

Early Years Advocacy Groups

Project of CT Early Childhood Alliance



Working to ensure that all Connecticut's children enter kindergarten healthy, eager and ready for success.

Advocacy Toolkit

January 2007

“ The most important office in our democracy is that of private citizen.”

- Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis

Thank you for your work as grassroots advocates for children in Connecticut. Today’s children are tomorrow’s leaders. The best investment our state can make is to equip our future leaders by allowing them to reach their full potential. Since children are our youngest citizens and because they cannot advocate for themselves, it is vital that we speak up on their behalf.

Concerned adults, parents, early care and education professionals, business people, faith leaders, and others can. As advocates for children, we must organize and align our efforts to maximize our impact on the policy process. This Toolkit was designed to channel the effective use of your voices in the policy process to improve the wellbeing of Connecticut’s children. By working together in a strategic and planful way, we can positively impact state policies and procedures for our children.

This toolkit can be used by any group of community members in Connecticut interested in affecting public policy in the interests of children. It was designed and distributed by the Early Childhood Alliance, a collaborative statewide organization that seeks to make young children the #1 priority in Connecticut. Parents, early care and education professionals, and other interested citizens can form an Early Years Advocacy group in their community and begin work using the toolkit. Existing early childhood collaborative groups can utilize this toolkit to assist them in their advocacy efforts.

For more information on the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance, or to schedule an appointment to get assistance using the toolkit, contact Jessica Bonafine at 860.951.2212 x233. Or visit our website at: www.readysetgrowctkids.org and while you’re there, be sure to sign up as a member or champion of Ready, Set, Grow...CT Kids!

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Policy Maker Contact Sheet

Alliance Policy Brief Inserts (to be released late January)

Acknowledgements: The CT Early Childhood Alliance is deeply grateful for Minnesota's Ready4k. Much of the material for this toolkit was developed for Ready4K by Grassroots Solutions, Inc.

(www.grassrootssolutions.com).

Part 1: Getting Started

HOW TO ADVOCATE

Advocacy is one of the ways citizens support issues they care about most. **You are children's best and most important advocate!** Elected officials and candidates base their political decisions on a variety of factors: party politics, personal experience, special interest groups, advocacy organizations, media coverage, party leadership, campaign donors, and, most importantly, the people. If parents and concerned citizens unite around the issue of early care and education and speak to their elected officials about the important role it plays in the well-being of their children and community, their representatives will be more inclined to make decisions that sustain and build support for early care and education programs and services.

Advocacy is most effective when it is well-planned and ongoing. If you're just starting to advocate, establish initial contact through a meeting and work to communicate regularly with your public officials through additional visits, phone calls, and letters year round. You want your elected representatives to use you as a resource as they make decisions on behalf of early care and education, so consider each contact you have with them as a step toward developing a working relationship. Don't be intimidated by their title; remember, they were elected into their office to serve the needs of the people.

If you and an elected official don't see eye to eye, don't burn bridges; it's important that you continue to communicate even if you don't agree. During your exchanges, work to identify the gaps in your official's understanding of early care and education issues and provide information you think will fill in the holes. It's important to learn from your encounters with your elected representatives and, more importantly, to celebrate your successes!

As you continue to connect with your representatives, invite others from around the community to build your efforts. Never underestimate the power of numbers. Building a sustained, active base of advocates is the most effective way to get what you want out of government.

There is no exact right or wrong way to participate in grassroots advocacy. The key is to let policy makers know what their constituents and voters think about an issue. The most important thing is to **build an on-going relationship** with policy makers, especially the ones who represent YOU.

KNOW WHO REPRESENTS YOU

Elected officials shape policies that affect many aspects of our lives (and our children's), so it's important to know who they are. It's best to start at the state level due to the large impact legislative decisions have on the amount of resources supplied to early care and education programs.

You can find them on the web:

The quickest, easiest way to find out who your legislators are is to visit www.vote-smart.org

Be sure to record the contact information listed on the Legislator Contact page, including email, phone, and address.

For more detailed information on your elected official visit the Connecticut General Assembly website www.cga.ct.gov . Knowing more about your legislators empowers you to more effectively speak to him or her about issues you care about!

You can find them by phone:

You can also retrieve your legislator's information by calling the caucus receptionists: phone numbers are included on the Policymaker Contact Sheet in the Action Portion of the toolkit.

Early education and care falls under the jurisdiction of all levels of government, so it's worth knowing the names of every elected official representing your area in addition to your State Representative and State Senator.

- School Boards are responsible for attending to issues relating to the public education of every child in the area.
- City/Town councils are responsible for making your community family-friendly. They are responsible for the safety of roads and parks, as well as community infrastructure.

You can search for other public officials through the town websites – for a link to town websites go to: www.state.ct.us/town.htm

You can also go to an online search engine, for example www.google.com, and type in the information you're looking for.

READY SET GROW ADVOCACY CALENDAR

The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance has developed an Advocacy Calendar to help advocates know when to take action. It is included at the end of the Toolkit or you can download a copy or get updates from the Ready Set Grow web site at www.readysetgrowctkids.org

Part 2: Making the Case

DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE

Effective messages help advocates talk about the values and benefits of early care and education in ways that will increase public support for investments. These statements are a summary of the national and state research on how to best talk about early childhood development in ways that are inclusive and engaging to multiple audiences.

Use these key messages as a guide when communicating with elected officials. Think about which arguments will make the most impact on a particular legislator. Narrow the information down to three or four key points that accurately and thoroughly express what you want your elected official to understand about early care and education.

Learning Begins at Birth; Relationships Matter

- ✓ 90% of a child's brain growth occurs prior to birth and age five.
 - *Early experiences lay the foundation for learning later in life.*
- ✓ Parents and those taking care of children are crucial partners in a child's development.
 - *It is our responsibility to make those early years count.*

Kids Can't Wait to Learn

- ✓ Babies, toddlers, and preschoolers are constantly learning, whether they are at home or in child care.
 - *The ability to follow directions, get along with peers, make observations about the world around them, and be competent problem solvers helps get children ready to be strong learners.*
- ✓ The traditional concept of public education beginning in kindergarten is changing with many educators and policy makers realizing we must start much earlier.

Quality Matters

- ✓ Kids with high quality early care and education experiences have a better chance of succeeding in life.
- ✓ Increasing access to high quality experiences is shown to have tremendous impact on children in low-income, at-risk environments.
- ✓ Developing more well-trained early care and education professionals leads to more children entering kindergarten fully prepared.

The Public Benefits of Early Learning

- ✓ According to experts at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, a strategic investment in early care and education can yield a \$12 -16 return for every dollar spent.

- *An investment in early care and education contributes to a more prosperous economy in Connecticut, thus improving the overall quality of life in our communities.*
- ✓ Early childhood programs studied by the RAND Corporation showed a positive rate of return on investment to taxpayers in the form of reduced costs for welfare and other public services.
 - *A decrease in children repeating grades or dropping out entirely coincides with less youth and adult crime, and a more productive workforce.*
- ✓ Research shows that quality early care and education programs later result in lower crime and drug use, higher graduation rates, and fewer families receiving welfare.
 - *Kids who have a strong foundation of early learning are less likely to fall behind in school and become involved with gangs or crime.*

Support Connecticut's Youngest Citizens

- ✓ What we do for our children today directly affects our own future, as well as theirs.
 - *Connecticut benefits from a healthy, educated population. These young children will grow up to be our neighbors, our doctors, our firefighters, and our political leaders.*
- ✓ High quality early care and education provides our youngest citizens with a strong social and educational foundation.
 - *Providing support for and access to quality early care and education prepares Connecticut's youngest citizens for their future roles in society.*

MAKE IT PERSONAL

In addition to using these key messages, it's helpful to begin from your personal experience: how has your family benefited from the early care and education program in your community? Then, broaden your scope and ask other parents how their participation in early care and education programs has impacted their family. Finally, draw on research that stresses how much children and communities could gain if all families had access to quality early care and education. Once you've created your message, stick to it!

Part 3: Take Action

YOU are a Grassroots Advocate

A grassroots advocate is someone who cares enough about an issue to speak up about it. The point of Grassroots Advocacy is to demonstrate to policy makers that particular issues – like early care and education – have deep support in their home districts, with voters, employees and community members.

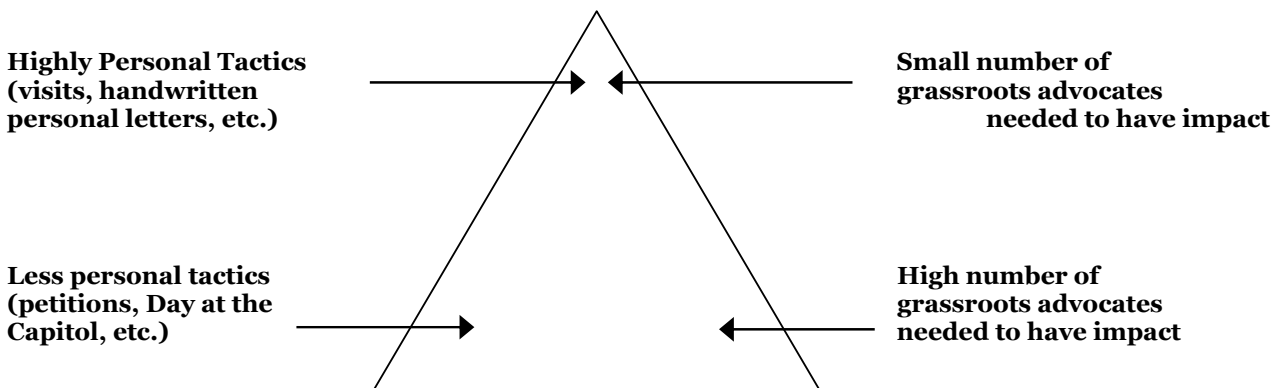
The focus of grassroots advocacy is not on how well you know a particular policy maker, or how much access you have, but rather on the quantity and quality of contact with the policy maker. A grassroots advocate is anyone who has an interest in early care and education issues. A grassroots advocate is YOU.

There is no exact right or wrong way to participate in grassroots advocacy. Strategies vary by organization, region and issue. The key is to let policy makers know what their constituents and voters think about an issue. The most important thing is to **build an on-going relationship** with policy makers, especially the ones who represent YOU.

When selecting tactics for grassroots contact with policy makers, follow the principle that the more personal the grassroots contact, the lower the number of grassroots volunteers needed to make contact. Conversely, the less personal the contact, the more grassroots volunteers are needed to make an impact.

For example, a generic postcard campaign in which volunteer advocates simply stamp and sign a pre-printed message and mail it to their legislator will be recognized as generic and orchestrated. Therefore, you will need to generate a very high number of them to get on a policy maker’s “radar screen.” Conversely, a personal visit in a legislator’s home district with five constituents who tell their personal story about the issue has very high impact, and requires fewer grassroots advocates.

Consider the Grassroots Contact Pyramid*, as a guide:



* The Grassroots Contact Pyramid was created by Grassroots Solutions, Inc. (www.grassrootssolutions.com)

GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

Grassroots Advocacy relies on certain skills and strategies that are used in a systematic way. It is not enough to get people who agree about an issue together to talk about that issue: grassroots advocacy requires **action** that produces concrete results. This section gives you tools for how you can work to make your grassroots action more successful.

The goal of grassroots advocacy is to build an ongoing relationship with the elected officials who represent you. Policy makers are just like the rest of us -- when they have a personal relationship with someone, they rely on their opinion and judgment to help them understand policy issues and know what the best choice is. We need to help legislators and the Governor know that the best choice is to invest in Connecticut's youngest children. There are a variety of ways to build an on-going relationship with policy makers and to raise awareness of early care and education issues. These include:

Letters: Letters provide much of the fuel that powers the legislative process. A stack of mail relating to a particular issue, especially if the letter is handwritten, is very influential with a policy maker, so if possible, send letters regularly and in mass. Many times, your elected official will write you back.

