

**Week of the
Young Child**
April 10 –16, 2011
**Early Years Are
Learning Years***



Event Planning Handbook

Week of the Young Child is held each year to honor young children and thank teachers and all those who make a difference in young children's lives. The theme for WOYC 2011 is:

Early Years Are Learning Years®

NAEYC encourages state and local Affiliates, early childhood programs, and organizations who work on behalf of young children to plan WOYC events that will bring your community together.

Planning your events

This handbook outlines a variety of ideas for ways that state and local Affiliates, early childhood programs and other organizations can plan events that:

- Promote early literacy and learning in your community
- Thank teachers in your community
- Influence public policy in your community, in your state, and nationally.

Early Literacy

Developing early reading skills is crucial to children's success in school. Children who enter school with larger vocabularies start school ahead of children who have not been exposed to enriching language environments. Reach out and help children get the early literacy foundation they need to succeed in school.

Affiliates:

Sponsor a mini-conference on children's early literacy. Invite early childhood teachers and parents. Ask experts in the field to present a variety of workshops on topics such as how children learn to read and write, how to choose books for children, techniques for conducting story time, and supporting children's literacy development at home.

Early Childhood Programs:

Create a family story time. Invite families to participate in your story time and other reading activities. Some parents, grandparents, or other family members may enjoy reading or telling stories to a group. Others might become a reading partner to a child in the classroom, while some parents may prefer to chaperone a field trip to the library.

Hold a kick-off breakfast for family and community reading partners. Photograph children with their reading partners (preferably someone who can read with the child more than once a week). Then post the pictures on a sheet of paper. Ask the child-adult partners to write their comments about the books they read under their picture throughout the week.

Ask businesses or other community partners to help fund a project to create story theme bags with books, games, and suggested family activities to do at home. Plan a kick-off event during Week of the Young Child to demonstrate how the bags can be used and to recognize business and other community partners.

Have children write or dictate their opinions of classroom books and rate them with stars. Tally the results and post the chart in the classroom. Publish in your parent newsletter a list of the five-star books along with a few student reviews.

Organize a Children's Book Festival to celebrate reading. Children and families can dress as their favorite book characters. Businesses or organizations might provide free books to children or families can participate in a book swap. Local celebrities or public officials can read stories and theater groups can perform puppet shows or skits.

Organizations:

Plan a community wide early childhood professionals' recognition dinner. Ask directors and principals to identify teachers and caregivers who have made a difference in children's literacy development. Give those teachers special recognition and ask them to share their successful strategies.

Organize a book drive in your community. Work with local businesses and civic groups to organize drop-off locations. You can give these to disadvantaged families or donate them to a local child care program.

Work with the local library, literacy organizations, civic clubs, book store owners and other members of the education community to plan community wide celebrations.

Thanking Teachers

Early childhood teachers educate and care for young children on a daily basis. They are helping these children build a learning foundation that will get them ready for school and support them through their lives.

Affiliates:

Take out an ad in a local newspaper, thanking all early childhood educators.

Early Childhood Programs:

Plan a thank-you breakfast or lunch for the teachers. Ask parents and families to participate. Have the children draw pictures and write notes to their teachers.

Organizations:

Send letters to early childhood programs, thanking the teachers for all they do. Offer to display children's artwork in your offices.

Public Policy and Advocacy

Getting yourself and others involved in advocacy work is a hands-on way you can make a difference in the lives of young children.

Affiliates:

Ask the Governor or Mayor to issue a proclamation. Invite elected officials to kick-off a Week of the Young Child event by reading the proclamation. Use the public appearance of elected officials as an opportunity to speak about specific initiatives and to thank them for their past support. Identify families that reporters can interview to highlight the impact that these policies and initiatives have or could have on families.

Celebrate the Month of the Young Child. Designate a focus for each week, including themes like: Celebrating Community Partnerships; Promoting Healthy Children and Families; Recognizing Early Childhood Professionals; and Advocating on Behalf of Children and Families.

Early Childhood Programs:

Get families involved. During community and program events distribute newsletters and fliers to families with information about your Affiliate's public policy work and how to join your grassroots advocacy network. Ask program directors to help recruit families willing to talk about their child care experiences with policy makers and the media. Then invite families to participate in Affiliate advocacy and media training and keep them informed of the Affiliates' public policy efforts.

Organizations:

Honor Children's Champions. Publicly acknowledge the contributions of community leaders and advocates during the event with a "Champion of Young Children Award". Think broadly about those in the community who have made a difference for young children and solicit suggestions from community and business partners as well as Affiliate members. Send a press release to the media about the awardees and the importance of quality early childhood education.

Coordinate related events with other organizations. Avoid duplication of effort and promote greater awareness of the needs of young children in the community by coordinating your event planning with groups that have related campaigns in the spring.

Promote local action. Draft a petition or resolution for a local council's consideration on behalf of all children within the community. Then arrange to have a group of children and their families present it at a city council meeting. You can follow up with one or more town meetings and invite elected officials to hear directly from families, teachers, and service providers about the unmet needs of young children in the community.

Publicizing your events

One of the keys to a successful event is to make sure people know about it. In the following pages of this guide, you will find templates of materials that you can customize and use to let families in your program, people in your communities, and the news media know about your events.

