that they make a donation to a local children's program or organization. Businesses can adopt schools and provide

funds and volunteers, resources, or expertise. They can also offer internships or part-time jobs for teenagers. Employees can serve as mentors or tutors to young people interested in learning job-related skills.

## RESOURCES

**Families and Work Institute** – A national research, advocacy and educational organization that provides information on the changing workforce and related family/personal issues.

330 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10001  
(212) 465-2044 (t) (212) 465-8637 (f)



## SIX: Get involved in your child's school.

One of the most important ways you can help New York City children is to become more involved in your child's school activities. Attend parent/teacher meetings and work collaboratively with other parents, educators, and local administrative officials to develop a curriculum, policies, and programs that support student achievement. Meet with your child's teachers on a regular basis. Talk to the principal when you have a concern, but also when you see that the school is doing something good.

At home, read to your child and help with homework. Volunteer as a tutor for other children who may be having problems in school. Limit your child's television viewing and monitor what programs s/he selects. Ask your child everyday what s/he learned in school.

At the community level, become an advocate for good schools. Remind people that overcrowded schools hurt children's chances of getting jobs and becoming responsible and educated citizens. Make a donation of time, money, and other resources to your local school and encourage your company, neighbors, and professional colleagues to do the same. Donate books and other materials, including computers, to local school libraries.

### RESOURCES

**Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships** – Information and resources for individual schools and districts regarding how to establish collaborative efforts among schools, families, and communities that result in comprehensive programs and student services. (410) 516-8800

**Public Education Association** – Information on New York City public schools. Publishes a newsletter, sponsors conferences, and works at community mobilization and advocacy. (212) 868-1640

**Community Campaign for Good Schools** – Organizes parents to assume a governance role in their child's school. (212) 998-5877

**Parents' Guide to the Hundred Best New York City Public Elementary Schools** by Clara Hemphill.

**Private School Advisory Service** – Information about independent New York City schools. (212) 696-0499

**Manhattan Directory of Private Nursery Schools** by Linda Faulhaber. Guide to more than 150 nursery programs.

**United Parents Association** – Citywide organizing of parents advancing an advocacy agenda for New York City public schools. (212) 406-7068

**Advocates for Children** – Information about the city's public school system and assistance from case advocates for students having difficulties. (718) 624-8450

### OFFICES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Office of Parent Advocacy and Engagement	(718) 935-5202
Office of Student Support Services	(718) 935-4042
Bureau of Attendance	(718) 935-3356
Office of Dropout Prevention/AIDP	(718) 935-5562
Students in Temporary Housing	(718) 935-5562
Health Services	(718) 935-5020
Student Guidance	(718) 935-4121
Health & Substance Abuse Prevention Programs	(718) 935-5213
Division of Special Education	(718) 935-3561
Office of Pupil Transportation	(718) 784-3313
Office of Student Information Services	(718) 935-3481

# SEVEN: Promote healthy development for children.

A healthy start for New York City children starts with your child. Make sure your child has an annual physical examination and begins his/her immunizations at two months of age. When you visit your child's doctor, be prepared to ask questions. Talk about your child's needs or changes in his or her behavior. Don't leave without scheduling the next appointment. Make sure you have the doctor's name and number in case you have follow-up questions or needs. Ask about information you can read to learn more about particular diagnoses, illnesses, or prescriptions.

If your child is hospitalized or in residential care, become a part of the treatment team. Read charts and notes on a regular basis. Remember that you are the expert when it comes to what your child needs—and what will be most helpful to him or her—and convey this information to health professionals. Use patient or parent advocates when you feel that your child's needs are not being met. Find out if the health care facility will consider letting you “room in” with your child. Hang a picture of your child in the room to remind health care professionals that s/he is not just a patient, but an individual.

You can also form parent support groups to share concerns and explore ways to help local health care facilities become more accommodating to children and their families' needs. Ask these facilities to develop a parent advisory board or allot room on their boards for parents.

At the community level, speak out against cigarette and alcohol advertising. Make sure local stores honor the “no cigarette sales to young people under the age of 21” New York State law. Learn the signs of drug abuse, and when you suspect that a youngster you know is abusing drugs, make him/her find professional help. Make your local school a drug-free zone.

Make sure that information about Child Health Plus and Medicaid is available in local schools, libraries, and businesses. Volunteer at a local clinic that provides maternal and child health care to underserved families. Donate books, toys, videos, and other child-friendly materials to a local hospital or clinic.