Meetings: A group meeting with your legislator or other elected officials is the most effective way to communicate your message. Whether it's held in someone's home, at a program's site, at the Capitol, or at a neutral setting, a meeting with your representative is a chance to connect on a personal level and should help you and your official gain knowledge about the other's perspective on early care and education.

Phone calls: Phone calls are best utilized when you want to let your elected representatives know whether you support a piece of legislation or to have a one-on-one conversation. It also allows you to connect more with the office staff, who are key allies when working with elected officials.

Email: Email is probably the least time-consuming method to deliver your message, but it is the least personal and, therefore, a less effective way to connect with public officials.

Media: Media attention is a great way to get noticed by both elected officials and the community. Your representatives and their staff monitor hometown newspapers, so any mention of a program in a letter to the editor, an editorial, a featured article, or in photos can be clipped and sent to your official's office.

Elections: Connecting with candidates for public office and participating in elections – by getting involved in your party's precinct caucus, attending candidate events and voting – are all important ways of influencing policy decisions. Get involved early and often.

CT Early Childhood Alliance is available to support you in applying any of these tools. In addition to using the Advocacy Toolkit, you can call us at 860-951-2212 x 233 or email us at jbonafine@cahs.org. You can also refer to the Early Years Advocacy Calendar to know when to take action. For additional copies of the calendar and the complete toolkit visit the Ready Set Grow web site- www.readysetgrowctkids.org

Writing a Letter to Policy Makers

Highly Personal, Moderate Time Requirement

Letters provide much of the fuel that powers the legislative process. A stack of mail relating to a particular issue, especially if the letter is handwritten, is very influential with policy makers, so if possible, send letters regularly and in mass. Many times, your elected official will write you back.

Before you write your letter

- Think about your message. The more you personalize your letter, the better.
- If you can use recent and relevant news stories that apply to your local community legislators are more likely to remember your letter.

As you write

- Be clear that you are a constituent by including your return address in your letter. Most policy makers give priority to their constituents.
- *Hand write your letter*, if possible. Hand written letters have the most impact with policy makers. If you are basing your message on a form letter, rewrite it or at least retype it.
- Highlight local issues and personal stories to strengthen your position. You can include copies of recent news articles or editorials that support your position.
- If possible, acknowledge and thank the policy maker for supporting the issue in the past. Encourage the policy maker to continue or intensify her or his support.
- Keep it short, one to one and a half pages at the most. Be sure that any additional information or articles you include are also brief.

Follow up

- Place a phone call or make a visit with the policy maker to get a better understanding of his or her position on the issue.
- Persuade friends, family members, or coworkers to write letters as well. The more letters a policy maker reads on an issue, the more likely he or she will be influenced.
- If you are writing the letter as part of a grassroots advocacy effort, be sure to report your letter to the organizers of the effort.
- Continue to communicate with your policy maker through more letters, phone calls, and visits. Many times it is the quantity of the advocacy effort that will influence the policy maker.

Holding a Letter-Raiser

High Impact Activity, High Time Requirement

A Letter-Raiser is a fun way to get people together, brief them on an issue they care about, and have them write personal, hand written letters to decision makers that can be mailed that very day.

How to hold a Letter-Raiser

1. Identify the issue and the “ask” for the letter. The “ask” means what you will be asking the policy maker to do; what your call to action is. Depending on the time of year it can be general (i.e., “Please support early care and education as you go into session this year”) or it can be tied to a specific piece of legislation or issue facing the legislature.
2. Review the key messages and talking points for the letter.
3. Review tips for writing a letter to a policy maker.
4. Talk together and help each other identify personal stories that pertain to the issue and fit in with the message.
5. Write letters! Keep the atmosphere relaxed and festive, but focused. Have pens, paper and envelopes of various sizes for everyone. Serve refreshments and have light music in the background.
6. Fold, seal, stamp and count your letters.
7. If the Letter-Raiser is part of a grassroots advocacy effort, tell the organizers of your success.

Sample Letter

This is a letter written by a parent. Note the intimate statements she included in her message, and her call to action at the end. The more heartfelt and direct your letter is, the more you can help policy makers understand the consequences of their decisions on the people of their district.

Dear Legislator:

I'd like you to work to increase funds for programs that support young children and families. As a working parent in your district, I'd like you to know that my family and I depend on child care funding to ensure that our children are receiving a high quality early education program prior to kindergarten.

I receive child care assistance through the Care4Kids program. I've seen that program impacted by cuts and as a result, fewer children have been able to be served and reimbursement rates remain low which prevent many families from accessing higher quality care. I want every parent to have the opportunity to choose a quality setting for their child while they work and I want all Connecticut children to have the opportunity to receive high quality early education. All of the state money given to those programs has benefited my family so much. I'm afraid of what may happen to my family and other families that no longer have access to the services.

Please do all that you can to support early care and education programs, including quality child care. The resources you provide for families and children are good for communities and have long lasting benefits for the state.

I appreciate your time and attention to this urgent issue. Working families and children need your support.

Sincerely,
Jill Q. Public
Address
City/State
Phone

Meeting with Policy Makers

High Impact Activity, High Time Requirement

There's the saying, "it's all about who you know." When it comes to gaining support for your issue, meeting in person with your legislator can be one of the most effective ways to establish a relationship with them, and through your relationship you'll be more likely to gain their support.

Remember, constituents are the most important people to have present.

Before the meeting

- Plan your meeting, and expect it to last 15-20 minutes.
 - Decide when and where you want to meet: in the district, at their office, at a program site, etc.
 - Make the appointment. Call the legislator's office to schedule the meeting, and be sure to state you're a constituent or group of constituents. Their schedule may change, so be flexible if you have to reschedule.
- Decide who will be participating in the meeting, who will lead the meeting, and what stories and information everyone will share, and from what perspectives they will be speaking.
- Determine goals and key messages for the meeting.
 - What do we want your legislator to understand after the meeting?
 - Gather facts and evidence you will share to communicate your key messages.
- Be clear on the action you want the legislator to take. What will you ask them to commit to do?
 - Be specific with your "ask." You want to ask them to do something specific (for example, vote in favor of an increase in funding for early care and education programs or for implementing a statewide school readiness assessment) so that you can hold the legislator accountable for their votes.
 - Refer to the CT Early Childhood Alliance Policy Agenda or call the CT Early Childhood Alliance office for more information on specific policy issues. Download information from the Ready Set Grow website www.readysetgrowctkids.org.
- Gather information about the person with whom you are meeting: What do they care about? Who do you know who knows the legislator personally? Does the legislator have young children or grandchildren? Have they participated in any early care and education programs or been involved in the education system?
- Make or modify a fact sheet to leave behind with the legislator including information about your local community.
- Arrive on time and leave on time.

During the Meeting

- Introduce yourself, and be sure to state that you are a constituent.
- Begin by finding something personal that you have in common with the policy maker. Do they live on the street where your mother grew up? Are their kids in your child's class at school? Does something in their office suggest an interest that you share? Engage in a little "small talk" to break the ice – but keep it brief.
- Thank them for meeting with you, and then explain why you wanted to visit with them. Share your stories about why you care about the issue, emphasizing the key messages that set the stage for your specific request of the legislator.
 - Remember, stay focused on a few key messages that support your issue.

- Ask them to take specific action(s) to support your issue. If you are meeting about a specific bill, specifically ask them to support that bill.
- Ask your legislator for their comments and questions. Ask follow up questions of them to find out more. Offer to be a resource for them, so that they can learn more about the issue.

After the Meeting

- Evaluate the meeting immediately following the visit.
 - Did the legislator commit to anything?
 - Identify what the legislator seemed to know or not know about the issue.
 - Identify what information can you provide as a follow up – this will help establish the relationship.

Different Kinds of Meetings

There are different kinds of meetings to hold with legislators, depending on the time of year and where we are in the legislative process.

Session Send-off: The Session Send-off Meeting is held prior to the start of the legislative session in the home district. The purpose of this meeting is to focus the legislators’ attention on early care and education issues before they go to the Capitol.

Site Visit: Any meeting could also be a Site Visit at your early care and education program(s).

- Have a small group of program leaders and parents/participants give a tour and describe the program and how it makes a difference.
- Have different people describe different aspects of the program.
- After the tour, have a brief meeting with the legislators, following the above instructions on “Meeting with Policy Makers.”
- Use the opportunity to share information about the population served by the program, what percent of the eligible population that is served, etc.
- Don’t let legislators leave thinking you’re serving all eligible children if you are not.
- Also, be sure to talk about how the program(s) you operate complement one another.

In-District Meeting: An in-district meeting is a meeting with the legislator in your home district usually during the legislative session. The Legislature’s Spring Break (usually around Easter/Passover) is a good time to schedule a meeting. This could be a Site Visit to your program, a meeting at the legislator’s local office or a gathering at the local café.

Post-session Meeting: It is very useful to meet with legislators following the legislative session to review their actions and votes during the session. This is an opportunity to hold your elected representatives accountable for their actions. Find out whether they voted in favor of early care and education programs and whether they took leadership in looking out for our youngest children. It is possible to be cordial yet still be clear what you want and expect from your legislator. If he/she voted in favor of children, thank them for that. If they did not, express your disappointment.

Setting Up Community Events and Forums

Before planning a forum, you must first determine *why* you are scheduling the event. Are you trying to influence? Educate? Are you putting forth your own point of view, or pulling together a platform on which various points of view are discussed? You need first to *define the purpose* of the meeting in order to know who to invite, how to invite them, and where to hold the event

Once you have figured out the *why*, you next need to determine the *who*, *when* and *where*. Along with appropriate groups/networks, you will want to invite policymakers, journalists, and influential members of the community. *Make, nurture, and update contacts*. Cold calls and mailings are nothing compared to face-to-face communications. Talk to as many real people as you can. Follow your invitation with phone calls and e-mails. It is often difficult to get journalists and policymakers to commit to anything in advance; remain persistent but flexible. Don't forget to fax information to appropriate media daybooks, both weeks ahead of the forum and then a few days before the forum.

Remember, the one thing you cannot control is what happens on the scheduled day of the event. A powerful story could break, a Congressperson could hold a press conference, a hurricane or blizzard could hit. Your media coverage is dependent on the news of the day. Accept those risks, keep your fingers crossed, and move on.

In addition, consider these planning details when setting up your forum:

- **Media Kits.** You should assemble media kits, preferably to send out before the forum, but certainly to hand out at the meeting. As mentioned earlier, media kits are folders of information and background sources that journalists and policymakers can use as a reference to better understand the issue and to influence others.
- **Directions.** When confirming with registrants, make sure to supply extensive directions to the venue, including information about parking and public -transportation.
- **Seating Arrangements.** Again, the room set-up depends on your meeting goals. To educate, use theater style. To encourage dialogue, use a round table. For community forums, try to include your audience as much as possible.
- **Food and Beverages.** At a minimum, it is courteous to provide coffee, tea, and water. If you schedule your event during breakfast, lunch, or dinner time, attendees will expect to be fed. Providing a light meal is in your best interest—a hungry person is much less likely to concentrate on the topic at hand.
- **Sign-in Table.** Have a sign-in sheet available as people come in, and make sure it is staffed throughout the meeting. Members of the press will frequently sneak in late, and it is very important to keep track of attendees.
- **Follow-up.** The contacts you make at the forum are important. However, your contacts may extend beyond the venue walls. Many times, those who were unable to attend will want to be updated and informed about what they missed. You should create a product—either a videotape, some press clips, or even meeting notes (proceedings)—after the forum for those absent but interested parties.

