

Philadelphia Can Be a City Where We Have the Courage to Heal Systemic Rifts that Disproportionately Harm Children of Color

What Kids Need

Over half of Philadelphia's population is Black and Hispanic and that is a strength. Where other cities may still be vying to have Black and Hispanic electeds, business leaders, home-grown talent, and spaces that are Black and Hispanic-owned for Black and Hispanic people, Philadelphia can check those boxes.

We have many examples celebrating the indelible contributions of Blacks and Hispanics have made to this city: historical buildings and art marking the work of Black freedom fighters, parades and murals remembering the heritage Hispanic communities bring, and Black and Hispanic students who every day excel at school, attend premiere colleges, establish exciting careers, and lead enthralling lives.

Despite such examples of excellence, Philadelphia still struggles with undoing deeply rooted structures that perpetuate very different levels of access to opportunity. Generations of Black and Hispanic children have had to navigate a two-tiered systems that robs them of access to quality learning, family support, and respect that their white peers have taken for granted for far too long. This must end.

The next Mayor must:

- Build systems that guarantee access to high quality early learning, quality public schools, and vibrant recreation centers and other after school programs that reach and respect the racial and ethnic identities of these children and their communities.
- Do what is necessary so that law enforcement, court personnel and other public servants are trained how to embrace respect and care for children of every color in the city. At minimum, the mayor must convene and direct main players in the criminal justice system – law enforcement, the courts, the District Attorney, Human Services, the Defenders, the private bar, and the schools – to actively reduce the number of Black and Hispanic youth entangled in the juvenile justice system.
- Direct the school board to implement training and accountability systems that remove the racial and cultural biases in the schools that inhibit parental engagement. .
- Uplift those parenting children by providing city funds to programs that build parents' capacity to improve their schools and communities.

Why This Matters To Kids, Parents and, The City

Every child can thrive where adults care and expect excellence from them. Children can neither combat systemic racism nor the biases of adults trusted to develop them. It is the job of the adults of this city to remove these structural and internal barriers so that every child can flourish.

A legacy of systemic racism that accepts low expectations for achievement and adopts high expectations for criminality and self-destructive behavior for children of color impedes the missions of critical public systems intended to support the healthy development of children.

The City must proactively support Black and Hispanic children to meet the expectations for educational and employability success. It must also reverse the trend where a majority of children entangled in the criminal justice system and harmed by violence are children of color.

Why This Matters To Kids, Parents and, The City

Research shows that children of color grow to be adults who are less likely to depend on public benefits, less likely to be incarcerated, and more likely to have higher earning potential over their lifetime when given equitable access to inputs that help parents raise their children.

When the Mayor addresses the legacy of racial bias that stunts the prospects of children head-on he/she will make our city safer and produce the added benefit of a more prosperous city as well.

The Details

The trends of racial disproportionality in the city demonstrate structural barriers to success for children of color. In early learning, 34% of Black and Hispanic children are in high quality programs compared to their white peers where 42% are enrolled in the best programs.

Black and Hispanic children attend the lowest quality schools compared to their white peers. For every 50 Black and Hispanic children in district schools, seven are admitted to magnet high schools, while for every 50 white students, twelve are enrolled in magnet high schools.

Further, 50% of Black and Hispanic students matriculate to post secondary programs after high school compared to 60% of their white peers.

Finally, Black and Hispanic youth make up 92% of arrests and 94.6% of children sent to detention. White youth make up 5.7% of arrests and 3.6% of children sent to detention.

This data is evidence that the systems that serve children of color have inherent biases that must be addressed head-on.

At a minimum the Mayor must:

- Direct the Office of Children and Families to make sure more early learning programs serving children of color have the upfront and recurrent funding needed to hire credentialed staff who ensure a larger share of non-white children start school ready to learn.
- Increase funding for prevention programs, recreation/after school programming, and career technical education so that Black and Hispanic children can play and grow in safe spaces with adult mentorship.
- Use their influence on the school board to make sure that schools serving Black and Hispanic children have more resources so there are ample highly effective and experienced teachers and staff to accelerate student educational progress.
- Assemble and lead the entire criminal justice system from schools, to law enforcement, the courts, the District Attorney, Human Services, the Defenders and the private bar to reach agreement on all the strategic decisions and align resources to reduce the share of Black and Hispanic youth who become connected to the juvenile justice system at a share lower their share of the city's youth population.
- Reform the city personnel evaluation system to measure and ensure staff know how to work in anti-racist manner within four years.

About The Kids Campaign

The Kids Campaign is a coalition of 60 plus child-serving groups in Philadelphia. Our coalition formed to make sure that the next mayor of Philadelphia is ready to do whatever it takes to ensure a **S.E.C.U.R.E.** future for every kid – a future with Safety, an Education, Careers, Uplift, Recreation, and a healthy Environment. A non-partisan effort, the Kids Campaign will share information parents and voters need to determine which candidate will make every day safer than the one before for children and youth. Organizations and individuals can learn more and join the Kids Campaign at www.thekidscampaign.org.