Children's mental health is as important as their physical health. Pay attention to your child's moods, feelings, and behaviors. If your child seems depressed, is not doing well in school, acting out, getting into fights, or engaging in behavior that is hurting others or him/herself, talk to your child and find out what s/he is feeling or experiencing. Discuss your concern with your local doctor, your child's teacher and others who come into contact with him or her to get more information. Call Lifenet to get help from a mental health professional.



PHOTO BY NITTA WINTER

## RESOURCES

**Child Vaccination Program** – Information on where to obtain immunizations for children ages 0-4 years.  
1-800-325-CHILD

**New York City Immunization Hotline** – Information on where to obtain free immunizations for children over 4 years of age. (212) 349-2664

**Growing up Healthy Hotline of the New York State Department of Health** – Referrals to free or affordable health insurance programs (Medicaid or Child Health Plus) as well as information on free or affordable health care for children and pregnant women and early intervention programs. (800) 522-5006

**Bureau of Child Health** – Information on where to get affordable health care for children

Manhattan:	(212) 9220/9224
Bronx:	(718) 579-6716
Queens:	(718) 476-7652
W. Brooklyn & Staten Island:	(718) 643-7035/7036
East Brooklyn:	(718) 574-3255

**Parent Resource Center, Child/Teen Health Plan of the Human Resources Administration** – Refers children on Medicaid to hospitals, clinics, and dentists. (212) 630-1147

**Women’s Health Line** – Provides referrals for gynecological and prenatal care, and family planning services. (212) 230-1111

**Families Together in New York State** – Offers support, information, education, and advocacy for children and youth with emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders and their families. (888) FAM-TOGH

**Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc.** – Provides information, referral or advocacy and training/workshops for professionals and parents of children with disabilities. (212) 677-4650

**Mental Health Association of New York City** – Provides on-going public education activities and parent resource

centers and engages in legislative and budget advocacy. (212) 254-0333

**Lifenet** – Provides linkage to transportation during a mental or physical health emergency; offers referral for mental health and substance abuse. 1(800) LIFE-NET

**New York City Early Intervention Program** – Offers services for children from birth to three years old with suspected developmental delays and provides referrals through its Hotline. 1-800-577-BABY.

**New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development** – Receives complaints about peeling or lead paint in apartments where there are children six years or younger. (212) 960-4800

**Poison Control Center** of the New York City Department of Health is available 24 hours a day. (212) 764-7667

## EIGHT: Be a resourceful, responsive and active parent.

A good parent is active and responsive. Take time out from your work and talk with and listen to your child. Find out what interests your child and then find ways to help him/her get more involved in those activities. Turn off the television. If your child wants to play a game, join in.

Another part of good parenting involves knowing when—and where—to get help that will meet your child’s needs. Keep a list of important telephone numbers (many of which are included in this Action Guide) nearby. Let family members and friends know about these resources by distributing copies of this Action Guide in your community.

At the community level, support youth programs, including after-school and recreational programs, as a volunteer or with a contribution. Volunteer as a coach for sports events or start a new league in your community. Be a playground watchdog. Call community youth organizations and ask how you can help.

### RESOURCES

**New York City Youthline** – Provides information on afterschool programs, summer camps, recreational opportunities, citywide events, tutoring, and youth employment opportunities. 1-800-246-4646

**Department of Parks and Recreation** – Offers information about parks, public swimming pools, recreational activities, and summer camps. 1-800-201-PARK

**Time Out, New York Magazine** – Published weekly and available at newsstands, includes sections on events for children.

