



# A parent-run, parent-led grassroots organization fighting for affordable quality child care for all

Parent Voices chapters are hosted by child care resource and referral agencies throughout California.

## Celebrating our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

### “A powerful feeling”

Tina Fleton has been active in Parent Voices from the beginning—she joined the Oakland chapter in '96, when she was receiving subsidized child care for her son, now 12.

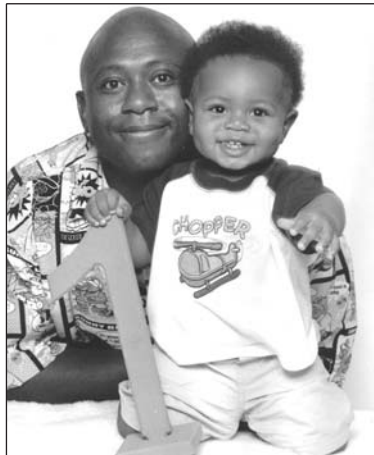
Of the many Parent Voices events she's attended—Stand for Children Day, budget hearings, public speak-outs where parents talk to politicians—she enjoys Stand for Children marches most. “We're really, really loud,” she says. “Everybody's involved, cars are honking. It's a powerful feeling, like your voice is being heard.”

In the beginning, speaking to legislators was “intimidating,” she says. “You have one to two minutes to present your case in a powerful way. But (speaking out) gets easier and easier.”

Being involved in Parent Voices “is easy,” she says. “You get to bring your children to meetings, there's always (food). It's like a second family.” Fleton now works at Bananas resource and referral agency, a decision she credits to her Parent Voices involvement.

### “A little more confident”

Mitchell White got involved recently in Chico's Parent Voices chapter because, without child care for his 20-month-old son, “I wouldn't be able to attend school. I wouldn't have a 4.0.” He even rescheduled an exam to be at



Mitchell White and his son, Benaiah Webster-White.

MITCHELL WHITE

the recent Stand for Children Day rally, where he “spoke from the heart,” he says, while other Chico parents cheered him on.

“(Now) I feel a little more confident,” he says. “(And) Parent Voices made me think about people other than myself.”

### In the past 10 years, Parent Voices...

- 1996: Was founded** at five resource and referral agencies
- 1997: Helped shape one of the best state child care policies** under welfare reform
- 1998: Trained parents** on public speaking, the state budget, and child care policy
- 1999: Sponsored legislation** that would have required the state to match employer contributions for employees' child care
- 2000: Began an asthma awareness campaign** in SF
- 2001-2005: Prevented budget cuts** to Stage 3 child care subsidies (for families off welfare for two years or more). In 2003, Parent Voices letters and rallies, plus budget hearings packed with parents, made the difference. In 2006, no cuts were proposed.
- 2001: Held an accountability session** with legislators
- 2002: Expanded** across the state
- 2003: Launched child care campaigns** that help parents go to work and college
- 2004: Engaged in media advocacy**
- 2006: Began a “defrost the SMI” campaign** to raise eligibility guidelines for child care subsidies to keep up with inflation.

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For more information or to find the Parent Voices chapter nearest you, contact Mary Ignatius, 415-882-0234, [mignatius@rrnetwork.org](mailto:mignatius@rrnetwork.org).