The Do's and Don'ts of Meeting a Legislator

Things To Do:

Do your homework: Know your district, the issues and at least something of the legislator's voting record and perspective.

Be prepared: Have information to give the legislator that supports your position. Provide facts and figures adds credibility to your case. Outline your agenda or have a written summary of your key points.

Stay focused: State your case up front. Frame the issue in terms of your community and the policymaker's constituency. Try to use real life examples.

Be ready to Answer Questions: Legislators often lack details about an issue. Share information that demonstrates your proposal's benefit.

Stay Calm: Don't assume everyone will see the issue in your way. Be friendly even if you disagree – remember today's adversary may be tomorrow's ally.

Be Appreciative: Thank the legislator for voting for previous legislation that has been important for you.

Follow Up: Afterwards, send a thank you note, including a summary of the substance of the meeting.

Establish a Relationship: Invite legislators to visit your facility, meet with your board, or attend district events. Consider inviting the media to these events.

Leave a Reminder: Have something in writing to leave behind with the legislator, preferably a one page fact sheet on your issue and position.

Things Not To Do:

Don't be Argumentative: Nothing ends a meeting faster than someone who is being confrontational or insulting.

Don't Waste Time: Don't ramble through unrelated subjects or issues.

Don't Complain: Be positive even if there is disagreement.

Don't Just Describe Problems: Anybody can recognize when something is broken. Those who are truly innovative and helpful, know how to fix it. Offer solutions.

Don't Assume: Not every legislator is an expert on every topic or bill before them, nor may they have read every material you have sent. Help them understand why this issue is important for you and their constituent.

Don't Guess: If you don't have an answer offer to follow-up instead of risking bad information.

Don't Leave Without a Commitment: "I'll keep that in mind." isn't good enough. Ask them to commit to an action. Be prepared to take no for an answer – graciously.

Don't Underestimate the Staff: Staffers do research, draft bills, make recommendations, set calendars for the legislator. Be respectful of the legislator staff and they will do the same in return.

Don't Get Frustrated: Victories rarely happen overnight. Moving the behemoth of public policy is often difficult time-consuming task. Celebrate even the little victories.

Don't Waste Time: Policymakers are often very busy, especially during a legislative session. Get to the point, make the point and move on.

Calling Policy Makers

Moderately Personal, Low Time Requirement

Phone calls are usually best utilized when you want to let policy makers know whether you support a piece of legislation or to have a one-on-one conversation. It also allows you to connect more with the office staff, who are key allies when working with elected officials.

Before the call

- Plan out what you are going to say before you make your call. Keep your message brief and clear. It may be helpful to write down what you are going to say so that you can be confident in your delivery.
- Think about and include a key point or personal story that relates to the issue and your position.

When you call

- If you would like to speak directly with the legislator, call while s/he is in your home community. It is often easier to get her or his attention without the distractions at the capitol and your position as a constituent is emphasized.
- If you are nervous or would prefer to simply leave a message, call the legislator's office staff. Be polite because office staff can have influence in conveying your position.
- In your phone call, be sure to state that you are a constituent. Policy makers are much more likely to be responsive to the people who are responsible for keeping them in office. Also, mention if you voted for them.
- Follow your plan and get to the point. If you're leaving a message, be sure to keep it brief. If you're talking directly with a policy maker, try to find out his or her position on the issue and try to persuade her or him based on your talking points.
- Be sure to thank the policy maker if she or he agrees to support your issue. Of course, thank the official or office staff for their time.

Follow up

- Recruit others to make a call as well. The more people policy makers hear from on a particular issue, the more attention they will give to the issue.
- If you are making your call as part of a grassroots advocacy effort, be sure to report your call to the organizers of the effort.
- Call multiple times and continue to communicate with your elected official through letters, more calls and visits. Many times it is the quantity of the advocacy effort that will influence the policy maker.

Emailing Policy Makers

Less Personal, Low Time Requirement

Email is probably the least time-consuming method when delivering your advocacy message, but it is also the least personal and, therefore, a less effective way to connect with your public officials. If you use email as a way of communicating with policy makers, it should be done in the context of an ongoing relationship where you have utilized other ways of communicating with the official.

Before writing the email

- Develop a clear and concise message. Also, the more you can include personal stories or local context to the issue, the more the policy maker will pay attention to your email.

As you write

- State in the subject line of the message that you are a constituent. An elected official's inbox can become very full and using the subject line will increase the likelihood that your message will be read.
- Keep your message brief and to the point. Email is less formal than a written letter and so the message should reflect the informality.
- Make the message personal and utilize local examples.

Follow up

- Recruit others to send an email as well. The more people policy makers hear from on a particular issue, the more attention they will give to the issue.
- If you are writing your email as part of a grassroots advocacy effort, be sure to report your message to the organizers of the effort.
- Continue to communicate with your elected official through letters, calls and visits. Many times it is the quantity of the advocacy effort that will influence the policy maker.

Writing “Printable” Letters to the Editor

High Impact, Moderate Time Requirement

An underused resource in grassroots advocacy is the local media. Letters to the editor can be powerful vehicles for influencing or inspiring public debate, making the case for your issue, or responding to related events. In addition, elected officials always read the opinion pages of their local paper, because it gives them an idea of what their constituents think. The trick is to write a letter that the editors find compelling enough to print. Use these tips to write a letter that is more likely to get printed.

Before you write your letter

- Think about your message. The more you personalize your letter, the better.
- Take advantage of the hot stories. Find ways to tie stories in the news with your issue. Open your letter with a reference to a recent event, and then quickly build a logical bridge to your issue.

As you write

- Keep it brief. Most Letters to the Editor should be under 250 words. Edit your letter aggressively.
- Be clear. This may seem obvious, but a surprising number of letters that don’t get published just plain don’t make sense. Avoid jargon, use common vocabulary, and let a few friends or colleagues review the letter for you before you send it.
- Use word cues to underscore your point. For instance, preface your major conclusion with “The important thing is,…” If you have research that makes your case, preface the facts with “Research proves that…”
- Don’t overlook neighborhood weeklies and smaller papers. Often these publications have more room for letters, and community papers have very large readerships.
- Include a call to action or solution. If you are illustrating a need or making a case for a specific action, include a line about what people can do to help.
- Don’t be afraid to toot your own horn. If you or your organization is involved in work that addresses the issue, include that in your letter.
- Be passionate, but not poisonous. There is a difference between “fire in the belly” and righteous indignation. Avoid sarcasm, and if you’re angry, cool off a bit before sending a final version.
- Use local or personal angles. All grassroots strategies rely on the local and the personal perspective on an issue. Include this perspective in the letter to illustrate why readers should care about the issue.

Follow up

- Try meeting with editorial boards. The editorial boards on newspapers often meet with community members, and sometimes will write an editorial based on information they receive from these meetings. Ask for a meeting with your local paper’s editorial board, make a case for your issue, and ask them to support it with an editorial.

Attending a Town Committee Caucus and Submitting a Resolution

High Impact, Moderate/High Time Requirement

Another way to influence elected officials and candidates is to participate in your Town Committee Caucus. Town Committee Caucuses are the beginning of the process that Connecticut's major political parties use for choosing the candidates and the issues they will support in elections. Their choices are especially important because the future of our state will be affected by the candidates we elect.

There are 3 main caucus activities:

- Electing delegates who will go to party endorsement conventions held later in the spring and summer.
- Electing a Town Committee chair and officers to be local party leaders.
- Debating and voting on resolutions on statewide policy issues (like early care and education). Anyone can submit a resolution, which may become part of the party platform at party conventions that occur later in the year.

Anyone can *attend* a Town Committee caucus to observe.

You can *participate and vote* in a party's town committee caucus if

- You reside in the district
- Will be eligible to vote on the date of the general election
- You are a member of the party.

Attending your party's town committee's caucus provides you with an opportunity to

- Advance an issue that matters to you, your community, or your organization
- Support the candidates of YOUR choice
- Build your involvement in the political process
- Participate in Connecticut's unique grassroots dialogue about policies and politics

How do I find my Town Committee caucus?

To find where your party's Town Committee caucus is meeting, call or visit the web site of your political party.

Republican Party
www.ctgop.org/
860-296-9900

Green Party
www.ctgreens.org/
1(888) 877-8607

Democratic Party
dems.info/
860-560-1775

Working Family
www.ct-workingfamilies.org/
860-523-1699

Submitting a Resolution at your Town Committee Caucus

Submitting a resolution at your precinct caucus is a great way to educate policy makers, candidates and your neighbors about early care and education issues.

What is a resolution?

- Party platforms are made up of party positions on a wide range of issues.
- Resolutions are position statements that can be adopted at the precinct level and advanced to become party positions.
- Resolutions need to be presented in writing.

Developing a Resolution

A resolution is usually a one-page document that outlines:

- The problem or opportunity
- A rationale for a position for the issue
- A policy statement about what should be done about the issue

A **SAMPLE RESOLUTION ON EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION** FOLLOWS ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Presenting a Resolution

- There is time for resolutions on the agenda.
- Present your proposal and the reasons for it. Be persuasive! (It helps to lobby early and have copies).
- If there is disagreement, the caucus chair will facilitate debate (often 3 statements for and 3 against).
- Vote on the resolution.

After the Precinct Caucus

- If you are elected to be a delegate to the ward convention, plan to attend and participate fully.
- Nominate yourself to be a delegate to the *congressional* district convention and the *state* convention (the next levels of the party convention process).
- Continue to promote your resolution throughout the convention process.

Have fun!

- Be proud that you have been part of the initial steps of a process that is essential to shaping the future of your community and the state of Connecticut.

STANDARD RESOLUTION FORM
(NOTE: Incomplete forms may be rejected)

Proposed By (Name): _____

In case of questions, contact (Name, Organization): _____

Phone Number: _____

City: _____ Precinct: _____

Unit/Senate District: _____

Congressional District: _____

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Whereas, the most rapid brain growth occurs between prenatal period and age five; and

Whereas, children who attend high quality early education programs achieve better outcomes in school and in life, in terms of higher earnings, lower crime, and less welfare use; and

Whereas, strategic investments in early care and education programs provide a public return on investment of \$7 dollars for every \$1 invested;

Therefore, be it resolved that the _____ Party supports increased state investments to expand the number of Connecticut's children who are ready for kindergarten through legislation that supports parents, improves the quality of early care and education programs, increases access to high quality experiences for all children, and coordinates the efforts of parents and programs.

This resolution should be considered under the following category:

Agriculture

Health and Human Services

Business & Community Development

Labor and Employment

Civil, Human, and Constitutional Rights

Natural Resources & the Environment

Consumer Issues

Public Safety & Crime Prevention

Education

Retirement Security

Energy

Tax and Budget Policy

Government Accountability to the Public

Transportation

World Affairs

STANDARD RESOLUTION FORM
(NOTE: Incomplete forms may be rejected)

Proposed By (Name): _____

In case of questions, contact (Name, Organization): _____

Phone Number: _____

City: _____ Precinct:

/Senate District: _____

Congressional District: _____

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

This resolution should be considered under the following category:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Human Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business & Community Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Labor and Employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil, Human, and Constitutional Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Resources & the Environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety & Crime Prevention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax and Budget Policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government Accountability to the Public | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> World Affairs | |

Attending a Candidate Forum

High Impact, Moderate Time Requirement

About Candidate Forums

- A Candidate Forum is a gathering of persons running for office in a given district to discuss policy issues of interest to the public. Two of the most common sponsors of candidate forums are The League of Women Voters and local Chambers of Commerce. The group sponsoring a forum will decide what district(s) will be included in the forum and which candidates will be invited. The sponsor may also decide to limit the number of issues covered. Call the event's sponsor in advance to ask about these important details.
- Candidate Forums vary. Some forums have a set of questions that are asked of the panel of candidates. Some ask the audience to write questions down and a moderator chooses which questions to ask. Other forums have microphones available for audience members to ask their own questions. Again, find out the format before the event and prepare accordingly. If audience questions are allowed, make certain to have questions about your issues ready in advance.
- Attending a Candidate Forum is a great way to get to know the candidates and to learn about their stances, or lack thereof, on your issues. It's also an important way to begin to raise awareness. In asking a question about early care and education, you not only educate the candidates, you educate the audience as well.

