

**Frequently Asked Questions
Step Up for Kids Day
(Watch our web site for the 2011 date!)**

Why do a Step Up for Kids Day?

Because millions of American children live in poverty...millions are alone every day after school... millions have no early learning opportunities...millions are abused and neglected.

Because the U.S. ranks 24th in child well-being among 25 rich democracies.

Because federal spending on children is declining sharply as a percentage of the federal budget.

What is Step Up for Kids Day?

Step Up is an annual special, non-partisan, nationwide event, sponsored by the Every Child Matters Education Fund (ECMEF) and co-sponsored by many other national, state, and local organizations (such as VOICES, Prevent Child Abuse America, the Afterschool Alliance, the National Association of Social Workers). It brings together thousands of people in October to show widespread public support for a shift in spending priorities towards children and families. It calls upon the Administration, Congress, State Legislatures, Governors, Mayors, and local officials to make our nation's children a top priority. Events take place on the steps of the state capitols and other appropriate venues.

What are the desired outcomes of Step Up for Kids Day?

- Raising public awareness of the needs of children and families in the U.S.
- Getting officials at every level of government to present their plans for shifting spending priorities towards families and children.
- Getting the media to cover the children and family issues and how state and federal governments are making the policy decisions to meet their needs.
- Making America's children a national political and policy priority.
- Closing the investment gap that is growing ever larger when it comes to America's children.
- Encouraging non-voters to register and everyone to vote with kids' well-being in mind.

What should the event look like?

ECM encourages each state to come up with an event design that works best for them. It should be an event that is fun but has a serious message.

- **Where?** When feasible, the event should be held on the steps of the capitol building.
- **Focus?** It should focus on children's needs/issues in the individual state (see www.everychildmatters.org for specific state information and data).
- **Audience/Participants?** A sizeable number of children's advocates, including service providers (early education teachers, after-school personnel, members of the medical community),

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parents, grandparents, and children themselves should be present at the event, as well as legislators, other public officials, and members of the media.

- **Speakers?** Speakers at the event should include some service providers and advocates, children and families with their own stories, a pediatrician...and these speakers (or at least one of them) should be well-known enough to draw state-wide attention. If you plan to have politicians speaking at your event, in order to insure that you do not go outside of the lines specified by 501(c)(3) regulations, only include those who are not seeking election or re-election during 2011. This will help shelter the lead organization from any perception of electioneering.
- **Entertainment?** Absolutely. Past year's events included performances, games and activities for children and parents, give-away items, etc.
- **Refreshments?** Many groups have included refreshments at their evenets, many of them donated.
- **Action?** Participants should call upon all elected and appointed officials to make kids a top priority and shift spending accordingly.

Must all events be held on the specific date established?

No. While it's great to have a good number of states holding an event on that day for the additional national attention it potentially can carry, having events on different days that simply work better is fine.

What types of groups are involved?

All types of child-friendly groups have expressed interest, including:

- state affiliates or networks of the National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- state affiliates or networks of Prevent Child Abuse America
- state affiliates of Voices for America's Children
- state affiliates of the National Association of Social Workers
- state Head Start Associations
- after-school programs
- hospitals
- PTAs
- nurses associations
- universities
- youth groups
- United Ways
- counties, cities
- state human services departments
- interfaith organizations
- politicians
- businesses

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What does ECM provide?

- Stipend to lead organization tied to completion of a mini-grant
- Materials—banners, posters, rally signs, t-shirts, bumper stickers, flyers
- Technical assistance: conference calls, tool kits including “how-to’s,” time lines, talking points, sample event designs, etc.
- Media notification
- Mini web site on the ECM national web site which you can manage yourself or provide information for ECM staff to upload

Will the event or its organizers be supporting candidates or political parties on this day?

No! ECM is a 501(c)(3) *non-partisan* organization. Our “candidates” are the needs of children and families. Candidates are welcome to attend the event, but there will be no partisan discussion or electioneering.

Who should interested organizations and individuals contact?

If your state doesn’t already have a lead organization or interested organizations listed (go to the ECM website: www.everychildmatters.org and click on your state to make that determination), please contact Alaina Kaczmariski at 202-591-6199 or akaczmariski@everychildmatters.org.