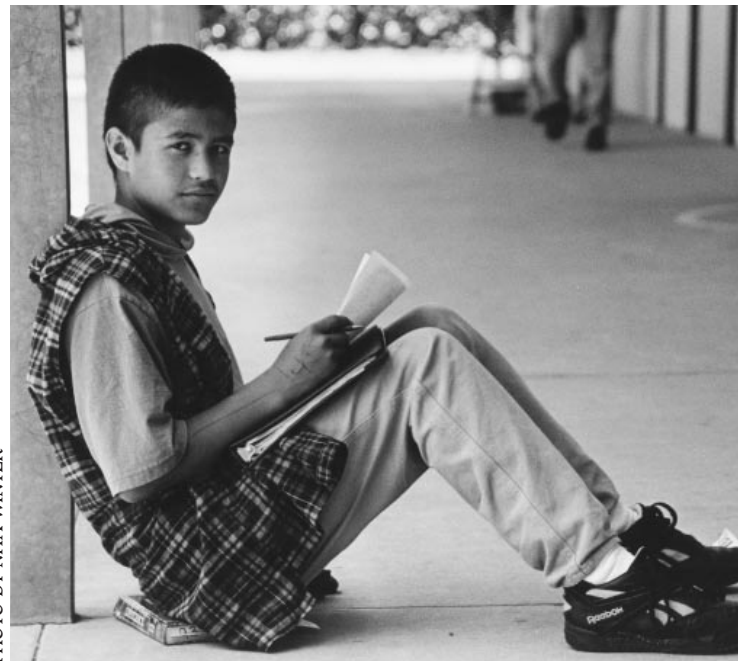


PHOTO BY NITTA WINTER

**Big Apple Parents’ Paper** and the **Queens Parents’ Paper** – Both published monthly, are good sources of information about summer camps, afterschool programs, and parenting in New York. Available in stores and program sites serving children or by calling (212) 533-2277.

**New York Family** – A monthly publication, includes information on activities and programs for children. Available in stores and program sites serving children or by calling (914) 381-7474.

# NINE: Make sure your child has quality child care.

Finding quality child care is a priority for working parents. The kind of child care you select for your child depends on his or her age and special needs. What is good for one child or family may not be appropriate for another. Some families prefer child care centers or Headstart programs while others prefer child care in a family setting. Take time to research and visit different programs. While there, ask yourself:

- Are staff warm and friendly? Do they listen and respond properly to children? Are they relaxed? Are they kind?
- Is the facility clean, comfortable, and safe? Are the toys and furniture in good repair?
- Does it have adequate space and sleeping arrangements for children? Are meals and snacks nutritious and carefully prepared?
- Are staff trained in first aid? Are there window guards and smoke detectors?
- Does the program provide age-appropriate toys, books, and supplies? Are a variety of activities offered to children? Are there enough adults to supervise the children?
- Are parents allowed to observe, make suggestions, and participate?

Ask for help from agencies that can help you make knowledgeable decisions about the best kind of care for your child and where to get it:

## RESOURCES

**The Agency for Child Development** – Provides information and referrals for publicly subsidized day care. You first need to make an appointment at a borough office to determine eligibility.

Bronx	(718) 401-2034/35/36
Brooklyn	(718) 488-5278/5279/80
Manhattan	(212) 835-7715/18
Queens	(718) 523-6826/72

**Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R)** – Can provide you with information about day care programs in your neighborhood, tax credits for day care, and advice about what to look for when you choose a day care provider for your child.

**Child Care Inc.**  
275 Seventh Avenue, 15th Fl.  
New York, NY 10001  
(212) 929-4999

**Committee for Hispanic Children and Families**  
140 West 22nd Street, Rm. 301  
New York, NY 10011  
(212) 206-1090

**Chinese American Planning Council**  
65-69 Lispenard Street, 2nd Fl.  
New York, NY 10013  
(212) 941-0925

**Child Development Support Corporation**  
352-358 Classon Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11238  
(718) 398-6738

**Day Care Council**  
10 East 34th Street  
New York, NY 10016  
(212) 213-2423

**Child Care Action Campaign**  
330 Seventh Avenue, 17th Floor  
New York, NY 10001-5010  
(212) 239-0138 (t)

You can help a local child care program by making a donation of funds, toys, furniture, supplies, or books or by volunteering. If your community does not have enough child care programs, find a sponsor to work with you to establish a program. Start a “child care scholarship” program in your community. Encourage your employer to offer on-site childcare.



PHOTO BY NITA WINTER

# TEN: Recognize and speak out against child abuse and neglect.

Abuse and maltreatment of children occur in every neighborhood in New York City. If you suspect a child is being abused or maltreated, it is extremely important that you act quickly to keep the child safe.

Know the signs of abuse and neglect: unexplained bruises or cuts, depression, crying spells, withdrawal or apprehensiveness, wariness of adults, consistent lack of supervision, young children who are left home alone, chronic absence from school, or fatigue. If you suspect child abuse or neglect, talk to the child or parent first to make sure you aren't jumping to conclusions. Or talk to a family member or someone who knows the family. If you see a parent on the verge of abusing a child, offer to watch the child so s/he or she can take a break. Lend a helping hand to a parent who might be overwhelmed.

