Let’s educate the candidates!

This document outlines specific steps early childhood advocates can take to make a difference this election year.

**Now is the time to raise our voices.** Candidates elected in 2018 will determine the outcome for the nearly 300,000 children under 5 in Alabama, and their families, for years to come. Most candidates, even those currently holding office, do not know how important early childhood is to **strong families, school readiness, and prosperity** in our state. They do not know that supporting early childhood is an opportunity. They do not know that Alabama has successful early childhood programs but a crisis of access to those programs. They do not know that recent Alabama polling showed voters strongly favor support for early childhood programs and that 30+ advocacy organizations are working together to make it happen. **Let’s let them know.**

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**GET UP-TO-DATE**

Review the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) website for a collection of key information on early childhood issues. www.smartstartalabama.org/programs/blueprint

**PLAN WHAT YOU CAN DO**

Each individual can offer a unique contribution to the early childhood movement. What can yours be? Do you have a connection to current policymakers or candidates? Connections to community leaders or journalists? A personal story in support of early childhood programs? Is there an event you can attend to spread the word? Could you make a donation? Do you have a social media account?

**CONNECT WITH CANDIDATES**

The more candidates hear from constituents about early childhood issues, the more likely they are to support and expand programs once in office. You can call, make an appointment, send an email, or attend an event. In-person is best. Explain the issues. Ask questions. Share materials with them. Challenge them to bring early childhood to the forefront during forums, town halls, and local events.

**CONNECT WITH YOUR OWN NETWORK**

Most people support early childhood programs, but they may not know the details—for example, how early childhood programs contribute to our state’s prosperity, and how few children have access to these award-winning programs. Spread the word. Encourage others to advocate with you. Business and faith leaders are especially good partners to bring into the early childhood movement.
During this election year, I am personally committed to taking the following actions in support of Alabama’s Blueprint for Strong Families, School Readiness, and Prosperity:

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Thank you for your unique contribution to the Early Childhood Movement.

Learn more about Alabama’s Blueprint for Strong Families, School Readiness, and Prosperity at www.smartstartalabama.org