What to do at a Candidate Forum

Ask questions.

- Candidate forums are only helpful if good questions are asked. Prepare your questions beforehand and be sure to ask them at the forum.
 - Keep the questions simple and brief. Overly complicated questions invite non-responsive answers.
 - Consider providing a (brief) context for your question. Lead with a relevant fact or statement about the issue, and then ask your question.
 - Consider asking a yes/no question, followed by an open-ended question. This method asks that the candidate take a position before explaining any broader views.
- Remember, you don't have to be an expert to ask a question. If you care about early care and education, stand up and ask a question. It's your right, and your responsibility! We cannot expect our elected officials to act if we have not educated them about what action we want them to take and why. A candidate forum is the place to begin that process.

Take notes on the candidates' responses to the questions.

- You can refer to their responses later, for example, in a small group meeting with a candidate who becomes your legislator, or in a letter to the editor in your local paper.
- These are small but nonetheless significant ways to hold public officials accountable for their rhetoric.

Here are some sample questions on early care and education issues to ask candidates. Please use them as they are or change them as you wish.

1. Parents need support from their communities to give them the resources they need to do a good job. What steps would you take to help support families in their tough job of raising children?
2. Someone once said, “It is far easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults.” Given the fact that 69% of women with children under age 3 are working and using some form of child care, how will you ensure that our youngest children receive high quality, yet affordable, child care?
3. In recent studies of school readiness in Connecticut, an estimated 50% of our youngest children were found to be not fully prepared to succeed in school upon enrolling in kindergarten. What do you see as possible solutions to meeting the needs of all of our youngest children and preparing them for success in school (and life)?
4. Currently less than 2% of Connecticut’s state budget is devoted to early care and education programs, most of which are under-funded. For example, Head Start, School Readiness and Care4kids child care assistance reach far fewer families than they should. Would you actively support an increase in state funding for early care and education programs from 1% to 2% of the state budget?
5. Most legislators *say* they support all children and programs that serve children. But few provide active leadership within their party’s caucus, or within the legislature as a whole, to ensure that all children have access to proven and successful programs. *If* you serve in the legislature, will you take a leadership role in fighting for increased funding for early care and education programs, and speak out on behalf of Connecticut’s youngest children?
6. What expenditures do you believe provide a better “return on investment” than early care and education in terms of dollars spent today providing long-term benefits?

How to find out about Candidate Forums in your community

Check with the local League of Women Voters to see if they are holding a forum in your area. You can visit their website at www.lwvnmn.org or call 203-288-7996 to find the local LWV contact person. Check with your local Chamber of Commerce as well.

Check out the Ready 4 K website in the “Events” section for information on other candidate forums on early care and education issues. Visit us at www.ready4k.org or call 860.951.2212 x 233.

You can also ***organize your own Candidate Forum*** in your community. Please contact CT Early Childhood Alliance for information on how to organize such an event.

Part 4: Elections and the Legislature

THE ELECTION SEASON

The fall leading up to Election Day is buzzing with political activity. The Election Season is one of the only times you will see elected officials and candidates travel throughout their district to listen to the concerns and priorities of their constituents. This is also one of the few occasions when citizens are able to solicit solid commitments from candidates and incumbents if they are elected into office.

If early childhood issues are going to be an important issue on federal, state, and local city/town agendas, there must be a strong base of people willing to learn about candidates, share information, and, most importantly, VOTE on Election Day.

Voting

State and National elections take place every even numbered year. There are two central dates to keep in mind on an election year:

- ✓ **Primary Election – First Tuesday after the second Monday in August**
The primary election narrows the field of candidates to one per political party for the general election. The primary takes place the first Tuesday after the second Monday in September.
- ✓ **General Elections – First Tuesday after the second Monday in November**
The general election is when voters choose who will represent them at the federal and state level. These elections are scheduled for the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November every two years.
- ✓ **Municipal Elections -** In odd numbered years local elections are held in most Connecticut towns in the month of November. There are some towns that hold municipal elections in May.

Connecticut requires citizens register to vote prior to elections. For general elections registrations must be postmarked by the 14th day before the election. In person registration at the City/Town Register of Voters is accepted until 7 days prior to the election. For a primary election registrations must be postmarked by the 5th day before the election. In person registration at the City/Town Register of Voters is accepted until 12 noon the day prior to the election. Voter registration forms are available at the following locations:

- The Secretary of State's website - www.sots.ct.gov/
- State or city/town offices or libraries
- The registrar's office at most Connecticut colleges, universities, and technical schools.

Make sure that you fill out the card entirely (pay attention to every line on the card!).

If you pre-register, you will receive notification from the City/Town Registrar of Voters to inform you of your polling location. Most people vote in the neighborhood where they live. To find out where to vote in a particular community you can call your local Registrar of Voters.

Polling hours usually run from 6am–8pm. Lines are typically shorter in the late morning hours. Check with your employer's policies, many larger employers have policies that allow employee's to take off time from work to vote.

If you will be out of town on Election Day, you can vote by absentee ballot by mail or in person. For more information about absentee ballots contact your Register of Voters or the Secretary of State's Office.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS. History has marked several occasions when a single vote determined a victor in an election, ***so every vote is meaningful.*** Dozens of people voting together can have an undeniable impact on Election Day, so try to make this a group or program effort.

- ❖ Encourage people that live around each other to travel to the polls together.
- ❖ Let people know that they can take their children to the polls. Some polling locations may even have activities available for young children.
- ❖ If possible, distribute polling information including location and corresponding community through your program.

Two Important websites for Voter Information:

Secretary of State's Office Connecticut www.sots.ct.gov/
League of Women Voter's www.lwvct.org/

The many organizations making up the Ready Set Grow campaign are working to make bold policy changes on behalf of all children in Connecticut. But bold change cannot occur without the committed involvement of our legislators. So if you want to work for real change, engage with candidates, and vote for those who stand up for kids!

Let people know that despite the myths and concerns, it's important to vote. Connecticut's children are depending on you!

Researching a Candidate

To Find Information about a Candidate's Campaign:

Secretary of State Website – www.sots.ct.gov/

Find out who has filed for candidacy in your district and their website link.

Search Engines -- e.g., www.google.com, www.lycos.com, www.yahoo.com.

Type in a candidate's name and district or town name to find links to sites.

State or Local Party Offices

Check with that party's office to find out contact information for their campaign.

- Democratic Party of Connecticut
www.ctdems.org
860-560-1775
- Green Party of Connecticut
www.ctgreens.org/
1- 888- 877-8607

- Republican Party of Connecticut
www.ctgop.org/
860-296-9900
- Working Families Party of Connecticut
www.ct-workingfamilies.org/
860-523-1699

For More Information about Candidates:

Project Vote Smart: www.vote-smart.org

Locate your state and federal representatives through your zip code.

DemocracyNet: www.dnet.org

[National League of Women Voters website](#)

Enter your zip code to find the candidates on your ballot and where they stand on issues.

CT Election Administration including Campaign Finance Filings:

www.sots.ct.gov/ElectionsServices/ElectionIndex.html

AND DON'T FORGET...

Statewide papers, as well as your local newspaper, are a great source of information with up-to-date news on candidates and campaigns. Many radio stations, particularly Connecticut Public Radio carry periodic programs on elections and allow candidates equal time to speak (www.wnpr.org to find your local station).

UNDERSTANDING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Connecticut is divided into 36 *Senate districts* and 151 *House districts*. Every person in the state is represented by one Senator and one House Representative. Senators and Representatives serve two year terms. The legislature's sole purpose is to create laws and manage the state's budget. Because the majority of early care and education programs receive most of their funding from the state, it is important to pay attention to the decisions made by elected state officials, or legislators, during the legislative session.

The Legislative Session

The legislature functions on a two-year cycle that runs from July 1st of an odd-numbered year (e.g. 2005) to June 30th of the next odd-numbered year (e.g. 2007). This cycle is called a *biennium*. In the first year of the biennium (the odd-numbered year), the session runs from January to early June and is structured around the passage of the state biennial budget starting July 1 of that year. It is considered the most important year of the legislative session because major decisions are made on how much money the state will spend on early care and education programs and other services.

In the second year (the even-numbered year), the legislature meets from February to early May, to deal with business left over from the first year, including reevaluating the needs of the state and modifying the budget.

The Connecticut Legislature's web site is full of information to help you understand and participate in the legislative process. Explore the site at www.cga.ct.gov

Majority rules

The party that holds the majority in each legislative body has more power to pass laws and drive their priorities during the legislative session. After November elections take place, Republicans and Democrats hold separate meetings (known as *caucuses*) with members of their political party to elect who will lead their party within the House and the Senate.

The Leaders

Senate

Senate President Pro tempore is the Majority Leader

The Senate Majority Leader is the most powerful member of the Senate. This person is elected to serve as the chief spokesperson for all the Senate, as well as schedule and approve all activities over the course of the session, choose committee chairs, act as spokesperson for his party, and lead caucus meetings. The chairs are the most influential member of the committee because they have the authority to establish many of the priorities of the group.

Senate Minority Leader Pro tempore is the Minority Leader

This person is elected to serve as the chief spokesperson for their party as well as appointing ranking members of the committees and leads caucus meetings

House

Speaker of the House

The Speaker is the elected leader of the House of Representatives. This person is elected to serve as the chief spokesperson for all the House, as well as schedule and approve all activities over the course of the session, choose committee chairs, act as spokesperson for his party, and lead caucus meetings. . The chairs again, are

the most influential member of the committee because they have the authority to establish many of the priorities of the committee.

House Minority Leader :

This person is elected to serve as the chief spokesperson for their party as well as appointing ranking members of the committees and be the leader in caucus meetings.

Following the general election, each legislator is typically given an opportunity to indicate to their leadership which committees he or she prefers. Generally, members serve on two or three committees. The best way to find out which ones your legislator sits on is to ask the official directly. The information is also available on their personal websites and the committee websites- all of which may be found at www.cga.ct.gov

Committees

Legislative committees play a key role in the development and passage of laws. Thousands of bills are introduced each session and committees are responsible for researching and recommending action on every piece of legislation. The process to review bills includes holding public hearings, adding, deleting, and changing sections of a bill, and recommending bills they feel merit further consideration to the full body of the legislature for a vote.

There are a number of committees that have the power to shape policies that impact early care and education programs and services, so it's worth knowing what committees your legislator serves on. Your legislator's participation on any of the committees listed below means that you have a direct source for learning whether bills are being introduced on behalf of early care and education, the degree of support for early care and education policies, and how you can work to support proposed legislation that benefits young children.

Important Legislative Committees for Early Childhood Issues

Which Committees to watch for Early Childhood bills.

