

How to Use This Kit

This kit makes it easy for you to spread the word to community members, parents, teachers and business leaders, about Ohio's need for quality early care and education programs and supports for all children and their families.

This Kit Contains:

- Key Messages
- Ad Samples
- Brochures
- Brochure Inserts
- Op-Ed Articles
- Letters to the Editor
- Letter to your State Lawmakers
- Working with the Media
- PowerPoint Presentation

Suggestions for Using This Kit

Key Messages

These messages tested positively among focus groups and are the most effective in spreading the word about our mission to create a quality early care and education system in Ohio. Use these messages when creating any of your own publicity materials, talking with the media or when communicating with the public. The uniform overarching message leads to more specific messaging to reach the following target audiences: business leaders, elementary education professionals and early childhood professionals.

Ad Samples

The five print ads included in this kit make up a series. Each, in PDF and Quark form, is available on a CD and will be posted to the Build web site at www.build-ohio.org in three sizes. All are available in full color and black and white. To publish as is, you'll simply need to send a PDF of the ad electronically to the publication. To personalize the ad, you'll need to send the publication the Quark version and have their graphic designers insert your logo. There is space allotted for your logo in the lower third of the ad. Use the Quark version if the publication needs to modify the ad size, but if possible, avoid changing the existing ad copy. Quark is graphic design software that is commonly used by printers and publications.

Brochures

Four sample brochures are included in your kit. Each targeting different audiences, these include; parents and families, early childhood professionals, elementary school professionals and business leaders. Use these brochures to educate these groups on the importance of a quality early care and education system in Ohio.

To re-produce the brochures and get a price quote you'll need to give your printer the following information:

- Size is 14"x 8.5" – folds to 3.5" x 8.5"
- Inks are 4c/4c – four color on both sides
- Use a 80# gloss cover stock
- To finish – trim, score and fold (folds in half once, and then in half again)

Call Wendy Jenkins at 614-221-2885 ext. 11 – to send the art to your printer. Build has a limited supply of brochures. Contact Chris Stoneburner for information at cstoneburner2002@yahoo.com

Brochure Inserts

Each brochure has an optional insert. These inserts give you the opportunity to include information about successful early care and education initiatives or programs in your own community. One pre-printed side of this two-sided insert features statewide accomplishments. The blank side has been left to highlight local progress. So, simply add your local copy to the existing template. When you send the insert to a printer for re-production ask them to use a cover stock of 60# or higher.

Op-Ed Articles

In your kit you will find two sample Op-Ed articles. Each article uses our "tested" messages and is ready for publication, although you can also add local information. Most newspaper editors are always on the look out for topical and interesting pieces to include on their editorial page. Before sending, contact your local paper to find out what its op-ed submission requirements are.

In addition to your local newspaper, use these articles for publication in the following:

- Community magazines
- Newsletters from businesses and/or credit unions
- Your own publications

Letters to the Editor

Make the case for a quality early care and education system in Ohio with the three sample Letters to the Editor included in this kit. Each letter is unique so you can send all three to your local paper over the course of a year. Try to space out your submissions to increase the likelihood of getting all three published. Each letter meets the 200 word limit required at most major papers. Feel free to make this letter your own, but be sure not to exceed your local paper's word limit.

PowerPoint Presentation

Why not start a speakers bureau? Face-to-face presentations are an excellent way to make the case for a quality early care and education system in Ohio. It's why we've included a PowerPoint presentation with talking points. Follow the talking points, as they fall in line with the PowerPoint slides.

Early Experiences Last a Lifetime

Overarching Message

To be successful in school and in life, Ohio's young children (birth through five) must grow up in an environment that develops their self-confidence, their social and emotional skills, as well as a love for learning.

Why?

New research on brain development has taught us that a child's early experiences are critical in developing strong language, cognitive, and social skills necessary for lifelong learning.

As more parents join the workforce and society places new demands on them, we need to make sure all Ohio families have the support they need to provide their young children with rich developmental experiences.

Because of challenging academics and a fast-paced, high-tech world, children are expected to function on a much higher level than ever before, reinforcing the need for quality early care and education.

How?

We can do this by increasing community and public investment in young children, particularly in quality early care and education programs, and other supports for all children and their families.

We can elevate public discussion through public private partnerships, personal involvement, community mobilization and legislative action.

Target Audiences

Business

Elementary Education Professionals

Early Childhood Professionals

(see flip side)

Business

Adult behavior finds its roots in the young child. Early experiences have a lifetime impact. Socialization, good behavior, the ability to work well with others and respect for people, places and things are part of what children learn in the early years. Without this important foundation, children will not do well in school and will find it difficult to be successful as adults.

