

What Head Start Programs Can Do to Keep Their Congressional Delegation and State Legislators Educated and Informed

* The term Congressman used here is intended to be gender neutral and is used to refer to Congress men and women, Representatives and Senators, as well as state Legislators.

- Send your Congressman a copy of the routine reports you send to the Regional Office and include a brief cover letter telling them that you're just letting them know how you're doing.
- As soon as you complete any grant (renewal, COLA, etc) send your Congressman a letter thanking him for his continued support and tell him how you're doing. Include some pictures.
- Get to know the names of your Congressman's aides, particularly those who have to do with education/social service issues. Send these individuals regular updates on program activities.
- Send your Congressman copies of you newsletters.
- Request a current photo of your Congressman and hang it prominently in your administrative offices. Take a picture with some children and parents standing next to the photo. Send him a copy with a brief note.
- Take a photo of kids getting on or off the bus (with agency name prominently displayed on the side). Send it to your Congressman with a note telling him this is how we start our day back in Wisconsin.
- Invite your Congressman (and spouse) to your center during one of the "district work periods" (call the office for a calendar) and:
 - Have him eat lunch with the kids.
 - Take a photo of him with the kids, frame a copy, and send it to his office.
 - Have him meet parents for a brief "thank you" that includes a few brief parent testimonials.
 - Show him classroom accomplishments like literacy awareness efforts and outcomes. Explain the assessment process and show him the results.
 - Show off your nicest center while giving demographic information about the children and families served there.
- Have the kids paint or draw a portrait of the Congressman. Choose one to send to the Congressman. Have it framed and mounted, then send it while including an accompanying note about the artist and how the portrait was "commissioned."

- Select some children's artwork and have it professionally framed. Send it to the Congressman with a brief story about the artwork and artist.
- Have the kids talk about our country and what they think about how things happen in the news, offices, etc. Write down their ideas verbatim and send them to the Congressman's office.
- Create a monthly parent success story (written in the parent's own hand) which relates the good experiences in Head Start and the program's positive impacts on that parent and family.
- Have a Disabilities Specialist write a brief letter to the Congressman about a child with special needs, how that child is served, and the positive outcomes for that child and family.
- Hold an open house during a Legislative recess and invite the Congressman. Declare it "Congressman _____ Day" at the center. Get press to attend and create a photo-op for the Congressman. Invite the Congressman's family, too.
- If you are opening a new or renovated center, invite the Congressman to be the keynote speaker. If he can't attend, make sure to send lots of photos and press releases.
- If you have agency shirts, pins, etc, send one to your Congressman with a note about how you are doing and thanking him for his support.
- When you have a great peer review, send the Congressman a copy of your letter and detail your commitment to operating a high quality center while spending taxpayer money wisely.
- Send your Congressman information about your staff in college (good grades, etc). Site numbers of staff in training and their educational excellence. Make sure to put their commitment to Head Start in context (have families at home to take care of, full-time jobs, school work, etc.).
- Learn your Congressman's birthday. Have the kids make birthday cards and send them along with a note from you on a HS greeting card.