Appropriations Committee

Official Description: The Appropriations Committee is one of the joint standing committees of the Connecticut General Assembly. It is composed of 55 members - 12 Senators and 43 Representatives. The committee has cognizance of all matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies. Other issues under the committee's jurisdiction include matters relating to state employees' salaries, benefits and retirement, teachers' retirement and veterans' pensions and collective bargaining agreements and arbitration awards for all state employees.

What this means to us: The appropriations committee is responsible for the State Budget- any program that requires state money through a state agency must pass favorably through the Appropriations Committee.

Mailing Address:

Appropriations Committee

Room 2700, Legislative Office Building

Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: 860-240-0390

Administrator: Susan Keene

Clerk : Jillian Spies

Select Committee on Children

Official Description: The Select Committee on Children members are appointed by the Speaker of the House and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. In addition, the chairpersons and ranking members of the committees on education, human services, public health and judiciary shall be ex officio members of the committee, but without the right to vote on this committee, and shall be given written notice of all meetings of the committee. Said committee may conduct public hearings, may issue reports of its findings and may originate and report any bill it deems necessary concerning children. Any bill favorably reported by said committee shall be referred to the appropriate joint standing committee.

What this means to us: The Children's or commonly known as the KIDS committee may have before it any bill pertaining to any children's issue.

Mailing Address:

Select Committee on Children

Room 011, Capitol Building

Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: 860-240-0370

Clerk : Rod O'Connor

Education Committee

Official Description: The committee on EDUCATION shall have cognizance of all matters relating to the Department of Education; local and regional boards of education and the substantive law of collective bargaining covering teachers and professional employees of such boards; vocational rehabilitation; the Commission on the Arts; and libraries, museums and historical and cultural associations.

What this means to us: Any bill that would be funded through the Department of Education would be considered by the Education committee – this includes the school readiness program, and the entry to k assessment.

Mailing Address:

Education Committee

Room 3100, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-240-0420
Clerk: Jessica Andrews

Human Services

Official Description: The committee on HUMAN SERVICES shall have cognizance of all matters relating to the Department of Social Services and the Department of Children and Families, including institutions under their jurisdiction; the Office of Child Day Care; the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities; the Commission on the Deaf and the Hearing Impaired; and the Board of Education and Services for the Blind.

What this means to us: Any bill that would be funded through the Department of Social Services and Department of Children and Families would be considered by the Human Services committee – this includes the Care4kids and Husky programs and the State Funded Child Care Centers.

Mailing Address:

Human Services

Room 2000, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-240-0490
Clerk: Jeanie Philips

Public Health

Official Description: The Public Health Committee is one of the joint standing committees of the Connecticut General Assembly. It has cognizance of all programs and matters relating to the Department of Public Health; the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Mental Retardation; the Office of Health Care Access; and all other matters relating to health, including emergency medical services, all licensing boards within the Department of Public Health, nursing homes, pure food and drugs, and controlled substances, including the treatment of substance abuse.

What this means to us: Any bill that would be regarding Birth to Three or child daycare licensing would be heard in the Public Health Committee.

Mailing Address

Public Health Committee

Room 3000, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860-240-0560

Higher Education and Employment Advancement

Official Description: The committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT shall have cognizance of all matters relating to public and independent colleges and universities, the Department of Higher Education including private occupational schools, the Board of Governors of Higher

Education, post-secondary education and job training institutions and programs, apprenticeship training programs, adult job training programs offered to the public by any state agency or funded in whole or in part by the state, and the Office of Workforce Competitiveness.

What this means to us: Early Care and Education workforce issues such as improving availability and access to higher education, ECE career ladder program Charters-A-Course.

Mailing Address

Higher Education Committee and Employment Advancement

Room 1800, Legislative Office Building

Hartford, CT 06106

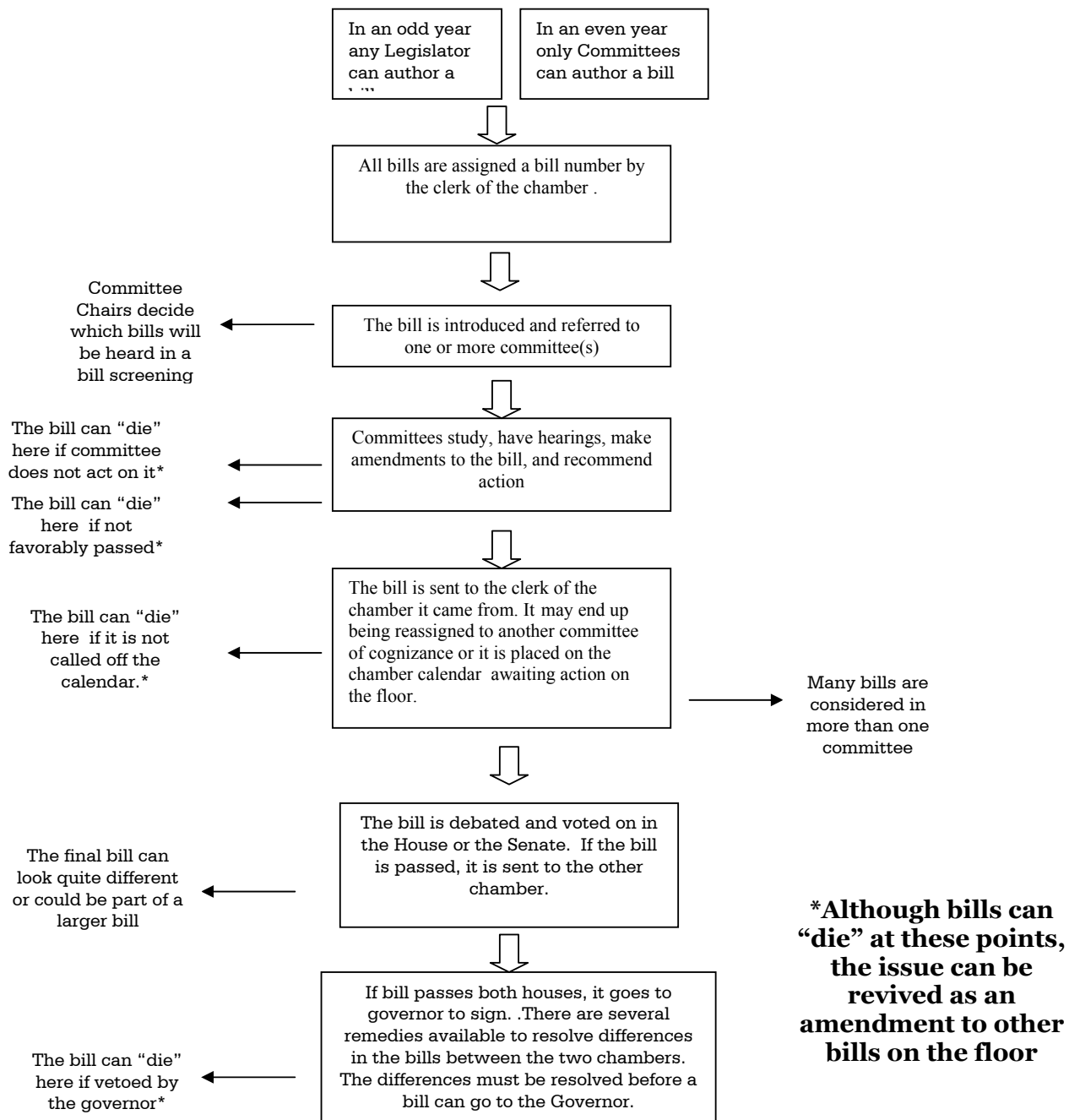
Phone: 860-240-0280

Clerk: Arthur Mongillo

** Official Description from www.cga.ct.gov

HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW

The legislature sees thousands of bills every year, and the majority of them die in committee. Voicing your support or concern to your legislator about a particular piece of legislation can be influential to the success of a bill regardless of whether he or she sits on a committee (if it reaches the floor of the legislature, your legislator can vote on the bill!). So, be a part of the process and find out what's impacting early care and education issues this year!



HOW TO TRACK A BILL

Knowing what bills are being considered by the legislature can be very useful during your conversations with legislators. If you're aware of bills affecting early care and education and can speak with your legislators about the benefits or harm a piece of legislation may have on families and children, you'll have more power to influence your legislator's decision to support or oppose a bill.

- www.readysetgrowckids.org

Once you register on the website as a friend or champion you will receive weekly alerts about issues effecting young children.

Using the Connecticut General Assembly resources to track bills www.cga.ct.gov

- If you know the number of the bill or file you're looking for, you can check the status of a bill manually through the Connecticut Legislative website . On the main page at the top is a search panel.
 - Select what type of number you have- bill, file, LCO etc...
 - Type the in the number you are looking for
 - Select the Year you are searching in.
- If you would like to look through all bills addressing young children there are several ways to do this – on the General Assembly home page in the left column select search. You can search by a wide array of criteria.
- If you'd like to call the committee of cognizance the committee phone numbers are included in the committee information in the previous section. You need to have the bill (or file) number ready or be prepared as there are often several bills (files) with the same subject. The committee staff can typically answer most questions or can refer you to someone who can answer them for you.

Legislative Terms

ACCEPTANCE AND PASSAGE - Short for of the floor motion for acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of a bill, as in "I move acceptance and passage." The motion is made by the member bringing a bill up for debate for the first time.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON REFERENCE- A special committee of Senate and House leaders convened to settle disputes over referrals of bills to committees.

ADJOURN- To end a committee meeting or a legislative session (see also **Sine Die**). Requires a motion and a second. The motion is not debatable.

ADOPT-To approve an amendment, motion, or resolution.

AGENDA (COMMITTEE)- A list of proposed actions to be taken at an upcoming committee meeting,. Must be published at least one day before the scheduled meeting.

AGENDA (SENATE)- A list of all business before the Senate (including agency and task force reports and communications from the governor) that needs either to be referred to committee or that has been reported out of committee and is ready for the calendar and printing. The Senate agenda is not distributed except to senators.

AMEND-To change the language of a bill, resolution, or motion.

AMENDMENT-A written proposal to change the language of a bill or resolution, prepared by the Legislative Commissioners' Office. Each amendment is identified by an LCO number and given a letter of designation (such as, House or Senate "A") by the presiding officer when formally introduced on the floor. The letter designation is sometimes referred to as a "schedule", as in House amendment schedule "A".

APPEAL- A request that the members of the full body overrule the presiding officer's decision to a question of parliamentary procedure. Requires a motion and a second and can be debated.

BILL- A written proposal to change existing law or enact a new law prepared by the Legislative Commissioners' Office.

BILL ANALYSIS- A description of the legal effect of a bill in non-legal language prepared by the Office of Legislative Research.

BILL NUMBER- Number given to each bill by the House or Senate clerk when it is first introduced in a legislative session. Senate bills are numbered 1 to 4999; House bills are numbered 5000 and up.

BILL STATUS- The stage in the legislative process that a bill has reached at a given time. A summary of a bill's status shows all the action taken on the bill up to the moment the status is requested.

BLUE BOOK- The common name for the state Register and Manual. A compendium of state facts published annually by the secretary of the state.

BOND COMMISSION- A statutory body, chaired by the governor, that allocates money to projects authorized for bonding by the General Assembly. Members represent the executive and the legislative branches. They usually meet monthly. Bond funds authorized by the legislature cannot be spent without the commission's approval.

BOND PACKAGE- The bill or bills authorizing state borrowing for specified purposes, usually capital projects.

BOX- A motion for final action to defeat a bill in committee. The term derives from the fact that defeated bills are returned to the committee's bill box until the end of the session.

BRACKETS- Used to show the words in an existing law that a bill or amendment proposes to delete. Brackets are placed before and after the deleted word or group of words.