When young children are receiving quality care and education, their working parents are more productive, have less absenteeism, show a greater work focus and a better overall work performance.

The changing job market and economy in Ohio have generated more need for early care and education options for families. 62% of Ohio's children under age six live in homes where both parents or their single parent works. We need to help these families by providing quality early childhood education opportunities so that parents can work, and children can develop.

Many states are investing in their youngest children by providing high quality early care and education opportunities. Not only does this help our children prepare for future success in school, it also helps close the achievement gap between low and high-income students.

High quality early care and education programs will make Ohio more economically competitive by helping to attract a well-trained workforce and to retain employees.

Elementary Education Professionals

For every dollar we spend on high quality, early care and education for low-income children, our return on investment can be as high as 16 dollars with savings in special education, criminal justice and welfare costs. This is confirmed in research done by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Early care and education is a cost-effective investment over a person's life, paying big dividends for society in the long run.

By the time children enter kindergarten, there already is a wide gap in social and intellectual knowledge between high and low income children. A high quality early care and education program can help narrow that gap. This will also make our K-12 system stronger and help our teachers be more successful in the classroom.

- Even as three year olds, the differences between language skills among children is startling with high-income children knowing 1100 words on average, compared to only 480 words by children at risk.***

Children's brains are like sponges – what they learn in their early years carries a lifetime impact – because nearly 90% of brain development occurs before the age of five. High quality early care and education give us the opportunity to help our children grow and develop, and do well as adults.

Since 62% of children under the age of six are in homes where both their parents or their single parent works, many children spend their early years in settings outside the home. This gives us an opportunity to support early learning where children acquire the basic educational and social skills they need to be successful in school.

Early Childhood Professionals

Children's brains are like sponges – what they learn in their early years carries a lifetime impact – because nearly 90% of brain development occurs before the age of five. Early care and education helps our children grow and develop, and become independent, successful adults.

All children benefit from high quality, early care and education through improved math and language ability, better social skills and fewer behavior issues. Low-income children are more likely to stay in school, attend college, earn more money and be in high-skilled jobs than their peers who do not participate in these programs. This is a significant contribution that early childhood professionals make to society.

Today only 14% of children spend their first three years in the full-time care of a parent. Yet during these years, a child learns a great deal that shapes his/her future for years to come. He develops respect for people, places and things, the ability to work well with others, and trust and self-confidence in decision-making. By investing in quality programs, we are giving our children the opportunities they need in the early years to succeed later in life.

Quality early care and education programs are extremely important to children giving them the social and knowledge base they need to succeed in school and in life.

With wages for unskilled jobs dropping daily, education is the key to a decent job with an income that allows families to support themselves. Early care and education professionals play an important role in future school success because they give children the foundation they need to become good students.

Did you know?

By age three, many children know 1100 words, at-risk children know 480.

Early experiences last a lifetime.



It's Why...

An alliance of groups and individuals is working together to increase community support and public investment in quality early care and education.

You can help.

www.build-ohio.org



Did you know?

A child develops the ability to reason by the age of five.

Early experiences last a lifetime.



It's Why...

An alliance of groups and individuals is working together to increase community support and public investment in quality early care and education.

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www.build-ohio.org



Did you know?

A child's mind is like a sponge, soaking it all up from day one.

Early experiences last a lifetime.



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Did you know?

Adult behavior finds its roots in the young child.

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Did you know?

90% of brain growth occurs from birth to five years old.

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Early Experiences Last a Lifetime

There's nothing like the sparkle in a child's eye when they've learned something new. Quizzically they study their new discovery. Poking, prodding, questioning - until they find their answers. From birth to age five a child's mind is like a sponge, soaking up everything in sight.

What children learn in these first, formative years carries a lifetime impact. New research on brain development has taught us that nearly 90% of brain development occurs before the age of five, before a child even enters kindergarten. It's why we – community members, parents, educators, business leaders and public officials – must continue to support early child care and education initiatives.

For every dollar we spend on high quality, early care and education for low-income children, our return on investment can be as high as 16 dollars with savings in special education, criminal justice and welfare costs. Early care and education is a cost-effective investment, paying big dividends for society in the long run.

Ohio is making significant steps toward creating an early care and education system that is available to all families who want and need it. The State Board of Education recently convened the School Readiness Solutions Group. Charged with creating a road map for creating this system, the Solutions Group's recommendations will be passed on to state leaders. For the latest on their findings visit www.schoolreadiness.ohio.gov/.

