January 18:  **Children's Inaugural Ball - 2009**  -- *America's Children celebrate and welcome the new President*; Sunday, January 18, 2009; 12:00 noon - 5:00pm; Historical Society of Washington, D.C., 801 K Street, NW at Mount Vernon Square, Washington, DC, sponsored by Every Child Matters Educational Fund, and many other national sponsors. For more information, go to their website at: [http://www.everychildmatters.org/National/Campaigns/Children-s-Inaugural-Ball.html](http://www.everychildmatters.org/National/Campaigns/Children-s-Inaugural-Ball.html)

January 31:  **I'll Make Me a World in Iowa** – January 31, 2009, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Polk County Convention Complex, Des Moines, Iowa. This free event is a diverse collaboration of Iowans, highlighting African American arts, culture and contributions through education, awareness, and preservation. For more information, go to: [www.worldiniowa.org](http://www.worldiniowa.org)

February 19:  **“Anger Replacement Therapy”**, Polk County Model Court Training Academy; 12 noon, Room 209A, Polk County Courthouse, Des Moines. Free CLEs and CEUs.

March 6-7:  **IFAPA Annual Spring Conference** – March 6 & 7, 2009, Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, Ankeny, Iowa. The annual conference of the Iowa Foster and Adoptive Parent’s Association features keynote presentations by Marsha Ternus, Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court and Eugene Gessow, Director of the Iowa Department of Human Services. For more information, go to IFAPA’s website at: [www.ifapa.org](http://www.ifapa.org)

March 19:  **“Family and Juvenile Drug Courts in Polk County,”** Polk County Model Court Training Academy; 12 noon, Room 209A, Polk County Courthouse, Des Moines. Free CLEs and CEUs.
**S-CHIP Reauthorization Begins:** You may recall from previous editions of *Child Views* that last year, Congress had reauthorized and expanded S-CHIP (State Children’s Health Insurance Program), only to have the bill vetoed by President Bush. Because of a new administration coming to Washington, D.C., quick action is expected on the S-CHIP Reauthorization. Many leaders in both the Senate and House are setting a goal to have a reauthorization bill on President Obama's desk soon after his inauguration and perhaps even on the very first day of his Presidency.

This week, the House overwhelmingly passed its version of the bill. The House bill is based largely on the first version of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007. The House version renews S-CHIP program and substantially increases its funding, establishes a major new initiative to enroll millions of already-eligible uninsured children in Medicaid and S-CHIP; and launches a new child health quality program. The House bill also includes “The Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act” (ICHIA), which would eliminate the 5-year bar that currently prevents states from covering legally present immigrant children. The Senate is in the process of addressing the issue as this edition of *Child Views* went to press.

**Arkansas Law Challenged:** Over a dozen families filed a lawsuit challenging a new Arkansas law banning unmarried couples living together from becoming foster or adoptive parents just two days before the new law is to take effect. The lawsuit was filed by the Arkansas chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of 29 adults and children from more than a dozen families. One of the named plaintiffs is a grandmother who lives with her same-sex partner of nine years and is the only relative able and willing to adopt her grandchild, who is now in Arkansas state care. The lawsuit was filed against the state of Arkansas, the attorney general, the Arkansas Department of Human Services and its director, and the Child Welfare Agency Review Board and its chairman.

The state had already barred cohabiting unmarried couples from becoming foster parents and was in the process of reversing that policy when voters approved the new ban. The ACLU was previously successful in a lawsuit that led the state Arkansas Supreme Court to overturn the state's ban on gay foster parents in 2006. The new act was passed as a voter initiative in response to that ruling.
Children in America: The following information appears in the recent publication of the Children’s Defense Fund entitled “The State of America’s Children 2008”:

How America Ranks Among Industrialized Countries in Investing in and Protecting Children:

- 1st in gross domestic product.
- 1st in number of billionaires.
- 1st in number of persons incarcerated.
- 1st in health expenditures.
- 1st in military technology.
- 1st in defense expenditures.
- 1st in military weapons exports.
- 21st in 15-year-olds’ science scores.
- 22nd in low birthweight rates.
- 25th in 15-year-olds’ math scores.
- 25th in infant mortality rates.
- Last in relative child poverty.
- Last in the gap between the rich and the poor.
- Last in adolescent birth rates (ages 15 to 19).
- Last in protecting our children against gun violence.

The United States and Somalia (which has no legally constituted government) are the only two United Nations members that have failed to ratify the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

If we compare just Black child well-being to children in other nations:

- 62 nations have lower infant mortality rates, including Sri Lanka.
- Over 100 nations have lower low birthweight rates, including Algeria, Botswana and Panama.
- Black women in the United States are more likely to die from complications of pregnancy or childbirth than women in Uzbekistan.

“But I know somehow, that only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.