



Adopt-a-Legislator



This outreach project connects elected officials with child care and/or pre-k programs in their district through activities and events at an early care and learning facility, visits in the legislator's district office, and by using other correspondence methods (letters, artwork, etc.). The suggested outreach activities are intended to support communication between the child care and/or pre-k program (the staff and the children and families they serve) and their local legislators to build relationships and highlight the important role early care and learning plays in local communities.

TO GET STARTED:

Look up the state senator and representative and/or member of Congress that serves your community at www.tinyurl.com/palegis by typing in your program's address in the form. The website will give legislators' names and district office contact information.



Send your state senator and state representative and/or member of Congress a letter describing how your program would like to build a relationship with them and "adopt" them as a part of the child care and/or pre-k program's family.



If you do not hear back from the legislator's district office within a few weeks, give their district office a call to schedule a visit. This initial visit can be in the district office, or it can be at your program.

Tips for a district office visit:



Bring general program information.



Bring a parent or family member if possible.



Bring children's artwork or something to leave behind that they can display.



Prepare talking points to describe how you would like to engage with the legislator and any opportunities for them to visit your site.

Tips for planning a visit by a legislator to your program:



Invite them to attend any pre-planned family event without them having a specific role.



Plan an event for them to engage with families or classrooms in a specific role (read to children, meet and greet with parents, STAR ceremony proclamation).



Plan an event where they are the honored guest. Examples include roundtable informational meeting with media and community members to engage in policy/funding conversations, host a media event around a specific program milestone (STAR level, anniversary, teacher retiring), or an event honoring their efforts to support early learning.

Stay in regular contact! Send monthly updates to your adopted state legislators including notes/letters from your families, artwork from the children, and any communication from the program administration or teaching staff.

Be sure to invite your legislators to all family events (they are now part of the family!) and offer opportunities to engage with the children (reading, art projects, etc.). Legislators have busy schedules, so don't be discouraged if it takes a few times contacting them to attend or participate in an event at your program.



Make sure you share your "adoption" with your families and the broader community.



Periodically recognize and publicly thank your adopted legislator through:

- Sending the legislator an "adoption certificate" to their office and hang one at your site.
- Posting about their involvement on social media.
- Writing a letter to the editor about the engagement of the legislator and the importance of early care and education.
- Including an article in your family newsletter.
- Hosting a small reception at your program.

If you have any questions or need support in any outreach activities, please get in touch with

Pre-K for PA info@prekforpa.org,

Start Strong PA info@startstrongpa.org,

or any of our partner organizations. Don't forget to document your activities and share them with the campaigns so we can include you in our Leadership in Action Program!

Remember to tag Start Strong PA and Pre-K for PA on any social media posts at:



@StartStrongPA



@PreKforPA
@PreK4PA