If you are reasonably suspicious of abuse, report it. Reports are confidential and do not require absolute proof. Don't assume that someone else will take care of the situation. To report, you can call the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register, which receives reports of child abuse and neglect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-800-342-3720

In your community, educate parents and others about child abuse and neglect. Tell stressed-out parents where they can turn for help. Contact community organizations and ask them to sponsor educational meetings, hold parenting support groups, or put up child abuse prevention posters.

## RESOURCES

**Prevention Information Resource Center (PIRC)** – Help for concerned parents, neighbors, and professionals. Provides information and referrals to community-based programs that offer parenting education and support groups, help for abused children, help for family problems, and services to parents under stress and suggests where to volunteer. They can also provide educational material regarding child development, abuse and neglect, and parenting. 1-800-342-7472

If you are a parent who is having problems controlling your temper or believe that you may be in danger of hurting your child, try these alternatives:

- 1) Stop in your tracks. Step back. Sit down.
- 2) Take five deep breaths. Inhale. Exhale. Slowly.
- 3) Count to 10. Or say the alphabet.
- 4) Phone a friend.
- 5) Punch a pillow.
- 6) Skim through a magazine, book, or newspaper.
- 7) Exercise.
- 8) Write down your thoughts.
- 9) Take a bath or shower.
- 10) Lie down on the floor.
- 11) Listen to some music.

**New York Foundling Hospital's Helpline** – Provides crisis counseling to stressed parents. The hospital also operates a Crisis Nursery, a temporary respite program for children at risk of abuse. Calls are anonymous and confidential. (212) 472-8555.

## CRISIS HOTLINES

**Helpline** – A 24-hour hotline available to help with any problem. (212) 532-2400

**Lifenet** – Provides linkage to transportation during a mental or physical health emergency, and offers referral for mental health and substance abuse. 1(800) LIFE-NET

**Family Violence Hotline** – A 24-hour service for victims of family violence. 1-800-621-HOPE

**Homeless Emergency Assistance Hotline** – Offers emergency help to the homeless from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. on weekdays and 24 hours a day on weekends and holidays. 1-800-994-6494

**Covenant House Nineline** – A 24-hour hotline that assists homeless, runaway, and other young people in need of help. 1-800-999-9999

**New York State Domestic Violence Hotline** – Provides referrals to counseling, shelter, and other services for survivors of domestic abuse, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. 1-800-942-6909

**Incest Helpline** – Offers information, treatment and protection related to incest. (212) 227-3000

**New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register** – Receives reports of child abuse and neglect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-800-342-3720

# WANT TO DO MORE?

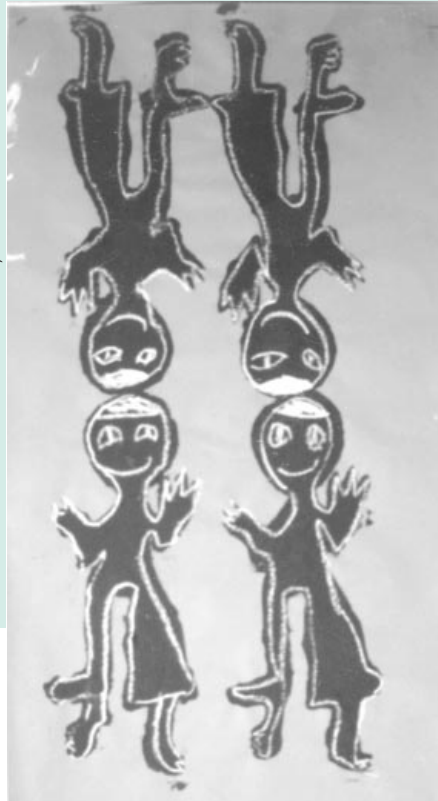
## Join CCC's *Kids First New York* Campaign

Citizens' Committee for Children, *Kids First New York* Campaign is a citywide movement that reaches out to New Yorkers, raises their awareness, and brings them to the forefront of the public debate on the serious conditions facing children in New York City. As a member of our advocacy team, you can help CCC convince policymakers to act on behalf of children as they make policies and develop programs and budgets.

By joining *Kids First New York*, you will receive:

- A *Kids First New York* membership card and *Kids First New York* magnet.
- Fact sheets and informational bulletins about children's issues.
- Invitations to policy briefings and mid-winter conference.
- CCC's quarterly newsletter, featuring articles, opinions, and recommended actions to make New York City a better place to be a child.

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**CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN**  
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