DC KIDS COUNT e-Databook

"People I meet... the effect upon me of my early life... of the ward and city I live in... of the nation"

—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Every city has many identities, depending on who you ask. A legislator, a police officer, a coach or a clerk might describe the same city's people, culture and reputation in starkly different terms.

We are the nation's capital, the official Washington that so many politicians run campaigns against. We are an international center of power, featuring stately embassies and serving as the temporary home to diplomats.

For some Americans, Washington is a code word for the bubble where politicians hobnob with "fat cats," bureaucrats operate and media swarm over the latest scandal.

For some Americans, Washington is a place to visit with their children to learn about history, read the original Declaration of Independence, stand on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and visit the Air and Space Museum.

For some Americans, Washington is a hub of African-American culture and education, as the birthplace of the movement that became the Harlem Renaissance, home to Black Broadway on U Street and the site of one of the nation's most prestigious historically Black colleges, Howard University.

But Washington, aka DC, is also simply a hometown, where many people live their daily lives, raise their children and create community and the future together.

Washington is home to 100,000 children under 18. They are one in six DC residents. The number of children under the age of 5 has started to grow again after almost a decade of decline.[1]

This DC KIDS COUNT e-databook is for and about them.

Why Place Matters in the Lives of Children (and Families)

Children grow up (and families live) in specific places: neighborhoods. How well these neighborhoods are doing affects how well the children and their families who live in them are doing and will do.

Many children grow up in high-poverty neighborhoods, with the disadvantages that can create and perpetuate. Simply put, growing up in a high-poverty neighborhood is bad for children.[2]

1. DC Action for Children. (2011). A Tale of Three Cities: What the Census Says About the District and How We Must Respond.

2. Komro, K., Flay, B.R., & Biglan, A. (2011). Creating Nurturing Environments: A Science-Based Framework for Promoting Child Health and Development in High Poverty Neighborhoods. *Clinical Child Family Psychological Review,* 14, 111-134.

High-poverty neighborhoods put critical resources for healthy child growth and development, including high-performing schools, quality medical care and safe outdoor spaces, out of reach.[3]

Beyond the obvious effects of poverty, such as not being able to afford the nutritious food, health care, and other things children need to thrive, growing up in high-poverty areas has far-reaching effects caused by factors beyond parents' income.

Nationally, the chance of a child living in a high-poverty neighborhood grew significantly in the last decade. The number of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods has risen by 1.6 million, a 25 percent increase since 2000.[4] In DC, one in three children is growing up in a high-poverty neighborhood.[5]

This phenomenon disproportionately affects children of color. Low-income working black families are significantly more likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods than low-income working white families.[6] Neighborhood poverty is also likely behind the striking mobility gap between blacks and whites in the US.[7] In DC, the neighborhoods with the highest levels of concentrated poverty are almost entirely Black (although, certainly, not all Black children in DC are growing up in high-poverty neighborhoods).

A robust body of literature, both national[8] and international,[9] is growing around the concept of social determinants and the powerful influence they have over an individual's and a community's health, as well as children's health and well-being.[10, 11] These determinants – such

3. Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2012). Children Living in America's High Poverty Communities.
4. See note 3.
5. DC KIDS COUNT.
6. Turner, M.A., & Fortuny, K. (2009). Residential Segregation and Low-Income Working Families. Urban Institute.
7. Sharkey, P. (2009). Neighborhoods and the Black-White Mobility Gap. Pew Charitable Trusts.
8. Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative. (Undated). Health Inequities in the Bay Area.
9. World Health Organization. (2008). Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity Through Action on the Social Determinants of Health.
10. Jones, C. et al. (2009). Addressing the Social Determinants of Children's Health: A Cliff Analogy. Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 20(4), 1-12.
11. Grantmakers in Health. (2011). Supporting Children's Healthy Development: Place DOES Matter.

as education, housing and employment – have a powerful effect on people's lives and well-being, including children. They are highly correlated with where people live and the conditions of the neighborhoods in which they live.

DC as a Place for Children

The city's prosperity rests on the shoulders of its children. They are the next generation of citizens, workers, teachers, parents and leaders. How well they do is critical to our city's future.

Where these children live, learn and play deeply affects all aspects of their lives. What kind of place is Washington, DC, for children?

DC children live in a city that is 68.3 square miles, of which the federal government owns about one-quarter (a little more than 23 percent).[12]

They live in one of eight wards, although a large number (41 percent) live in Wards 7 and 8, east of the Anacostia River.

They live in one of 39 neighborhood "clusters,"[13] although about one-quarter (25 percent) live in the neighborhood clusters of Columbia Heights/Mt. Pleasant, Brightwood/Crestwood and Congress Heights.

The data and maps presented here show that the success of too many these children may be predetermined by their ZIP Code — and not their gifts and abilities.