Week of the Young Child News Release

The news release template provides you with a simple way to attract local media interest in Week of the Young Child, your events, and the need for more high-quality early childhood education programs. You can customize the news release by inserting the name of your Affiliate or organization, along with information about the special activities you have planned for WOYC. Send the news release to newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations in your area. You can get the names of the best contacts within each news organization by contacting the news desk. Send it out early enough for reporters to plan to cover the events.

Reaching out to different types of media

Invitation to television stations to cover event

Customize this note and send it with the news release to television stations. Television news reporters want to cover events that are visually interesting to their audience. By highlighting what reporters will be able to show with the story, you can increase the chance that they will cover your WOYC events.

PSA script for radio

Public service announcements, or PSAs, are simple announcements are often used by radio stations during breaks in their programming. Customize the enclosed PSA script with details about issues affecting young children in your community to build awareness of Week of the Young Child and the importance of these issues. Contact radio stations in your area and ask for the person who arranges public service announcements, and request that the stations run the PSA before and during WOYC.

Letter to the editor for newspapers

The letter to the editor is designed to bring awareness of the issues affecting children in your community. This letter should be customized with information about your community, and sent to the letters section of your newspaper to raise awareness of the needs of young children. This brings important information about early childhood education issues to a broader audience.

For more information, contact
[Media Contact and Affiliate / Organization Name]
[Phone Number and E-mail Address]

EARLY YEARS ARE LEARNING YEARS
[State/City] Celebrates National Week of the Young Child

[DATE], 2010 – [NAME OF YOUR AFFILIATE / ORGANIZATION] asks [STATE/CITY] to come together for children during the Week of the Young Child (April 11-17, 2010). As part of the national Week of the Young Child celebrated across the country, [STATE/CITY] is honoring young children and all those who make a difference in children's lives.

“All young children need and deserve high-quality early learning experiences that will prepare them for life, and [STATE/CITY] has a great opportunity to do our part to help young children,” said [NAME AND TITLE OF YOUR AFFILIATE / ORGANIZATION'S LEADER]. “Week of the Young Child is time our [STATE/CITY] to recognize that early years are learning years for all young children.”

[Insert details about your Affiliate/Organization's events. Be sure to include location and time, as well whether it is open to the public.] Week of the Young Child, [OPTIONAL: sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)] is an opportunity for early childhood programs across the country, including child care and Head Start programs, preschools and elementary schools, to hold activities to bring awareness to the needs of young children.

Young children and their families depend on high-quality education and care, which help children get a great start, and bring lasting benefits to [STATE/CITY]. Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize the importance of early learning and early literacy, and to celebrate the teachers and policies that bring early childhood education to young children.

[NAME OF YOUR AFFILIATE / ORGANIZATION] has [NUMBER OF MEMBERS] early childhood professionals working together to improve professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education, and to build public support for high-quality early childhood education programs.

[OPTIONAL]:

[NAME OF YOUR AFFILIATE] is an affiliate of NAEYC, the largest organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of early education programs for children birth through age eight. Founded in 1926, NAEYC has nearly 90,000 members and a national network of over 300 local, state, and regional affiliates.

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Proclamation by Mayor/Governor
The Week of the Young Child

Whereas, the [Name of your Affiliate / Organization] and other local organizations, [OPTIONAL: in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children,] are celebrating the Week of the Young Child, [dates]; and

Whereas, these organizations are working to improve early learning opportunities, including early literacy programs, that can provide a foundation of learning for children in [STATE/CITY]; and

Whereas, teachers and others who make a difference in the lives of young children in [STATE/CITY] deserve thanks and recognition; and

Whereas, public policies that support early learning for all young children are crucial to young children's futures;

I, [name of official], [Mayor/Governor] of the [STATE/CITY], do hereby proclaim [dates] as The Week of the Young Child in [STATE/CITY] and encourage all citizens to work to make a good investment in early childhood in [STATE/CITY].

Early Years Are Learning Years

*Celebrate Week of the
Young Child*

April 11-17, 2010

Early childhood education is vital to our community. Children need a strong early learning foundation to succeed in school, and go on to succeed in life.

Make a difference in your community:

- Support early literacy programs. Early reading skills are crucial for young children to be ready for school.
- Reach out and thank parents, teachers and all adults who help young children get a great start.
- Support policies at the local, state, and federal levels that provide high-quality early learning opportunities for all young children.

[Add information about date and location of your WOYC celebration, details on how to participate, and contact information.]

Radio Public Service Announcement – :30 seconds

Week of the Young Child

Young children are the future of our communities, and there are many ways that [STATE/CITY] can come together for children. April 11th to 17th is “Week of the Young Child,” a time when we can reach out in our communities to help young children. Take some time to support early literacy initiatives, thank teachers who work with our children, and work towards public policies that benefit all young children.

For more information, call [Name of your Affiliate / Organization] at [local phone number].

April 2010

Dear Editor,

Young children here in [STATE/CITY] deserve the best that we can give them.

Week of the Young Child, held April 11-17, is a time to recognize the needs of young children, and thank the adults involved in their education and care. Parents, teachers, caregivers and other adults play important roles in the lives of young children, and Week of the Young Child celebrates their efforts.

We can show our support for early learning in our community by promoting early literacy programs, thanking teachers who care for our children, and working to ensure that our public policies support early learning for all young children.

Week of the Young Child is a time to remind us that early years are learning years that early years are learning years.

Sincerely,
[Your Name,
Address, and
Phone Number]