

## Ms. Rodgers Goes to Washington

It seems that politics has been anything but usual lately and one wonders if there are meaningful ways to affect national policy regarding issues so important to our patients and their families. Riley Child Development Center Family Leadership Coordinator and Training Director Rylin Rodgers, however, encourages each of us to engage our elected leaders to inform them about the value of policies and programs that support healthy Hoosiers. Her own engagement with elected leaders resulted in a December 13, 2011 trip to Washington, DC to participate in a White House Policy Briefing and attend a White House Holiday Party hosted by President and Mrs. Obama. Rylin's personal life experience in addition to her professional work has resulted in her extensive knowledge of public and private health care financing. This past summer Rylin worked hard to provide information about how proposed changes to Medicaid would adversely impact families and the provider systems that serve them. These efforts resulted in relationships with the Obama administration that ultimately lead to the invitation to the December briefing and celebration. While attending the policy briefing, Rylin had the opportunity to dialog with the Obama administration about its 2012 priorities, agenda and increased efforts at public engagement. Using social media, Rylin was able to share her learning instantly with colleagues, students and families, thereby continuing to build relationships and extend impact. Access to health care, systems and related services for children who have disabilities and special health care needs touches the lives of millions of Americans and demands the continued engagement of us all. For Rylin this engagement happens at the family level and with policymakers in our nation's capital. Yet we are all called to engage at some level as we seek to support children with disabilities and special health care needs and their families achieve their hopes and dreams. Will you become engaged in 2012?

