

March/ April Advocacy Toolkit



Advancing quality early care
and education in Bucks, Chester,
Delaware, Montgomery and
Philadelphia Counties

Our asks for this month:

- Engage the public in celebrating young children during the Week of the Young Child.
- Get families and staff prepared to vote in the May primary election.
- Educate lawmakers to raise support for a PA budget that will support ECE.

What this kit contains:

- Planning resources for Week of the Young Child, **April 2-8**.
- Sharing your story through interview or social media storm on **April 19th**.
- Information on getting families and teachers out to vote on **May 17th**.

What you can do:

1. **Advocacy Activity #1: Celebrate ECE During the Week of the Young Child**

- The annual Week of the Young Child is a great place to celebrate early learning AND educate others about ECE. Learn more about Week of the Young Child: <https://www.naeyc.org/events/woyc/overview>. Invite legislators! Click [here](#) to find yours, or [email us](#) and we'll contact them for you.
- Get creative! On Artsy Thursday, try out an Advocacy craft project! See below for ideas and how-to's. Share these crafts on social media (tag **@FirstUpEarlyEd** with and **#WOYC22**) or deliver to your lawmakers' offices.
- Share your work -- on social media, your local paper, via video blog, whatever format is comfortable for you. SEPECC would love to highlight your activities in our next meeting as well. Let us know what you did with a few sentences and a jpeg or video!
- *WOYC activities are eligible for gift cards ranging from \$20-\$250!* Contact Elizabeth.Ozer@FirstUp.org to share your event and receive your reward.

Advocacy Crafts

1--Show how little ones BLOOM in early ed with a flower corsage or boutonniere!



1. Let each kid decorate a white coffee filter using washable markers. Write kid's name with fine tip permanent marker near the edge.
2. Adults will give a light spritz to each filter and let kids watch the colors bleed and run.
3. If you have time and want a more colorful result, give kids watercolor paints, a brush, and

jars of water so they can enhance the moist coffee filter.

4. Set aside to let dry.
5. Pinch center of coffee filter(s). Twist one end of a green pipe cleaner tightly around the pinched center and curl the other end around as a stem.
6. If you wish, fan flower edges out. Have kids choose a self-adhesive foamie shape—star, circle, scalloped flower shape, etc., or a plastic gem with adhesive back or glue dot, and stick to center of fanned-out flower.
7. Make leaves, like those below, and tape onto the curled stem.
8. Tape on a safety pin for wearing corsage or boutonniere on a lapel, or ponytail ring, for wearing the corsage on a wrist.



*Take Action at
www.StartStrongPA.org so
children can bloom!*

For flowers that go
home to families

For flowers that go
to legislators

*Help little ones
BLOOM! Devote MORE funding
To early childhood programs*

2--Show how ECE helps little ones SOAR with a butterfly plant stick

Let each kid decorate one or two white coffee filters using washable markers. In small print, write kid's name with fine tip permanent marker near the edge.



1. Adults will give a light spritz to each filter and let kids watch the colors bleed and run. Fun!
2. If there is time and want a more colorful result, give kids watercolor paints, a brush, and jars of water so they can enhance the moist coffee filter(s).
3. Set aside to let dry.
4. If you want a colorful butterfly body, let kids color a spring-type clothespin with crayons.
5. Fold a 3" piece of pipe cleaner in half, for antennae.
6. Pleat or gather colored coffee filter(s) from one edge to the center and on to the opposite edge, to make two (or two sets) of butterfly wings. Clamp with spring-type

clothespin to secure, and add the antennae.

7. If desired, add small wiggle eyes.
8. Tape butterfly to a long straw, a dowel, or pencil, or skewer, for a plant stick.
9. Copy a message like one below on strips of paper, and wrap one end around plant stick.

for families: *Take Action at www.StartStrongPA.org so little ones can SOAR!*

for legislators: *Raise ECE funding and help children SOAR*



Kid crafts for Week of the Young Child, for Spring, for Provider Appreciation Day, or for Mother's Day/Father's Day – by Eleanor Levie, volunteer advocate for SEPECC and the National Council of Jewish Women; eleanorlevie@gmail.com.

Advocacy Activity #2: Share your Story! Stories matter-- yours may change the perspective of your community and lawmakers. Join the social media storm on April 19, participate in a PQAS level training, or engage with your legislators.

Hone your Storytelling skills & Earn PQAS at one of these Advocacy events

First Up Storytelling workshop -- March 24, 6:00-8:00 pm

ECE Advocacy is driven by stories. Teachers and families of young children have powerful stories that illustrate the value of ECE. You may wonder, *What is my story? How do I tell it? Will I find the time to write it down? Who would I share it with?* First Up is here to help! In this powerful workshop, participants will learn about the impact of stories, determine the highlights of their experience, and work with peers to capture their voice for advocacy. No storytelling experience necessary- just experience in early learning! Register here:

<https://www.papdregistry.org/register.aspx?evid=338203>

PACCA Advocate With Confidence series -- This two-part series covers everything from how to: find, research and establish a relationship with your representatives; leave a memorable impression; involve your staff, parents and allies; and present a unified “ask” that’s also tailored to you.

