



What is Step Up for Kids Day?

This special day, conceived of by the Every Child Matters Education Fund (ECMEF), seeks to bring child-friendly organizations and individuals together in every state capital to advocate on behalf of children and call upon Presidential, Congressional, and Statewide candidates to address the needs of children and discuss their plans for meeting those needs.

A national event in Washington, DC, at the National Press Club, will feature renowned pediatrician Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, who will speak to the need to make greater investments in children and also call upon the candidates to make children a priority. ECMEF will use the day to leverage media attention on children's issues and to continue to organize and mobilize child-friendly groups across the country.

New York's efforts in the Every Child Matters campaign are led by the New York Children's Action Network, or better known as New York CAN. New York CAN is a broad-based initiative that brings together a variety of coalitions, organization, and individuals all concerned about issues affecting children and families with the goal of elevating the importance of supporting all children in New York State.

New York CAN has seven committees, including: Zero to Five, Health, Mental Health, Education, Child Welfare, Youth Development and Economic Security. These committees are composed of, and chaired by, organizations from throughout the state interested in furthering the welfare of our children and families.

The goals of New York CAN are: 1. To mobilize public will; 2. To foster investments in children; 3. To elevate children's issues as a priority with elected officials, administrators and candidates; and 4. To serve as a clearinghouse.

New York's event will be hosted on the steps of the New York State Capitol in Albany, and we're hoping for a crowd of 2,000 to 3,000. We're planning for direct access to the DC event and a smart, comprehensive program of champions for children. The event will additionally include resource tables, information, food, and fun for the family. We are currently working on covering transportation costs for attendees (bus/train).

It's a media-focused event, pushing the candidates to speak out on their platforms on children. And it's all-encompassing, with the message that **EVERY CHILD MATTERS**. We're inviting, and hoping, that all organizations, individuals, businesses, and agencies that touch the life of a child attend. There'll be materials provided by the national Every Child Matters, such as posters, stickers, fans, etc.

Why are we doing this?

Among the desired outcomes are:

- Raising the awareness of the needs of children and families in the U.S.
- Getting the candidates (federal, state, and local) to place issues of kids and families on their platforms and discuss how they plan to address those needs if they are elected.
- Getting members of the media to address these issues and pose these questions when they're interviewing and/or writing about candidates.
- Making America's children a national political priority.
- Closing the investment gap that is growing ever larger when it comes to America's children.
- Getting non-voters to register and everyone to vote with kids' well-being in mind.

Will we be supporting candidates on this day?

No! ECM is a 501(c)(3) *non-partisan* organization. Our “candidates” are the needs of children.

So, just the September 16th event?

No, in fact, over the next several months, we'll be doing a series of candidate questionnaires to your representatives and candidates, asking about health insurance, early learning, child maltreatment, after school programming, poverty, incarcerated parents, mental health, kinship care, home visiting, and any other issue pertinent to our families today. These surveys will be posted online for your reference.

We'll also be working with the local news media throughout the state to ask questions of candidates, and print their questionnaire answers.

We'll be developing a media kit for this, and for the Every Child Matters campaign in New York State. We'll also be developing a kit for voter registration to be available online.

Finally, we'll be developing talking points on the issues – focused on politics, not policy.

And, of course, we're working on expanding this event for October 15th and the Presidential debate in Hempstead, Long Island.

Who's on the Planning Committee?

- Prevent Child Abuse NY, Chair
- The After School Corporation
- Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy, New York CAN
- Families Together in New York State
- Docs for Tots
- National Association of Social Workers - NYS

An open invitation stands for all those interested in being involved!

What other 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

How can I be involved?

- Add your name to our mailing list by calling Michelle Gross at 518-445-1273, or emailing mgross@preventchildabuseny.org
- Keep up-to-date with the launch of the Every Child Matters New York State website, which will include tools to use in your community. You'll then be able to register yourself and/or your organization to participate.
- Join the Planning Committee!
- Pass along fliers and information about this event to your organization's members, program participants, friends, family, colleagues...
- Provide access to resources for speakers, event materials, etc.
- Just be there!

Who should I/we contact?

If you're interested in participating or for more information, contact:

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Resources

- Every Child Matters Website: www.everychildmatters.org
- New York Children's Action Network Website: www.scaany.org/nycan