

Advocacy Toolkit for ECE Providers

November & December 2022

After elections is a prime time for advocates to build relationships with their legislators -- new and old -- as well as connect with family and friends around the issues that matter most. Read more about funding opportunities, building relationships with your legislators and communicating early learning issues to others in your life. Plus, a simple and eye-catching crafts activity to include children in this work!

Activity #1: Build Support for Federal Child Care Funding

Families with young children struggle to find and afford high-quality child care that meets their needs; the COVID pandemic has only exacerbated these challenges. Continued investments in federal child care and early learning programs are critical to help the industry long-term. The Child Care for Working Families Act (CCWF) would ensure families have the quality care that they need to work, their children receive care that helps them learn and thrive, and the early childhood workforce has the training and compensation its important mission requires. Legislators in Washington have requested input and stories of need to help their colleagues prioritize these investments. Here are some ways you can influence this process:

- Easily send a message to legislators: [TAT - Investments in Child Care \(everyaction.com\)](https://www.everyaction.com/legislators)
- Share photos of children & caregivers holding a CCWF sign on social media (tag @SenBobCasey, @JohnFetterman, @StartStrongPA, @FirstUpEarlyEd). See the printable sign at the end of this toolkit- print on colorful paper or recruit your resident artists to decorate it!
- Recruit families to share their stories in video or interview- email Jackie Groetsch (jackie.groetsch@firstup.org) or sign up here: <https://forms.gle/DHaBf4gzmRK7PxfA7>
- Educate yourself about the Child Care for Working Families Act here:
 - [Microsoft Word - Child Care for Working Families Act 11-21-17 FINAL \(zerotothree.org\)](https://www.zerotothree.org/microsoft-word-child-care-for-working-families-act-11-21-17-final)
 - [2021-04-22 Child Care for Working Families Act Fact Sheet.pdf \(house.gov\)](https://www.house.gov/committees/education/2021-04-22-child-care-for-working-families-act-fact-sheet.pdf)

Activity #2: Messaging Tips for Family & Friends

Few people outside of ECE understand the importance of this field, but everyone can learn about it and become a supporter with the right information and messaging. The holidays are a great time to share your work and explain the crisis currently facing ECE. Who needs to hear from you?

- **Talking points on ECE benefits to everyone:**
 - Economy: Child care benefits the economy in many ways: families can work more, pay more in taxes, and be self-sufficient.
 - Education: High-quality early learning reduces the cost of our K-12 education, prepares children to love and succeed in school and become life-long learners.

Early support for children with special needs reduces the high costs of special education later.

- Society: High-quality early learning increases graduation rates, job success, future wages and health, and reduces the temptations of crime. All good things for everyone!
- **Tips for a productive conversation:**
 - Start from a place of connection -- your mutual love of children, your shared values, your roles in your neighborhood, place of worship, or other community.
 - Talk about your work and why it's important, then share what challenges you see in ECE.
 - Listen and answer questions, then invite the person to support ECE. Individuals can:
 - Join an Early Learning PA campaign
 - [SIGN UP INDIVIDUAL | Pre-K for PA \(prekforpa.org\)](#)
 - [Sign-on Support - Individuals — Start Strong PA](#)
 - Engage legislators or local business leaders
 - Speak out through a Letter to the Editor or on social media.

Activity #3: Engaging Your Legislators

Your new legislators will be sworn into office in January but are gearing up for their role right now! Learning about the people and businesses in their community will help them do their job well, and learning about early childhood education will ensure that they understand these issues going into office and will keep your concerns in mind throughout their tenure. Invite them to visit your program, attend an event, or just meet the children, families, and staff at another venue, virtual or in-person.

- Find your legislator here: [Find Your Legislator - PA General Assembly \(state.pa.us\)](#)
**Note: new legislators may not yet be reflected; to see who won in your district, visit the Vote.PA.gov Elections Result page: [Election Results \(pa.gov\)](#)
- Request Advocacy staff to set up a visit to your program by emailing Jackie Groetsch (jackie.groetsch@firstup.org)
- Does your legislator support Early Learning? Click here to find out if your Legislator signed a pledge for early learning [Candidate Responses 2022 | Children Matter Action Fund](#)



ECE leader Khadijah Sabir with Congressman Dwight Evans

Craft Activity: ECE Rocks!!!

A fun crafts activity for child care groups, pre-K classes, or families to do together, and a great gift for elected officials with stacks of paperwork in need of an eye-catching paperweight.

What you'll need:

- Rocks
- Washable school glue or craft glue
- Tissue paper in pastel colors
- Permanent marker



1. Find rocks. Make it a scavenger hunt in the yard, the park, the woods, alongside parking lots. Look for rocks that are smooth and large enough that they could make a good paperweight.

2. Wipe or wash rocks that are dirty. Let each child choose a rock and place it on an easy-to-clean work surface.

3. Squeeze about a tablespoon of glue per person into a recycled plastic container.

4. Cut or tear small pieces of tissue paper. If your rock is dark, start with one or two layers of white tissue paper. Otherwise, use different colors. Using one finger, spread glue on the top surface of the rock. Lay one piece of tissue paper onto the glue. Gently smooth the tissue paper down over the rock.

5. Spread glue on top of that. Add one or two other small pieces of tissue paper, overlapping them, and smoothing them down. Spread glue under and over each new piece.



6. Using a permanent marker on a piece of tissue paper, write a word or draw a simple design. Consider: THNX!, WELCOME, HAPPY, HOPE, CC ROCKS, a smiley face, a heart, a spiral.

7. Smooth the printed tissue paper down over the wet, glued surface of the rock, and spread more glue thinly over all the tissue paper pieces. While the glue is still wet, sprinkle a bit of glitter around the word. Let dry. Add dots of glitter-glue if you want.



8. Deliver to your local legislative offices with a thank-you note (or welcome note!). Your message could say "Thank you for caring for our community! We appreciate you and look forward to working together to support children, working families, and businesses." Include some information about your program, and consider adding an invitation for a visit to see the magic of early childhood education firsthand. ##



PASS the **CHILD CARE** for
WORKING FAMILIES Act!