BUDGET BILL- Usually refers to the annual proposal specifying appropriations for the state agencies for the coming fiscal year. Bills that change the statutes to implement the budget may also be called "budget bills".

BULLETIN- Short for Legislative Bulletin. The document showing the schedule for legislative sessions, committee meetings, public hearings, and other events and containing notes of interest to legislators and staff. It is published daily when the General Assembly is in session.

BUSINESS ON THE CALENDAR- Bills awaiting action by the full Senate or House.

CALENDAR- The daily list of bills awaiting action by the full Senate or House.

CALENDAR NUMBER- The number each bill receives when it is placed on the calendar for the first time. Bills are renumbered in chronological order based on when they go onto the calendar. Thus, a low calendar number indicates a bill that has been awaiting action since early in the session.

CAUCUS (1) A group of legislators made up of all members of a particular political party or a group within a party.

(2) A private meeting of such a legislative group.

CAUCUS STAFF- Partisan staff.

CHAMBER (1) The room where the House or the Senate meets.

(2) The House of Senate itself.

CHANGE OF REFERENCE- The action by which one committee sends a bill to another committee.

CO-SPONSOR-To formally include a legislator's name on the list of a bill's amendment's introducers.

COMBINE- A committee's action to draft a new bill based on the provisions of two or more proposed bills.

COMMITTEE BILL-A fully drafted bill based on a proposed bill.

COMMITTEE BILL DEADLINE- The date set in the rules by which committees must vote on which proposed bills they want the Legislative Commissioner's Office to draft in formal statutory language.

COMMITTEE BILL RECORD-The committee clerk's record of each bill referred to the committee.

COMMITTEE CLERK- The staff member assigned to each committee responsible for maintaining its records, filing committee notices, monitoring public hearings, and performing administrative tasks for the committee.

COMMITTEE, JOINT STANDING-A group of designated senators and representatives with authority to raise and consider legislative proposals dealing with a subject area set forth in the Joint Rules. Committee members are appointed for a full two-year term. Joint standing committees tend to carry over from one biennium to the next.

COMMITTEE, SELECT- group of designated senators and representatives, similar to a joint standing committee but without the authorization to report bills directly to the Senate or House.

COMMITTEE STAFF- The staff who assist the committee chairmen and members. Usually during session the staff consists of at least a clerk, and an assistant clerk.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE- A committee of senators and representatives appointed by the presiding officers of their respective houses to resolve conflicts when the Senate and House pass different versions of the same bill. The committee usually consists of three members from each house. The report of a committee of conference must be adopted by both houses without amendment or the bill fails.

CONSENT CALENDAR- A group of bills that all members of a committee or house agree to pass without debate with one roll call vote. A single member may have a bill removed from the consent calendar merely by asking.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT- A proposed change to the state constitution adopted by a resolution and submitted to the voters, If a resolution containing the amendment passes by a three-fourths majority of each house, the proposed amendment appears on the ballot at the next statewide election. If the resolution passes by a simple majority, it must be submitted to the next General Assembly and passed again before it can be submitted to the voters.

DEAD- As in, "The bill is dead." Means a bill is defeated or otherwise removed from consideration for the rest of the session.

DEFICIENCY- A budget shortfall between an agency's appropriation and the amount it needs to spend in a fiscal year.

DEFICIENCY BILL- A bill making additional appropriations to state agencies that need more funds to complete a fiscal year.

DISAGREEING ACTION- A bill one house must consider for the second time because the other house passed a different version of it.

DIVIDE THE QUESTION- A motion to take separate votes on parts of a bill that involve unrelated subjects. The motion is debatable as to the form of the division.

DOUBLE-STARRED- A calendar designation indicating that a bill is ready for floor debate.

DRAFT - (1) To write a bill, resolution, or amendment.
(2) A written version of a bill, resolution, or amendment.

DUMMY BILL OR DUMMY- A bill without much content raised or reported out by a committee to meet a deadline specified in the rules in order to allow time to formulate and later substitute a more substantive bill.

E-CERT- Short for emergency certification, see below.

EFFECTIVE DATE- The date the bill becomes a law. Unless otherwise designated, all bills that amend the statutes are effective October 1 in the year passed. All special acts are effective upon passage.

EMERGENCY CERTIFICATION- A procedure by which the speaker and president pro tempore jointly propose a bill and send it directly to the House or Senate, floor for action without any committee referrals or public hearings.

FAVORABLE CHANGE REFERENCE- Action by which one committee refers a bill to another committee with a recommendation favoring the bill's passage.

FAVORABLE REPORT, JOINT- Joint committee's recommendation to the full General Assembly that it pass a bill (also known as "JF").

FILE A BILL OR AMENDMENT- Formally introduce a bill or propose an amendment by giving a signed copy to the House or Senate clerk.

FILE COPY- Printed version of bill ready for consideration by the full House or Senate.

FILE NUMBER- Number given to each bill reported out of a committee and printed and ready for House or Senate action. If a new version of a bill is printed because of amendments by one house, it receives a new file number. Files are numbered from one ("1"), regardless of whether they are House or Senate bills.

FILED WITH LCO- Bill status notation indicating that a committee has sent a bill to the Legislative Commissioners' Office for transmittal either to another committee or the Senate or House floor.

FINAL ACTION- Any action that the General Assembly or one of its committees takes to dispose of a bill or resolution for the remainder of the session.

FISCAL ANALYSIS, OFFICE OF (OFA)- The nonpartisan staff office responsible for assisting the legislature in its analysis of tax proposals, the budget, and other fiscal issues.

FISCAL NOTE- Statement prepared by the Office of Fiscal Analysis of the cost or savings resulting from a bill or amendment. Required for every bill or amendment considered by the House or Senate.

FISCAL STATEMENT- A written explanation in addition to the fiscal note required for proposed Senate amendments that would reduce state revenues or increase state expenditures. The statement must explain the decrease in expenditures or the source of increased revenues required to balance the state budget.

FISCAL YEAR- The state's budget year which runs from July 1 to June 30.

FLOOR (1) The full Senate or House, as in "sending a bill to the floor."

(2) Also used to indicate who is allowed to speak at a particular time as in "having the floor."

FOOT OF THE CALENDAR- A parliamentary device used in the Senate to hold bills. The "foot of the calendar" is a special category at the end of the calendar. Bills may be placed or removed from the foot only by a special motion.

FULL DRAFT- A bill written in statutory form ready for action by a committee.

GENERAL FUND- The money used for expenditures authorized by the budget and not otherwise restricted by the statute.

GERMANE- The characteristic that fulfills the parliamentary requirement that substitute bills and amendments relate to the same subject as the original proposal.

GO LIST- The list of bills on the calendar that the House intends to take up on a particular session day.

GOVERNOR'S BILLS- Bills introduced by legislative leaders of the governor's party at the request of the governor's request.

GUT- To amend a bill to remove its key provisions; to weaken a bill drastically.

HOUSE (1) Either of the two chambers of the General Assembly.
(2) When capitalized, short for the House of Representatives.

HOUSE BILL- A bill introduced by a member of the House of Representatives. House bills are numbered from 5000.

HOUSE CLERK- An officer elected by the House with administrative and procedural responsibilities for keeping track of House business.

HOUSE OF ORIGIN- The chamber where a bill is introduced and which debates and votes on the bill first.

IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION- A motion asking that a matter be given priority over other business, sometimes without following all the normal procedural steps.

IMMEDIATE TRANSMITTAL- A motion to send a bill directly to the other house or governor without allowing the normal time for possible reconsideration.

IMPLEMENTER- A bill that changes statutes to put into effect or "implement" the provisions of the adopted state budget. Implementers are often referred to by the agency or department most affected, as in "Education Implementer."

IN CONCURRENCE- Motion to pass a bill in the same form as already passed in the other chamber.

INFORMATION ROOM - Provides information on bill status, committee meetings, and public hearings to legislators and the public.

INTRODUCE- To formally present a proposal for consideration in the General Assembly.

JF- Short for joint favorable report.

JF DEADLINE-The date by which each committee must report out bills or resolutions for further consideration by other committees or the full General Assembly. The committee deadlines are listed in the Joint Rules and all reports must be submitted to the Legislative Commissioners' Office by 5:00 p.m. on the dates listed.

JF REPORT- A report compiled by the committee clerk on a standard form for each favorably reported bill. Among other things, the JF report summarizes public hearing testimony and lists organizations that support and oppose the bill.

JFS- Short for joint favorable substitute; an amended bill reported favorably by a committee.

JOINT COMMITTEE- See, COMMITTEE, JOINT STANDING

JOINT FAVORABLE- Short for joint favorable report. A joint committee's recommendation to the full General Assembly that it pass a bill.

JOINT FAVORABLE SUBSTITUTE- A committee motion to give a favorable report to a new version of a particular bill. Also known as "JFS".

JOINT UNFAVORABLE- A committee motion to report out a bill with a recommendation that it not pass.

JOURNAL- The official record of the events and actions that occur in the Senate and House on each session day. There are separate journals for the Senate and House,.

LCO ATTORNEYS- The nonpartisan lawyers who draft bills, resolutions, and amendments. Each committee has an LCO attorney or attorneys assigned to it.

LCO NUMBER- A number assigned to each item drafted in LCO. Each version of a bill and each amendment has a different LCO number. The number is used to identify versions of a bill or amendments to a bill before they receive their number or letter designations.

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONERS- The two part-time attorneys of different political parties appointed by the General Assembly who head the Legislative Commissioners' Office. They advise the legislature and review the final drafts of each favorably reported bill. They serve staggered four-year terms.

LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONERS' OFFICE (LCO)- The nonpartisan office headed by the legislative commissioners consisting of all the LCO attorneys and their support staff. They provide bill and amendment drafting services and publish the annual public and special acts and the Connecticut General Statutes.

LEGISLATIVE GUIDE-The handbook published annually by the Legislative Management Committee that contains information concerning the General Assembly, including names, addresses, and telephone numbers of legislators; committee assignments; and legislative rules, guidelines and regulations.

LEGISLATIVE INTENT- Used by courts to interpret statutes when the actual wording of the law is ambiguous or unclear. It consists of members' statements made during debate on a bill. Sometimes members make statements about a bill's meaning during debate specifically to establish legislative intent.

LEGISLATIVE LEADERS- The Senate president pro tempore, majority, and minority leaders and the speaker and majority and minority leaders of the House of Representatives.

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON- An employee of a state agency assigned to monitor legislation affecting the agency and to assist legislators and their staffs in dealing with that agency.

LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY- The reference library and library staff available to legislators and legislative staff. Among other things, it contains all legislative research reports, legislative documents, copies of state and federal statutes, court opinions, and state and federal regulations.

LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT - (1) Short for the Joint Committee on Legislative Management, a 26-member legislative committee chaired by the House speaker and the Senate president pro tempore. The committee oversees the operations of the General Assembly, including personnel, budget, and buildings and grounds. It also raises and reports on bills and resolutions affecting laws governing the legislative branch. (2) The nonpartisan staff responsible for administering legislative organization, operations, and facilities under the committee's direction.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS- The procedure by which a bill becomes a law.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH, OFFICE OF (OLR)- A nonpartisan office providing committee staffing, policy research, bill analyses, and public act summaries. Each committee except Appropriations and Finance, Revenue and Bonding is assigned its own OLR researcher.

LINE NUMBERS-Numbers that appear in the margins of each bill, resolution, and amendment. Used as reference points in discussing the wording in legislation and in drafting amendments.

LIST OF BILLS - Printed listing of bill titles, numbers, suggested committees referrals, and statements of purpose, for bills filed in the Senate and House clerks' offices. Acceptance of a list of bills by the House constitutes each bill's first reading and automatically refers the bills to their designated committees. In the Senate, bills must also appear on the Senate agenda.