In addition several other state initiatives are making a big impact. Operating in several Ohio counties, Step Up to Quality, a pilot program created by the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRA) in collaboration with Build Ohio, the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, rewards quality childcare centers with the recognition they deserve, while aiding and offering incentives to those looking to make improvements. Step Up's three-star rating scale also gives parents a much needed guide in finding quality early care and education programs.

Also, Ohio's Infant & Toddler Guidelines, published in 2006 are now available to parents, caregivers and teachers to broaden their understanding of how children develop. Find them online at www.occrra.org.

Keeping up with all of this progress and advocating further growth, is Build Ohio, an alliance of groups and individuals working together to increase community support and public investment in quality care and education. Build's web site, www.build-ohio.org, offers a wealth of information.

Ohio's recent advances are substantial and mark the beginning of a new understanding by our lawmakers, business leaders and parents that early care and education is necessary to prepare Ohio's children for success in school and in life. We must keep this momentum going. Call your local, state and federal lawmakers and encourage them to support funding for early care and education initiatives. Make your voice heard. Ohio's future depends on it.

Stand Up for Ohio's Youngest Children

By age three many children know an average of 1100 words, but at-risk children only know 480. This startling statistic reflects the wide gap in social and intellectual knowledge that is too prevalent in our nation. A high quality early care and education system can help narrow that gap.

All children benefit from high-quality early care and education from improved math and language ability, to better social skills and behavior. And the impact is even more pronounced in disadvantaged children. Low-income children who attend high quality programs are more likely to stay in school, attend college, earn more money and be in high-skilled jobs than their peers who do not have the same opportunity.

Today we know more about how young children develop than ever before. The truth is early experiences last a lifetime. To be successful in school and in life, Ohio's young children – ages birth through five – must grow up in environments that develop their self-confidence, their social and emotional skills, as well as a love for learning.

As more parents join the workforce and society places new demands on them, we need to make sure all Ohio families have the support they need to provide their young children with rich developmental experiences. We can do this by increasing community and public investment in young children, particularly in quality early care and education programs, and other supports for all children and their families.

Investing in our youngest children not only helps them prepare for future success, but also pays society big dividends in the long run. For every dollar we spend on high quality, early care and education for low-income children, our return on investment can be as high as 16 dollars with savings in special education, criminal justice, and welfare costs. This is confirmed in research done by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

You can help. Make your voice heard in your communities, to your neighbors and to your lawmakers. Advocate for the continuation and expansion of high-quality, early care and education programs – and support the public investment needed to make them a reality for all Ohio families.

Sixty-two percent of Ohio's children under the age of six live in homes where both parents or their single parent works. This means more and more children are spending that critical growing up time outside of the home. It's why, now more than ever, we must support public investment in quality early care and education. Find out more at www.build-ohio.org.

Date

Editor
Address

Dear Editor:

Preparing Ohio's Children for Success

To be successful in school and in life, Ohio's young children must grow up in an environment that develops their self-confidence, their social and emotional skills, as well as a love for learning.

More and more parents are joining the workforce and society is placing new demands on them. It's why we need to make sure all Ohio families have the support they need to provide their young children with rich developmental experiences, whether in the home or in early childhood programs.

A coalition of state, private and business organizations is working to increase community support and public investment in quality early care and education. Find out how you can help at www.build-ohio.org. You can make a difference.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Date

Editor
Address

Dear Editor:

Early Childhood Education – Good for Business

Adult behavior finds its roots in the young child because early experiences last a lifetime. Socialization, good behavior, the ability to work well with others and respect for people, places and things are part of what children learn in their early years.

A bright beginning leads to an even brighter future. This is why businesses should support making quality early care and education available to all Ohio families who want and need it. We can do this by increasing community and public investment in young children, particularly in quality programs, and other supports for children and their families.

Businesses can offer early care and education benefits, such as pre-tax flexible spending accounts or reimbursement for child care. They can also direct their corporate charitable dollars to projects that benefit our youngest children.

As more parents join the workforce and society places new demands on them, we need to make sure all Ohio families have the support they need to provide their young children with rich developmental experiences. Encourage your employer to support quality early childhood care and education and find out how you can help - visit www.build-ohio.org.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Date

Editor
Address

Dear Editor:

New research on brain development has taught us that nearly 90% of brain development occurs before the age of five, before a child even enters kindergarten. Early experiences last a lifetime and what children learn in these first, formative years carries into adulthood. It's why we – community members, parents, educators, business leaders and public officials must renew our efforts to make quality early care and education available to all Ohio families who want or need it.