Advocate with Confidence! Part 1: Nuts and Bolts -- Wednesday, March 30, 1:00 - 2:30 pm

We will explain the PA budget process, what’s a “target,” an “ask,” the role(s) of advocates and legislators, how to research your targets, make your approach, and prep for the meeting. At the end of the session you’ll get a homework assignment that could take up to a half-hour. Register at https://www.memberleap.com/members/evr/reg_event.php?orgcode=PCCA&evid=30036439

Advocate with Confidence! Part 2: I Scheduled a Meeting! Now What? -- Wednesday, April 6, 1:00 - 2:30 pm

We’ll show you how to shape your own story into effective communication that will resonate with your audience. Adapt our talking points around the 2022 state budget into messages they’ll remember. We’ll review the ELPA “ask” around child care and pre-k. You’ll be able to prep your staff and parents to be active participants on your team.

https://www.memberleap.com/members/evr/reg_event.php?orgcode=PCCA&evid=30037661

The Crisis is Real Social Media Storm -- **Tuesday, 4/19** Start Strong PA is coordinating a Social Media Storm on April 19th to continue highlighting issues plaguing child care providers and families during this crisis. We are asking child care programs to fill in the blank information and post one or more of the following anytime on April 19th. Include the hashtags #thecrisisreal #fundchildcare and tag us @SEPECC @FirstUpEarlyEd @startstrongpa. If you can include a picture of your program, a classroom, yourself, and/or your staff, please add that to the post.
**Note: Participants who create a post for this event are eligible for a \$30 VISA gift card.*

Sample messages to copy and paste into a post from your account:

- My child care program **[PROGRAM NAME] in [NAME OF COUNTY]** cannot serve all the families that need us. We currently have a waiting list of **[XX]** children. #thecrisisreal #fundchildcare @startstrongpa
- My child care program **[PROGRAM NAME] in [NAME OF COUNTY]** cannot find enough staff to serve all the families that need us. We currently have **[XX]** closed classrooms. #thecrisisreal #fundchildcare @startstrongpa
- My child care program **[PROGRAM NAME] in [NAME OF COUNTY]** cannot find qualified staff to fill our classrooms. We currently have **[XX]** openings because we cannot compete with other businesses' higher wages. #thecrisisreal #fundchildcare @startstrongpa
- My child care program **[PROGRAM NAME] in [NAME OF COUNTY]** needs federal and state support to pay our staff more than **[\$11/hour]**. Child care teachers should not live in poverty. #thecrisisreal #fundchildcare @startstrongpa

Short on time or want to work ahead? Capture your story via this simple [Google form](#) and SEPECC will share it on your behalf on 4/19, or click [here](#) to request an interview.

Extra Impact -- Invite your staff and families to join this effort! Here is a letter you can send out in an email or newsletter

Dear Family/ Colleagues,

*I'm writing to share that **[CHILD CARE CENTER]** will be participating in a social media event on April 19th to highlight the challenges facing the child care sector struggling to recover from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on working families and the overall economy. We need to improve access to and the affordability of high-quality child care and pre-k for all working families. To do this we need our legislators to invest significant, sustainable funds to build a stronger early care and education system that will:*

- *Increase access to affordable, high-quality child care and pre-k programs for Pennsylvania's families.*
- *Pay early educators a living wage and ensure those with similar qualifications as K-12 teachers receive comparable compensation.*
- *Pay programs that serve subsidized children what it actually costs to provide care.*

I invite you to join us on April 19th to show your support for quality early care and education. We are asking families to post one or more of the following messages anytime on that day. Include the hashtags #thecrisisreal #fundchildcare and tag @SEPECC @FirstUpEarlyEd @startstrongpa

Sample Tweets/Facebook/Instagram posts (remember to include a personal picture of your child/family/program if possible):

The earliest years of life are when the majority of a child's brain development occurs. Let's ensure all families like mine can access high-quality #childcare opportunities that will help their children learn and grow. @startstrongpa

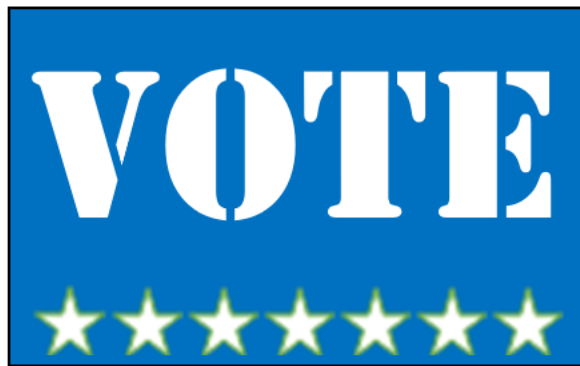
When parents, like me, are at work, they want to know their kids are cared for in settings that support their healthy development. But quality #childcare can be inaccessible and unaffordable. Please #FundChildCare to #SolveChildCare. @startstrongpa

Child care workers in our communities often earn poverty wages. Dedicated federal investment in child care would finally allow programs to pay early educators for the invaluable work they do. Please support investments in child care. @startstrongpa

Advocacy Activity #3: Get out the Vote! Access to voting is an equity issue. Children cannot vote, so we must ensure those closest to them participate in electing our lawmakers. ECE programs have power in supporting families and staff registering to vote, learning about candidate issues, and getting to the polls (or drop box) on Election Day.

- **Learn who is on your ballot:** [Committee of 70 Voter Guide \(seventy.org\)](https://www.seventy.org/)
- **Help families get registered to vote:** <https://www.vote.pa.gov/Resources/Documents/PA-Voter-Registration-Guide.pdf>
- **Read books about voting:**
 - [14 Children's Books on Voting \(momscleanairforce.org\)](https://www.momscleanairforce.org/)
 - [10 Great Children's Books About Voting and Elections \(bookriot.com\)](https://www.bookriot.com/)
- **Facilitate voting activities with children:** <https://kidsvotingusa.org/>
- **Share voting information with families and staff:** [DOS Voting & Election Information \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov/)
- **Attend a PQAS training on voting:** *Getting Staff & Families Out to Vote*, Tuesday, April 12, 2022, 6:00-8:00pm, <https://www.papdregistry.org/v7/trainings/338179/detail>

KIDS CAN'T



BUT YOU CAN

Like this graphic? First Up will send you a sheet of these stickers! [Email us](mailto:info@firstup.org) to request them.