

Helen Blank

Helen Blank is Director of Leadership and Public Policy, working on child care and early education issues, at the National Women's Law Center.

Previously Ms. Blank served 24 years as the director of the Child Care and Development Division at the Children's Defense Fund. While at the Children's Defense Fund, Ms. Blank spearheaded a variety of efforts for improved early learning legislation. In an effort to pass the Act for Better Child Care, the first comprehensive federal child care legislation, she organized the Alliance for Better Child Care. Additionally she developed a guide for the implementation of the legislation that was enacted, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, that was widely used by state policymakers and child care leaders. In 1991, she led an effective campaign to convince the Bush administration to issue regulations for the Child Care and Development Block Grant that allowed states to use the new federal funds in the best interests of children. She was also a leader in efforts to expand and improve the child care provisions in welfare reform, subsequently developing a guide to assist states in implementing the provisions. In addition, she created the Child Care Now!® Campaign, an ongoing initiative, which attempts to focus attention on early care and education

She has authored and co-authored numerous major studies and reports on state child care policies including [A Center Piece of the Child Care Puzzle; Providing Prekindergarten in Child Care Centers; Getting Organized: Unionizing Home-Based Child Care Providers; Close to Home: State Strategies to Strengthen and Support Family, Friend and Neighbor Care, In Their Own Voices: Parents and Providers Struggling with Child Care Cuts; Working Together for Children: Head Start and Child Care Partnerships; Seeds of Success: Pre-Kindergarten Initiatives; and A Fragile Foundation: State Child Care Assistance Policies](#), and numerous articles and papers on child care policies.

While at CDF, she created and led the Emerging Leaders Program for up and coming leaders in early care and education and at the National Women's Law Center co-directs PLAN, the Progressive Leadership and Advocacy Network for emerging leaders focusing on issues affecting low-income women and their families.

Prior to her work at the Children's Defense Fund, she spent two years at the Child Welfare League of America where she was instrumental in the development of child welfare reform legislation. Working with the National Child Nutrition Project, she directed a model food stamp outreach campaign in the Washington Metropolitan area that increased food stamp participation, and resulted in major improvements in the administration of the program in several local jurisdictions. In addition, she helped advocate for replication of this campaign in a number of states.

Ms. Blank is a member of Teach for America's Early Childhood Advisory Board, the T.E.A.C.H.® Early Childhood Advisory Committee, the Child Care Food Program Sponsors' Forum, and the Advisory Board for LISC, the Local Initiative Support Corporation.

Ms. Blank has a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Michigan and a Master's Degree in Urban Planning from Hunter College of the City University of New York.