All children and families benefit from this support, but for low-income families it's even more important. For every dollar we spend on high quality, early care and education for low-income children, our return on investment can be as high as 16 dollars with savings in special education, criminal justice and welfare costs. Early care and education is a cost-effective investment, paying big dividends for society in the long run.

High quality early care and education, whether it be at home or in early childhood programs, gives us the opportunity to help all our children grow and develop, and do well as adults. It's why we must elevate public discussion through public private-partnerships, personal involvement, community mobilization and legislative action. Find out how you can help – visit www.build-ohio.org.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Date

State Senator or Representative's First and Last Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Senator or Representative (Last name):

Children's brains are like sponges. What they learn in the early years carries a lifetime impact. For this reason and many others, it is important that the early care and education we offer Ohio families, be top-notch, and high quality. Our children deserve this.

As someone who has seen first hand the impact good quality programs can have on our youngest children, I encourage you to take an active role in supporting improved quality when it comes to early care and education.

You will find support for quality from every corner of the state, including Build Ohio, a statewide coalition that is working to support the development of a comprehensive, early care and education system for children ages birth through five. Build has been working for several years to educate parents and community leaders on the difference quality makes in the lives of children.

We need your support as we move forward. Here are some things you can do.

- Support statewide expansion of Step Up To Quality, a 3-star quality rating system for licensed early childhood centers. Step Up To Quality helps centers meet quality benchmarks that include using Ohio's Preschool Academic Content Standards to prepare children for kindergarten. Step Up To Quality gives parents an easy-to-use tool to identify programs that exceed Ohio's licensing standards.
- Improve the education of those who work with our youngest children by expanding T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Ohio. T.E.A.C.H. is a scholarship program that makes higher education affordable for those who work in the profession.
- Promote the professional development of early childhood teachers by insisting on specialized training and education along with equitable compensation for teachers who often earn less than parking attendants.
- Continue to support public funding for quality programs that are helping our children be successful in school and in life.

Thank you for your past support. By believing in children, you are believing in Ohio. If I can provide any additional information on early care and education in our local community, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Your Name

The Basics in Working with the Media

Designate a spokesperson.

- Know the media--and make sure they know you. Be familiar with the publication, the show, and the style of the individual reporter
- Be honest
- Be available
- Talk in everyday language that your neighbor could understand

Follow these rules when contacted by the media:

- Return calls promptly.
- Find out and work within a reporter's deadline.
- Speak the truth
- If you are not the spokesperson, refer the reporter to the proper person who can comment on the issue
- Use criticism sparingly

Follow these rules when you contact the media:

- Be concise.
- Accept that they're "always" busy.
- Use plain English.
- Most reporters aren't experts on your issue. Never assume that they have in-depth knowledge about your issue.
- When contacting the media via e-mail, do not include attachments unless you have spoken to the person and know that he/she is willing to receive them. Rather, include any press releases or other information in the text of the e-mail.
- Think before you speak
- Know in advance the points you want to make--stick to two or three points.
- "No comment" is a comment; "I don't know" is not a sin.
- Never ask to see a story before it's published
- Never let a reporter get to you
- If it doesn't feel right--don't do it. Research the reporter or outlet, if necessary, before granting an interview
- Follow up
- Complain only if the story is factually wrong--and even then be professional--and remember that it's a reporter's job to get both sides of the issue, and it's seldom worth it to fight with someone who buys ink by the barrel.

Tools for Communicating with and Through the Media

There are a variety of tools available to help get your message out there, from the handwritten letter to the Internet. They range from vehicles over which you have a great deal of control to public service announcements and letters to the editor, which are granted life only by the goodness of the gatekeeper. Consider the following vehicles:

- news releases
- visits with the editorial board
- fact sheets
- events
- news conferences
- individual briefings with reporters or editors
- op-ed articles
- letters to the editor
- public service announcements
- appearances on radio and television programs
- Internet access--from Web sites to online forums and newsgroups

Media Releases

One of the most common ways of conveying information when you have something new to say is to put out a media release. The following tips will help to make sure that your information is published.

- The news must be newsworthy – and remember that what you think is interesting may not necessarily be to the media. Try to make the news timely, or demonstrate that it will affect a large number of people.
- Your release should cover these basic facts: who, what, where, when, why, and how.
- The first paragraph should grab the reader's attention – it should include your main news or message.
- The rest of the story should contain further details to support your news – think of an inverted triangle with the most important news at the top, and the less important news at the bottom. Editors will shorten a news article from the bottom up.
- Keep the language simple – don't use jargon, or superlatives (such as 'biggest' and 'best').
- Include quotes from relevant people.
- Always include the date and contact phone number for further information.

