



**Testimony of
Foster and Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (FAPAC)**

**DC Child and Family Services Agency Performance Oversight Hearing
FISCAL YEARS 2025-2026**

Tuesday, January 28, 2026
9:30 AM Hearing

Dear members of the Youth Affairs Committee,

The Foster and Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (FAPAC) has served as both a partner and a critical voice to the DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) for more than twenty-six years. During that time, we have made significant strides in strengthening services and programs for children in foster care, foster and adoptive families, youth transitioning to adulthood, and birth families - ultimately working to prevent the need for foster care intervention whenever possible.

As you know, we have long advocated for the approximately 250 DC children in foster care who are placed in Maryland to be returned to the District. We established the vision of “DC Kids in DC Care,” and we are excited to share that CFSA has partnered with FAPAC to recruit more foster parents here in DC. As a result, we are already seeing increased interest from caring District residents who want to step forward as foster parents. While the ideal goal remains eliminating the need for foster care intervention by strengthening birth families so children can remain safely with their natural families, we are encouraged by this important progress and are proud to participate in efforts to expand the pool of DC-based foster parents. This progress has been made possible because Director Tanya Torres Trice and her team have committed to trying something new. Never before have I witnessed such a deep and genuine commitment to meaningful change and improvement within the child welfare system at CFSA.

That said, there are still critical issues that require additional attention. We need more social workers who are knowledgeable, professional, and committed to high standards of practice. Equally important, those social workers need stronger support and adequate opportunities for



rest. This work, serving children and families in crisis, is both essential and exhausting. I urge the committee to explore strategies to recruit more DC-based social workers and to invest in the resources and supports they need to sustain this vital work.

We also request additional funding for the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs throughout the District. The purpose of these programs is to strengthen families and prevent child abuse and neglect before it occurs by building protective factors, providing early supports, and engaging communities in keeping children safe. CBCAP programs aim to:

- Prevent child abuse and neglect through proactive, family-focused services
- Strengthen parental resilience so caregivers can manage stress and challenges
- Build social connections to reduce isolation and increase peer support
- Increase knowledge of parenting and child development
- Provide concrete supports in times of need, such as referrals for housing, food, childcare, or mental health services
- Promote children's social and emotional well-being

CBCAP programs, combined with the 211 Warm Line, are well aligned to support families before crises occur. However, additional funding is needed to expand our parenting classes. Many participants are requesting ongoing emotional support and coaching after completing the courses, and for FAPAC, meeting this need is only possible with increased financial support. We do the best we can with the resources available, but with additional funding, we could continue providing families with the sustained support they need as they learn to build their own village.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. As always, FAPAC remains a committed partner in strengthening families and communities across the District.

Najiba Hlemini

Executive Director

Najibah@dcfapac.org



The Foster and Adoptive Parent Advocacy Center (“FAPAC”) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to empower and advocate for families and youth involved in the child welfare system, promoting *the long-term stability of families in the nation’s capital*. We envision a future where every child in the nation’s capital is safe, supported, and nurtured by their birth, kinship, foster, or adoptive family, and every family is empowered to uphold the well-being and dignity of the children in their care.