LOBBYIST- Person required to register with the Ethics Commission who spends or is paid at least \$2,000 a year to influence legislation. Lobbyists are required to wear blue badges stating their names and whom they represent. They may not enter either chamber; the areas immediately outside the entrances to them; or the Legislative Commissioners', the Legislative Research, or Fiscal Analysis offices.

LONG SESSION- The regular five-month session of the General Assembly held in each odd-numbered calendar year.

MACHINE IS LOCKED-The announcement the presiding officer makes when closing the automatic roll call voting machine. Members may still vote after the machine is locked and before the tally is announced by seeking recognition from the presiding officer and announcing their votes.

MACHINE IS OPEN- The announcement the presiding officer makes to indicate that members may begin recording their votes on the automatic roll call voting machine by pushing the "yes" or "no" button on their desks.

MANDATE- Anything the legislature requires, but usually used to mean a state-initiated constitutional, statutory, or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand, or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional local spending. All bills that include a local mandate must be referred to the Appropriations Committee unless the referral is waived by a two-thirds vote of each house. Whenever a bill contains a mandate, the fact is recorded as a municipal impact in the fiscal note.

MARKINGS- A process used in Senate whereby, at the beginning of each session, the majority leader reads out loud the actions proposed to be taken on each bill on the calendar that day. Comparable to the House "Go List."

MASON'S MANUAL- A manual of parliamentary procedure that, together with the rules of the General Assembly, governs the manner in which the legislature transacts its business. Whenever Mason's Manual conflicts with the rules adopted by the General Assembly, the rules take precedence.

MATTER RETURNED BY COMMITTEE- A calendar designation for a bill that was referred to a committee from the floor and reported back to the chamber.

MOTION- A formal request for a particular action.

MUNICIPAL IMPACT- The part of a fiscal note that describes the financial effect of a proposal on municipalities.

NECESSARY FOR PASSAGE- The number of "yes" votes needed to pass a particular measure. The number depends on the number of members present and voting, and may differ depending on the nature of the measure. Always announced by the House clerk as part of the vote tally.

NEW- A designation that appears in parentheses before a section of a proposal that, if passed, would be a completely new section of the statutes rather than a change in an existing one. Used instead of printing the new section in all capital letters.

NEW FILE- Substitute bill reported by a committee after being referred from the floor. Such a bill is reprinted and given a new file number.

NO ACTION- A method of defeating a bill in committee that, unlike a motion to box, does not require a roll call vote.

NONPARTISAN STAFF- Legislative employees not assigned to work solely for a caucus who provide nonpolitical services to the members of the General Assembly. Nonpartisan staff work in the Legislative Management, Legislative Commissioners', Legislative Research, Fiscal Analysis, Program Review, and Law Revision offices; for the Capitol Police; and as permanent committee administrators.

O.E.- Short for other expenses. The line item in agency budgets that includes expenditures for items other than personnel.

OLR REPORT - (1) A research report written by the staff of the Office of Legislative Research.
(2) Another name for an OLR bill analysis.

ON CONSENT- Refers to a bill being on consent calendar, as in "The bill is on consent."

ORDER OF BUSINESS- The sequence in which business is normally transacted each day in each chamber. The order for each chamber is specified in the House and Senate rules.

ORDER OF THE DAY- The designation of a special time and date for considering a particular bill. Bills that are the order of the day are taken up at the specified time and date regardless of their place on the calendar.

PAIRING- A type of "absence voting" by which two members who, had they been present for a vote, would have voted on opposite sides. When they agree to pair themselves they indicate their respective positions on the issue and the fact that their absences did not effect the outcome. The Senate rules provide for pairing.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY- A question from a member to the presiding officer concerning proper procedure or the parliamentary status of a matter under consideration at that moment.

PARTISAN STAFF- Staff hired by the House and Senate caucuses.

PASS RETAIN (PR)- Short for "passed, retaining its place on the calendar." The action of passing over a bill but allowing it to keep its position on the calendar relative to other bills. Bills not pass retained fall into the bottom of the calendar. In practice PR'd bills are held until the next session day.

PASS TEMPORARILY (PT)- To suspend consideration of a particular bill for a short time, for example to await an amendment or the answer to a question. PT'ed bills are usually taken up later on the same day.

PERMANENT ASSISTANT CLERKS- The full-time employees who administer the House and Senate clerks offices.

PERSONAL PRIVILEGE, POINT OF- A member's request for recognition to make announcements, personal statements, or introductions.

PETITION- A method by which a member can, by collecting the requisite number of legislators' signatures, require a committee either to have a proposed bill fully drafted and hold a public hearing on it or to report a bill to the floor. Bills petitioned to the floor are often shown on the calendar as unfavorable reports.

POINT OF ORDER- The parliamentary device used to require a committee, the House, or the Senate to observe its own rules and follow established parliamentary practice. Points of order are raised by individual members and decided by the presiding officer. The presiding officer's decision may be overruled by a majority vote of the full body.

POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST-The term used in circumstances where the discharge of a legislator's duty would affect his or her financial interest (or that of the spouse or other family members) unless that interest is virtually inconsequential or is not distinct from the interest of a substantial segment of the general public. If an action would create a potential conflict, the member can be excused from voting or he can prepare a written statement for the journal or minutes explaining why he is able to act fairly, and file a copy with the Ethics Commission.

PRECEDENT- A prior ruling or established custom on which a presiding officer may rely in dealing with points of order and parliamentary inquiries. General Assembly precedents are compiled by the Office of Legislative Research and published at the beginning of each two-year term by the Legislative Management Committee.

PRESIDENT-The presiding officer of the Senate, usually the lieutenant governor.

PREVAILING SIDE- The majority of the votes on a particular measure. Only someone who voted on the prevailing side may move for reconsideration.

PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE-A permanent bipartisan committee that conducts in depth investigations of issues, programs, or state agencies. The chairmen are members of different parties. The committee has a nonpartisan staff.

PROPOSED BILL- A bill introduced by an individual legislator at the beginning of a session, not fully drafted. In even-year sessions, the subjects of proposed bills are restricted to fiscal matters.

PROPOSED DRAFT- A fully drafted bill, resolution, or amendment not yet formally introduced.

PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE- A fully drafted version of a revised bill not yet acted on by a committee.

PUBLIC ACT-A bill passed by both chambers of the legislature that amends the general Statutes.

PUBLIC HEARING-A meeting which members of the public and representatives of state agencies have the opportunity to testify to a legislative committee on bills, resolutions, or issues before the committee. Requirements for public hearings are set forth in the Joint Rules.

QUORUM-The minimum number of members who must be present to conduct business.

RAINY DAY FUND- Common name for the Budget Reserve Fund.

RAISED BILL- A fully drafted bill introduced by a committee that is not based on a proposed bill.

RANKING MEMBER- The designated leaders of the minority party on a joint committee. Each committee has a House and Senate ranking member designated by the minority leader of each house.

RAT- Slang term for a bill or amendment that a member or group thinks is bad. When a member must support such a measure for political reasons, he is said to "swallow a rat."

READ IN- The process of giving a bill a first reading by presenting a list of bills with their committee referrals to the chamber of origin. No debate is required for this procedure.

READINGS-A technical term for three stages of a bill's passage. The first reading is the initial committee referral, the second occurs when the bill is reported to the floor and tabled for the calendar and printing, and the third when the bill is debated and voted on. At none of these stages is the bill's text actually read aloud.

READOPT-To pass an amendment a second time after it has been rejected by the other house.

RECALL-To request the return of a bill from the other house or the governor to correct a technical error.

RECESS-A temporary suspension of a House or Senate session or a committee meeting with the intention of resuming before adjournment.

RECOMMIT-The House or Senate's decision to return a bill to a committee that previously reported it out. A bill that is recommitted is dead.

RECONSIDER- Motion for a second vote on a question. Must be made by a member who voted with the majority the first time. A committee may reconsider an item only at its next regular meeting. House rules impose a similar requirement for House reconsideration. The Senate rules allow reconsideration on the same day as the original vote or on the next day. An item can be reconsidered only once in a session. Except for the last three days of the session, unless the rules are suspended, a bill must be held by the clerks until the end of the following session day for possible reconsideration.

RECONVENE-To reassemble, usually after a recess.

REFER- To send any item of legislative business to a committee.

REFER FROM THE FLOOR (FLOOR REFERRAL)-Refer a bill or resolution to a committee from the full House or Senate.

REGS REVIEW- Short for the Legislative Regulation Review Committee. The bipartisan committee that reviews and approves all state agency regulations.

REGULAR SESSION- One of the two annual sessions of the General Assembly held in each biennium.

REGULATION-A rule adopted by a state agency to implement, interpret, or prescribe law or policy or describe its procedure or practice requirements. Agency regulations have the force of law, must be adopted according to procedures described in the law, and must be approved by the Legislative Regulation Review Committee.

REJECT-To defeat, usually used to refer to action on an amendment.

REMOVE FROM THE FOOT- A motion made in the Senate to take an item previously held at the end of the calendar and return it to its place for action that day.

REPEAL-To revoke an existing law.

REPEALER-The section of a bill, usually at the end, that revokes one or more sections of existing law by listing only their statutory citations.

REPORTING DEADLINES- See JF DEADLINE.

REPRINT-To print a new file copy of a bill after it has been amended for the other house or revised by a committee after being referred from the floor. Reprints receive new file numbers. Normally, the Senate reprints bills amended by the House but the House does not reprint bills amended by the Senate.

RESERVE FOR PUBLIC HEARING-A committee decision to schedule a public hearing on a proposed bill.

RESOLUTION-A statement by the General Assembly that is not a law. Used to approve nominations or labor contracts, place constitutional amendments on the ballot, or express the legislature's collective opinion.

REVENUE ESTIMATE-A projection of state revenues for the coming fiscal year prepared by the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee that must be included in the state budget.

ROLL CALL VOTE-The record of the individual votes of each member of the House or Senate or a committee on a particular question. All House and Senate roll call votes are printed in their respective journals. Any vote that constitutes final action on a bill must be taken by roll call.

RULES- The General Assembly's written governing legislative activity. The rules are adopted at the beginning of each session. Joint activities are governed by the joint rules adopted by both houses. Each house also adopts its own separate rules.

SCREENING-The informal process by which a small group of designated legislators and staff reviews bills (1) before they are reported out of a committee and (2) before they are considered on the floor. Each House and

Senate caucus has a separate screening process. The results of the majority party's screening are the House Go List and the Senate markings.

SECOND-To endorse a motion made by another member. Required for further consideration of the motion.

SENATE BILL-A bill introduced by an individual senator or first filed with the Senate clerk. Senate bills are numbered 1 through 4,999.

SENATE CLERK -An officer elected by the Senate with administrative and procedural responsibilities for keeping track of Senate business.

SESSION DAY- A day when either house of the General Assembly meets or holds a regular or technical session.

SESSIONAL EMPLOYEES-Temporary staff hired to work only for the session.

SHORT SESSION-The three-month session held during even-numbered years.

SIGN-UP SHEET-The place where those wishing to testify at a public hearing write their names to determine the order of their appearance before the committee. There is usually a separate sign-up sheet for legislators and agency heads who wish to testify.

SIGN ON-Term used when a legislator adds his name as a co-sponsor of a bill or amendment; as in "Did Representative Smith sign on to this?"

SINE DIE-Latin for "without day," meaning a final adjournment. A motion used to close an annual session of the General Assembly. It terminates all unfinished business.

SINGLE-STARRED-Calendar designation showing that a bill awaiting action has been on the calendar for two of the required three session days.