Some DC neighborhoods have many assets that enrich children's lives. But some DC neighborhoods are characterized by concentrated poverty and the many challenges that come with it, including poorer performing schools, more violent crime and less access to healthy food, libraries and parks and recreation centers.

In DC, these differences are both product of and perpetuate a long history of racial discrimination and segregation. Discrimination and segregation were institutional, created and enforced over centuries by laws and practices whose effects we still feel today.

Place in DC's History

Since the city's founding, laws, policies and practices have shaped DC neighborhoods, influencing where many people could live and work. Some repercussions carry forward to today and helped to construct the city and community as we know it.

For example, a city ordinance in the 1830s forbade blacks from operating their own businesses[14] and, until 1948, racial covenants in property deeds restricted where blacks and other ethnic groups could buy property and land.[15] Discriminatory practices made life difficult for owners and patrons of downtown black businesses,[16] and DC's Municipal Code effectively legalized segregation until the 1950s.[17] Local zoning regulations encouraged the construction of rental apartments over single-family homes in Southeast.[18]

DC's status as a federal city has also played a role in where DC residents live, work and grow up. The federal government, with its size and presence, has displaced existing residents from downtown neighborhoods and drawn new residents to neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill. The establishment of embassies from Central American countries drew Hispanic residents to the nearby neighborhoods of Adams Morgan and Mount Pleasant, as embassy staff put down roots.[19] Policies such as segregation in federal agency employment beginning in Woodrow Wilson's presidency[20] separated black office workers from whites and removed some black civil servants, helping to discourage blacks from joining the federal workforce, and a World War II-era federal policy not to disrupt existing racial housing patterns[21] maintained the status quo. Federal policies aimed at redevelopment have resulted in highways and public housing in the neighborhoods of Mayfair, Carver Langston, Barry's Farm, Congress Heights, Kenilworth and Southwest.[22, 23]

DC's history is one of fast-changing demographics. Historical events, such as the two 20th century world wars and desegregation, caused fast and large shifts in the racial makeup of numerous DC neighborhoods, just as economic development is doing today. Throughout DC history and even today, who is

12. http://www.blm.gov/public_land_statistics/pls99/99pl1-3.pdf
13. A unit defined by the DC Office of Planning, see the map here: http://www.neighborhoodinfodc.org/pdfs/Cluster.pdf. Appendix A lists the neighborhood clusters by number and name.
14. Fitzpatrick, S., & Goodwin, M.R. (2001). *The Guide to Black Washington: Places and Events of Historical and Cultural Significance in the Nation's Capital.* (p. 35). New York, NY: Hippocrene Books, Inc.
15. The Smithsonian Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture. (2005). *The Black Washingtonians: 300 Years of African American History* (p. 231). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; Fitzpatrick & Goodwin, (p. 178).
16. Smith, K.S. (Ed.). (2010). *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital* (2nd ed.) (p. 66). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
17. See note 17. (p. xv).
18. See note 17. (pp. 170-171).
19. Cary, F. C. (ed.). (1996). *Washington Odyssey: A Multicultural History of the Nation's Capital* (p. 233). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books.
20. See note 16. (p.146).
21. See note 15. (p. 59).
22. See note 15. (pp. 65-66).
23. See note 17. (pp. 5, 95-97).

moving into DC and who is moving out of DC have transformed the city's neighborhoods seemingly overnight.[24]

Understanding the Role of Place in Children's Lives

Despite a growing recognition of the role of place in children's lives, little research has quantified how neighborhoods where children live affect their transitions to adulthood or on characteristics (other than poverty) that might influence their development.[25] Place-based analysis usually takes measures of individual or family well-being and reports them by city, county or some unit of place.

Recently, a new approach, based on mapping opportunity, has emerged.[26] Results indicate that neighborhood conditions can measurably affect children's educational outcomes,[27] physical health[28] and behavioral health.[29]

Through this DC KIDS COUNT e-databook and its accompanying online interactive tools, DC Action for Children is blending a traditional approach to understanding child well-being (mapping individual-level indicators) and this emerging approach (mapping neighborhood-level indicators). All of this work is to ask, and try to answer, the following questions: How do assets and opportunities available to DC children and families vary by neighborhood?

Place and Action

Results from programs such as Moving to Opportunity (MTO) which tried to reduce the negative effects of place on children and families by moving them out of high-poverty neighborhoods and into lower-poverty neighborhoods, have been disappointing. For example, the final evaluation of MTO found the program had few detectable effects on child physical health or risky behaviors, no detectable impacts on educational achievement as measured by standardized testing and some negative effects on young men, despite some beneficial effects for young women.[30]

Another action choice is to work to improve the neighborhoods children and families already live in, especially those with the compound challenges of family poverty and neighborhood poverty. Doing this is beyond the power of individual children and families. Change will require place-based strategies and collective action.

