Think Babies:
Advocating for Early Head Start
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Learning Outcomes

- Understand the political landscape around Early Head Start
- Identify your passion for this program, and your role in advocacy
- Make a plan for advocating for Early Head Start that builds on your individual skills, resources, and passion

About ZERO TO THREE

- We help babies and toddlers benefit from the early connections that are critical to their well-being and development.
- Our mission is to ensure that all babies have a strong start in life.
- We envision a society with the knowledge and will to support all infants and toddlers in reaching their full potential.
ZERO TO THREE fulfills its mission by supporting:

- **Parents** with practical resources that help them connect with their babies.
- **Professionals** with knowledge and tools that help them support healthy early development.
- **Policymakers** in advancing policies which support and strengthen families, caregivers and infant-toddler professionals.

**About the ZERO TO THREE Policy Center**

- **Nonpartisan**
- **Research-based**
- **For policymakers and advocates**
- **Speak to the developmental needs of babies and their families**

**Exercise: What do Infants and Toddlers Need?**
All About Early Head Start

How does poverty affect babies and toddlers?

Infants and Toddlers Living in Poverty

Poverty and the brain

Research shows poverty diminishes brain growth.

Early stress and lack of positive early experiences mean poverty gets under the skin, understanding development in key brain regions for school readiness and academic success.

- SELF-REGULATION & LEARNING
- MEMORY & LANGUAGE
- EMOTIONAL CONTROL
Early gaps

Gaps in development appear before children turn 2.

- Early gaps in children’s development can have lasting effects on their future success.
- Identifying and addressing these gaps is crucial for long-term developmental outcomes.

What makes a difference?

Strong nurturing relationships help build healthy brains.

- These relationships buffer children from harmful stress and strengthen their brain development in key areas that affect academic success.

Building a comprehensive program

- Safe and developmentally enriching environments
- Support as primary caregivers and educators
- Support in meeting goals and self-sufficiency
- Assuring comprehensive services
- Development of trained, caring and compensated workforce
Comprehensive services

- Child development and learning services
- Health (including mental health, nutrition, and dental) services
- Family engagement services

How does Early Head Start affect babies and parents?

- Children did better on measures such as cognitive, language and social-emotional
- Parents were more supportive of language and learning, more positive, and emotionally supportive
- Parents progressed toward self-sufficiency
- Fathers significantly more engaged
- Outcomes better when:
  - Began prenattaly
  - Performance standards implemented early and fully

So what’s the problem?

Proportion of Eligible Infants and Toddlers Served
What is happening with Head Start?

- Overdue for reauthorization
- 2017 Appropriations Committees put additional money to Head Start
- S. 185/ H.R. 1921 Head Start Improvement Act

Taking Action for Early Head Start

How are you a Big Voice for Little Kids?
Why Advocate?

– Responsibility: If we don’t who will?
– Constituents matter!
– A link to the State/District
– You’re the expert!

Think Babies Campaign

Think Babies
Make their potential our priority.

Think Babies as a Platform

The connection matters

A healthy brain begins healthy

Their future is worth the investment.
Taking Action in Your Community

http://www.thinkbabies.org/take-action/

You Have What It Takes!

Share the Think Babies Message

- Share on social
- Publish a blog post
- Promote Think Babies in newsletters
- Send an email to your network
Share the Think Babies Message

**Publish a Blog Post**

Share your thoughts on why early childhood education is crucial for the Think Babies message. Include links to relevant research and personal stories to engage your audience.

**Send an Email to Your Network**

Send an email to your local network or child development advocates. Include links to the Think Babies website and encourage them to spread the word.

**Spread the Word in Your Community**

- **Talk with parents**
- **Connect with advocates**
- **Write a letter to the editor**
- **Submit an opinion editorial**

**Spread the Word in Your Community**

**Think Babies Talking Points**

- **Create an Opinion Editorial**
  
  "As a [Your Occupation], I support the importance of early childhood education. The benefits of investing in our youngest learners cannot be overstated. By prioritizing early education, we ensure a brighter future for all children."

- **Sample Op-ed**
  
  "At [Your Location], we believe in the power of early intervention. By focusing on children's developmental milestones, we are building a stronger, more resilient community."

- **Local Events**
  
  "Join us for our Think Babies event this weekend! Together, we can make a difference in the lives of our youngest learners."

- **Social Media Campaign**
  
  "Spread the word on social media using #ThinkBabies. Let's work together to create a brighter future for all children."

- **Contact Local Media**
  
  "Reach out to your local news outlets and share the Think Babies message. Let's raise awareness and make a difference."
Engage Your Elected Officials

• Call or email your elected officials

• Attend Town Hall meetings

• Visit Congressional offices in your state

• Invite Members of Congress to visit you

Visit Congressional Offices In Your State or District

Making the trip to Washington, DC to meet with your members of Congress is tedious, but all worthwhile. Here are some simple tips:

• Take photos and make notes about what you see and how you feel

• Visit your senators' offices in your state

• Invite your members of Congress to visit you

For more information and sample invitations, check out ZERO TO THREE’s How to Plan A Site Visit for Your Policy Maker.
Things You Can Do Right Now

- Sign Up for the ZERO TO THREE Policy Network
- Sign up for Think Babies™!
- Send us your Child Care story
- Plan to join us!

Thank you!

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