SPEAKER-The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, elected by the members.

SPECIAL ACT-A law that has a limited application or is of limited duration, not incorporated into the Connecticut General Statutes.

SPECIAL SESSION-A meeting of the General Assembly called for a particular purpose. A special session may be called by the governor or by a majority of legislators.

SPECIAL SESSION CALL-The announcement of the special session giving its date, time, and purpose.

SPLIT COMMITTEE-A joint committee that has been divided so that House and Senate members can act separately. The rules allow a committee to split only at the request of the majority of the committee members present representing either house.

SPONSOR-The originator of a legislative proposal, either a legislator or a committee.

STANDING VOTE (ALSO KNOWN AS RISING VOTE)-A Senate vote taken whenever the presiding officer doubts the result of a voice vote. A standing vote does not require that the votes of individual senators be permanently recorded.

STARRED FOR ACTION-Another term for double-starred, meaning an item has been on the calendar for the required three session days and is ready for action.

STATUTE-Another name for a law. "The statutes" are the General Statutes of Connecticut.

STRAIGHT CHANGE OF REFERENCE-The action by a committee to send an item to another committee without a recommendation.

STRIP-To remove all a bill's provisions and substitute an entirely new proposal.

SUBCOMMITTEE-A portion of a whole committee. Usually refers to sub-groups of the Appropriations and Finance, Revenue and Bonding committees.

SUBJECT MATTER HEARING -(1) A public hearing held by a committee on a group of proposed bills all relating to the same subject.

(2) A committee hearing on a particular subject to seek ideas for legislation.

SUBSTANTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST- The term used in connection with legislators and matters of private interest or gain to them. A legislator has a substantial conflict of interest if he has reason to believe he, his spouse or dependent child, or a business with which he is associated, will experience a direct monetary gain or loss as a result of his official action. If an action would create a substantial conflict, the official is prohibited from taking it.

SUBSTANTIVE-Term applied to an adopted amendment that alters the substance of a bill. Under the rules, once a substantive amendment has been adopted, further action on a bill must be suspended until the amended bill has been reexamined by the legislative commissioners and reprinted as a new file. After each amendment is adopted in the House, the speaker rules whether it is substantive or technical.

SUBSTITUTE BILL-An amended bill reported by a committee. Indicated by a small "s" in front of its bill number.

SUSPEND THE RULES-To waive the rules to accomplish a particular purpose. The motion requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.

TABLED FOR THE CALENDAR-The formal order for a bill reported out of committee to be printed in the files and appear on the House or Senate calendar. This step also serves as the bill's second reading.

TALLY SHEET-A written record of a roll call vote.

TASK FORCE-A special group authorized to study a particular issue and report back to the General Assembly. Its members often include legislators.

TECHNICAL- Non-substantive, especially when applied to an amendment.

TECHNICAL REVISER'S BILL-An annual bill to correct grammatical or typographical errors in the statutes.

TECHNICAL SESSION- A brief formal convening of the House or Senate held purely to advance bills on the calendar and make pro forma referrals. There is no debate or voting on bills. It usually lasts a few minutes and involves only two members and the clerk.

TRAILER SESSION-Another name for the veto session.

TRANSCRIPT-A written word-for-word record of the proceedings of a committee's public hearing, or the House or Senate debates. No transcripts are made of committee meetings.

TRANSPORTATION FUND- Short for the Special Transportation Fund. A separate budget account funded by fuel and transportation-related taxes and motor vehicle fees. It pays for the departments of Motor Vehicles and Transportation and its revenues provide backing for state bonds used for state and local highway improvement projects.

UNFAVORABLE REPORT- A recommendation from a committee that a bill be defeated.

UNDERLINING- Used to show new language a bill or amendment proposes to insert into existing law. The proposed insertion is underlined.

UPON PASSAGE-Used as the effective date for certain bills.. Means the act takes effect the day the governor signs it.

VALIDATING ACT-A special act that retroactively legalizes a previous action or failure to act by the state, a local government body, a corporation, or anyone else.

VEHICLE-A bill or resolution that is susceptible to being amended to accomplish another purpose, often either more controversial or larger in scope than the original bill. A vehicle to which many amendments are attached is sometimes called an omnibus.

VETO- The governor's rejection of a bill. A veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the membership of each house.

VETO SESSION- A special session of the General Assembly held usually about six weeks after the regular session to consider whether to override gubernatorial vetoes.

VOICE VOTE-A vote taken by a call for Yeas and Nays that does not require recording members' individual votes. Usually used to pass amendments and adopt motions. It cannot be used for taking a final action on a bill.

WELL OF THE HOUSE-The open area of the House chamber between the speaker's dais and the first row of legislators' desks. Used for guests and staff, who must remain there while roll call votes are in progress and the roll call machine is open.

WITHDRAW- A motion to remove an amendment or a motion from consideration. Must be made by the proposer. A member who seconds a motion may also withdraw his second. Motions to withdraw may only be made before the vote.

WORKING DRAFT-A preliminary draft of a bill, resolution, or an amendment. Often circulated to interested parties before being filed and still subject to revision. Stamped as such by the Legislative Commissioners' Office.

YIELD- Short for yield the floor. One legislator's giving the floor to another member during debate.

2007 Early Years Advocacy Groups Legislative Calendar

January

Organize your Early Years Group

Schedule meetings with your legislators

February

Thank you letter to legislators you met with.

When I grow up.... Picture Drive

March

Organize a community petition for the support of particular issues.

Call Legislators on Human Services and Education Committee

April

Call your legislators

Early Years Advocacy Conference

Lobby Day/ NAEYC Week of the Young Child

Letters to the Editor

May

TBD watch RSG site for more info

June

TBD watch RSG site for more info

January

Organize your Early Years Group

Set First Meeting

Step 1: Decide where and when you will meet

Suggestions: *your home, childcare center, community room at library, church*

Step 2: Invite a minimum of 5 – 10 people in your community to come together to support early childhood issues.

Step 3: Write a written agenda for the first meeting and distribute to group members

Agenda Items for the First Meeting

- Give every member a copy of the Early Years Advocacy Toolkit and Ready Set Grow Flyer
- Consider the Issues
- Groundwork and Division of labor: Set Roles and expectations for group and individual members

Suggestions: Goal: *Our group will meet with our legislators two times this session. Each member will contact our State Senator and Representative with one call and personal letter supporting our issues by June.*

Division of Labor: *Who will plan the meeting with the legislator? Who will do the research on the legislator?*

- Encourage everyone to sign up with Ready Set Grow and to invite others to join
- Set a regular time and place to meet

Schedule meetings with your legislators – this first meeting should occur before the end of the first week in February when the Legislative Session gets busy.

February

Thank you letter to legislators you met with.

Include in the letter any bills you would like your legislator to support.

When I grow up.... Picture Drive Ask local providers to do a project with the children to create a picture of what they want to be when they grow up. Have one person be responsible for collecting the pictures. Mail them to CT Early Childhood Alliance 110 Bartholomew Ave, Suite 4030 Hartford, CT 06110. The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance will coordinate delivering these to your legislator on designated day in March.

March

Organize a community petition for the support of particular issues.

Example letters will be available on Ready Set Grow website. Set a goal for the number of signatures your group will collect. Draft the letter and circulate the petition in your community. Members should select places they will be responsible for circulating the petition. Some suggestions include: childcare centers, pediatrician and family doctor's offices, churches, libraries, PTA.

Mail copies of the petition to your legislators on the first week in April.

Call Legislators on Human Services and Education Committee urge favorable passage of
Bills you are supporting that are before their committees.

April

Call your legislators – scripts will be provided on major early childhood issues in early April on www.readysetgrowctkids.org

Early Years Advocacy Conference – The Early Childhood Alliance is proud to sponsor this opportunity for Early Childhood Providers, parents and concerned community members to learn about the Connecticut policy landscape and some basic tools to effect change for the children and families. This years conference will be held on Saturday April 21st.

Lobby Day/ NAEYC Week of the Young Child – This year Week of the Young Child coincides with the Appropriations committee JF deadline. Stay tuned for more details at www.readysetgrowctkids.org .

Letters to the Editor- samples will be provided on www.readysetgrowctkids.org

Notes and Additions



The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance is available to support you in planning or implementing any of the tools in this Advocacy Toolkit. **Call us at 860.951.2212 x 233**. You can download a copy of the calendar and access other resources at the Ready Set Grow web site, www.readysetgrowctkids.org

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110 Bartholomew Ave
Suite 4030
Hartford, CT 06106

Phone: 860.951.2212 x233
Facsimile: 860.951.6511

www.readysetgrowctkids.org

Policymaker Contact Information

Complete this reference sheet with your policymakers' contact information. To find your policymakers visit Project Vote Smart at www.vote-smart.org or call the toll free number for one of the caucus's and ask for assistance locating the contact information for your legislators.

Governor

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Executive Office of the Governor
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Phone: 860-566-4840
Toll Free: 800-406-1527
TDD: 860-524-7397
Email: Governor.Rell@po.state.ct.us

State Senate

Democratic Caucus- Majority

Phone: 860-240-8600
Toll-free: 1-800-842-1420

Senate President Pro Tempore

Senator Donald E. Williams Jr.
President Pro Tempore
Legislative Office Building, Room 3300
Hartford, CT 06106-1595
Email: Williams@senatedems.ct.gov

Senate Republican Caucus – Minority

Phone: 860-240-8805
Toll-free: 1-800- 842-1421

Senate Minority Leader Pro Tempore

Senator John McKinney
Minority Leader Pro Tempore
Legislative Office Building, Room 3400
Hartford, CT 06106-1595
Email: John.McKinney@cga.ct.gov

State Senator: _____

Phone number: _____

Email Address: _____

Capitol Address: _____

Home Address: _____

Aide's Name / email address and phone number: _____

State House of Representatives

Democratic Caucus – Majority

Phone: (860) 240-8500
Toll-free: 1-800-842-1902

Speaker of the House

Rep. James Amann
Speaker of the House
Legislative Office Building, Room 4105
Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Email: Jim.Amann@cga.ct.gov

House Republican Caucus – Minority

Phone: (860) 240-8700
Toll-free: 1-800-842-1423
<http://www.housegop.ct.gov/>

House Minority Leader

Rep. Lawrence F. Cafero Jr.
House Minority Leader
Legislative Office Building, Room 4200
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

State Representative: _____

Phone number: _____

Capitol Address: _____

Home Address: _____

Aide's Name / email address and phone number: _____

Committee Membership

On the lines below note the committees your legislators are on

"The most important office in our democracy is that of private citizen." –
Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis

Important Committees for Children's Issues

Appropriations: 860-240-0390

Education: 860-240-0420

Human Services: 860-240- 0490

Public Health: 860-240-0560

**Higher Education and Employment
Advancement:**
860-240-0280

Select Committee on Children: 860-240-0370

Local Contact Information

Fill in the information below so you have the information easily accessible when you need it.

Municipal Website: _____

School Board Website: _____

Municipal Chief Elected Official: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Other local contacts in Town Government (Dept of Human Services)

Superintendent: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Chair of School Board: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

School Board Members: Name/ phone number

School Readiness Coordinator: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Members of School Readiness Council: Name/ phone number

Discovery Community Coordinator: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

ECE Programs in the Community

Include Family home Providers or local network of Providers

Name: _____

Director: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Name: _____

Director: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Name: _____

Director: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Name: _____

Director: _____

Phone number : _____

Mailing Address: _____

Political Town Committee Chairs or local contacts:

Democrat: Name _____

Phone: _____

Green: _____

Phone: _____

Republican: _____

Phone: _____

Working Families: _____

Phone: _____