Place-based strategies seek to change conditions in communities by going beyond traditional approaches.[31] The strategies are holistic and long-term. They aim to address complex problems by focusing on the social and physical environment of a community and on better integrated and more accessible service systems, rather than focusing principally on the problems faced by individuals.[32]

This approach will take effort. Whether you are a parent or grandparent, a teacher, a policy maker, a city leader, an advocate or just a concerned citizen – please join us. Working together, all of us who care about our city's future and our children's success can:

- Build and sustain neighborhood assets that help support families and help children grow up to become healthy, successful adults.
- Identify where assets and needs are mismatched for children and their families.
- Invest more wisely to address inequity in opportunity and inequality in outcome.
- Build data systems that help identify where we are succeeding and where and why we are failing.

24. See note 20. (pp. xiii-xxv).
25. Popkin, S.J., Acs, G., & Smith, R. (2010). Understanding How Place Matters For Kids. *Community Investments*, 22(1).
26. See, for example, the opportunity mapping work of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University (http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/) and the opportunity index of Opportunity Nation (http://www.opportunitynation.org/).
27. Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University. (2011). Mapping Child Well-Being in Duval County, Florida.
28. Singh, G., Siahpush, M., & Kogan, M. (2010). Neighborhood Social Conditions, Built Environment and Childhood Obesity. *Health Affairs*, 29(3), 503-512.
29. Buu, A. et al. (2009). Parent, Family and Neighborhood Effects on the Development of Child Substance Use and Other Psychopathology from Preschool to the Start of Adulthood. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 70(4), 489-498.
30. US Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2011). Moving to Opportunity for Fair Housing Demonstration Program: Final Impacts Evaluation.
31. See note 12.
32. Centre for Community Child Health, The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. (2011). Place-Based Approaches to Supporting Children and Families.

Appendix A – DC Neighborhood Clusters by Name and Number*

Cluster 1: Kalorama Heights, Adams Morgan, Lanier Heights
Cluster 2: Columbia Heights, Mt. Pleasant, Pleasant Plains, Park View
Cluster 3: Howard University, Le Droit Park, Cardozo/Shaw
Cluster 4: Georgetown, Burleith/Hillandale
Cluster 5: West End, Foggy Bottom, GWU
Cluster 6: Dupont Circle, Connecticut Avenue/K Street
Cluster 7: Shaw, Logan Circle
Cluster 8: Downtown, Chinatown, Penn Quarters, Mount Vernon Square, North Capitol Street
Cluster 9: Southwest Employment Area, Southwest/Waterfront, Fort McNair, Buzzard Point
Cluster 10: Hawthorne, Barnaby Woods, Chevy Chase
Cluster 11: Friendship Heights, American University Park, Tenleytown
Cluster 12: North Cleveland Park, Forest Hills, Van Ness
Cluster 13: Spring Valley, Palisades, Wesley Heights, Foxhall Crescent, Foxhall Village,
       Georgetown Reservoir
Cluster 14: Cathedral Heights, McLean Gardens, Glover Park
Cluster 15: Cleveland Park, Woodley Park, Massachusetts Avenue Heights,
       Woodland-Normanstone Terrace
Cluster 16: Colonial Village, Shepherd Park, North Portal Estates
Cluster 17: Takoma, Brightwood, Manor Park
Cluster 18: Brightwood Park, Crestwood, Petworth
Cluster 19: Lamond Riggs, Queens Chapel, Fort Totten, Pleasant Hill
Cluster 20: North Michigan Park, Michigan Park, University Heights
Cluster 21: Edgewood, Bloomingdale, Truxton Circle, Eckington
Cluster 22: Brookland, Brentwood, Langdon
Cluster 23: Ivy City, Arboretum, Trinidad, Carver Langston
Cluster 24: Woodridge, Fort Lincoln, Gateway
Cluster 25: Union Station, Stanton Park, Kingman Park
Cluster 26: Capitol Hill, Lincoln Park
Cluster 27: Near Southeast, Navy Yard
Cluster 28: Historic Anacostia
Cluster 29: Eastland Gardens, Kenilworth
Cluster 30: Mayfair, Hillbrook, Mahaning Heights
Cluster 31: Deanwood, Burrville, Grant Park, Lincoln Heights, Fairmont Heights
Cluster 32: River Terrace, Benning, Greenway, Fort Dupont
Cluster 33: Capitol View, Marshall Heights, Benning Heights
Cluster 34: Twining, Fairlawn, Randle Highlands, Penn Branch, Fort Davis Park, Dupont Park
Cluster 35: Fairfax Village, Naylor Gardens, Hillcrest, Summit Park
Cluster 36: Woodland/Fort Stanton, Garfield Heights, Knox Hill
Cluster 37: Sheridan, Barry Farm, Buena Vista
Cluster 39: Douglass, Shipley Terrace
Cluster 39: Congress Heights, Bellevue, Washington Highlands

* A small number of DC residents (about 1 percent) live outside of cluster bounds.

**DC Action
for Children**

Shaping Policy for DC's Youngest Citizens