Editorial Board Meetings

Depending on the newspaper, scheduling a meeting with the editorial board can be as simple as picking up the phone to call the editor or as complex as sending a formal letter of request to the board, which then reviews the requests. Be prepared to explain your position and, if possible, tie your subject into an issue currently making headlines. Tell the editor of the timeliness of your issue, as well as its interest to, and impact on their readers.

Fact Sheets: Presenting the Essentials

The fact sheet, like the media advisory, gives "just the facts." This one-pager is particularly useful for focusing on the key points of a complex issue, or as an introduction to an organization or program. It may be written in a standard bullet format with a minimum of explanation preceding it, or it may take the form of short, journalistic paragraphs.

Op-Ed: High-Profile Opinions

The purpose of an op-ed article is to persuade the reader, generally in the form either of a direct commentary on a current situation or of a rebuttal of a previously published article or op-ed piece. Because an op-ed carries the prestige of placement opposite the editorial page and includes a byline, it can be an effective means of increasing the visibility of your main spokesperson.

Letters to the Editor: Noteworthy Views

Letters to the editors of local and statewide newspapers are a good way to express your views on an issue while also providing important information to the public. The "Letters to the Editor" section is one of the most popular sections of newspapers, assuring letter writers a wide audience for their views.

Letters render a valuable service to the public by providing information and viewpoints that might not be reported in other sections of the newspaper. Many people have not had the same kinds of experiences you have had. Your letter can help them gain new insights.

Don't be discouraged if your letter is not printed right away, or printed at all. The larger newspapers often have more letters than they can print, or may not print more than one or two letters on a certain topic. Even if only one out of ten letters is printed, you have reached thousands of readers - enough to make your effort worthwhile.

Public Service Announcements: An Informative Approach

A public service announcement (PSA) is defined by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) as an "unpaid announcement that promotes the programs of government of voluntary agencies or that serves the public interest" (Wilcox and Nolte, Public Relations Writing and Media Technique, 1995). As with the news release, stations tend to be overwhelmed by the number of potential PSAs they receive. PSAs must meet time specifications; often they are submitted in a 10-second, 20-second, and 30-second versions. There is no requirement that a station air your PSA, so you should probably check with the station before you go to the expense of producing a PSA.

Television Appearances: A Visual Story

From community cable access programs to interviews on regional or national news, television appearances and news stories offer an unparalleled opportunity for education advocates to communicate their messages to wide audiences.

Dress in a subtle manner. Wear solid-colored clothing and simple accessories. If you want to be viewed as a knowledgeable professional, make certain you convey that image visually.

Before you go on the air, practice how you will deliver your key points. A mirror or critical friend may be quite helpful.

Be aware of your nonverbal communication, particularly your gestures. Assume you are on camera at all times, from all angles. Make an effort to appear to be a good listener when other people are speaking.

Radio Programs: Making Yourself Heard

Whether you are being interviewed or are calling a talk-radio show program, your words--and your voice itself--assume great significance.

Call-In Shows. Radio call-in programs are an excellent tool for activists. Your local newspaper will probably have listings for the major radio programs in your area. Tune in to talk radio on several occasions to become familiar with the style, format, and political views of the host. Before you call in, jot down your key points. Remember to identify your role as an educator at the beginning of your message and to keep your points brief.

Radio Interviews. As with television appearances and political testimony, carefully practice delivery of your message. Most radio interviews are done over the phone so you can have your notes in front of you. If the interview is in the studio, watch your language; microphones are sometimes accidentally switched on. If you are a featured guest on a call-in program, listen carefully to callers and refer to them by name when responding to questions.

Web Outlets

In communicating with the media and disseminating information, your contacts should include online publications, listservs and news groups. Many publications that have both a print and online version also have separate staff members responsible for each version. Research online organizations as you would any other media contact.

If you have a Web site, include a hyperlink in your correspondence, when appropriate. Also, it is a good idea to include an "online media kit" on your Web site. An online media kit can connect members of the press with information about your organization, including contact information, current and previous press releases, newsletters, biographical information about members and fact sheets.

*Adapted from some of the following materials: ASCD, Tools for Education Activists, www.ascd.org; and the Virginia Organizing Project <http://www.virginia-organizing.org> ; and an article by Candice Wartie on Editorial Board appearing in the Association Forum of Chicagoland.