



NBCDI

National Black Child
Development Institute

Our Course of Action

A week has passed since what has been called the most surprising and unprecedented presidential election result in recent memory. Many organizations and individuals have released statements in response. The National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) is issuing a **Call to Action**.

As is customary, our President and CEO gathers the team following major events, whether tragic or celebratory, to share our disappointments, concerns, hopes, and aspirations. Last week was no exception. Our time together was insightful, emotionally charged, and constructive. From that meeting came **NBCDI's Call to Action** rather than a statement from our President and CEO.

The outcome of this election will not paralyze our communities. The children and families we partner with and represent will not fold and crumble. We are resilient and empowered. As people seek solutions to mounting concerns and ponder what they can do to create change, we must rally our friends, family members, neighbors, families at our children's schools, faith communities, fraternities and sororities, membership organizations, community centers—every organization and assembly of leaders in our communities—to engage with greater intentionality and urgency.

Our work must begin at the local level. The National Black Child Development Institute has been working for 46 years to improve and advance the quality of life for Black children and families through education and advocacy. NBCDI continues to advocate for policies that support and positively impact our communities and oppose or inform those that do not. Although we are preparing to engage the new administration, we are not stopping there. With our National Affiliate Network, we are mobilizing locally. We have a clear agenda for action, one that will continue to challenge societal norms, change the trajectory for our children, and reshape the educational landscape in *your* neighborhood and communities across the country.

Here's how you can get started:

- 1) **Get involved in demanding better schools and early learning centers to ensure our children are receiving a high quality education.** All of us must invest our time and talents in ensuring our children's success. There are so many traditional and nontraditional ways to get involved: chaperoning a field trip, coaching, planting a school garden, reading, teaching dance, or preparing your favorite recipe with your children's class.

Ask about the school or center's discipline policy. Ensure suspensions and expulsions are no longer acceptable practices in the early learning centers and elementary schools in your community. [Data](#) from the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights shows that children of color are suspended at disproportionate rates. Black

preschool children are 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as white preschool children. These practices disrupt learning and impact the social and emotional well-being of our children. If your local school or center is suspending and expelling students ages eight and under, share this information with friends, families at the school, and other community members. Have them join you in advocating for the elimination of suspensions and expulsions, sharing your concerns with appointed and elected officials.

To assist you in this process, and ensure you know the access points and levers that you can use to demand the necessary changes, NBCDI with our partners, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, The Education Trust, and the U.S. Department of Education, released the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Parent Power Toolkit**. The toolkit is designed to better equip parents to engage and hold accountable school leaders and advocate for the elimination of suspensions and expulsions for children ages eight and under and advocate for equitable funding, resource allocation, and practices that support children receiving high quality education. You can begin using the ESSA Parent Power Toolkit today, download it [here](#).

- 2) **Talk, read, and sing** to the children you love and care about. **It can change their trajectory.** Learning begins at birth. When a child is born, his or her brain is already a quarter of the size it will be in adulthood and by the time that child is three years old, the brain is experiencing the most rapid period of growth, making this time the optimal opportunity for parents and caregivers to engage in brain-building moments. Critical to brain development in young children is their consistent interaction with their caregivers and the environment as they grow⁴. Here are brain development resources and tools developed by NBCDI's partners: [VROOM, Too Small to Fail](#), and the [African American Babies Coalition](#).
- 3) **Become an advocate and champion for the issues important to you and that most impact your family and community.** Ensure you and your circle are aware of and understand proposed policies, regulations, and regulatory and policy changes. Be aware of your local election cycles and **VOTE** even when there isn't a presidential election. Remember, local elections determine your school superintendents, school board members, police chiefs and sheriffs, district and state's attorneys, and other officials that directly and indirectly impact children, families, and communities.

The National Black Child Development Institute, in partnership with the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, also released the Early Learning Toolkit for Faith-Based and Community Leaders. This toolkit is designed to equip diverse community leaders as advocates for high quality early learning experiences for young children. Members and leaders of faith-based communities are using the toolkit to support, expand, and initiate early learning programming for young children and their families. The toolkit identifies best practices from faith-based and

community organizations across the nation that are grounded in holistic approaches, designed to uplift children, families, and communities. You can begin using the Early Learning Toolkit for Faith-Based and Community Leaders today, download it [here](#).

There is power in numbers. Our presence and participation matters. How we show up, for ourselves, our children, and our communities matters. Our presence engenders infinite power, purpose, and possibility.

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. *We* are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” -President Barack Obama

Download NBCDI's [Action Agenda](#).