



High 5 For Kids Campaign

2018 Volunteer Toolkit

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High 5 for Kids Campaign

Kids can't vote and they don't give money to political candidates. That's why we launched the High 5 for Kids campaign – to give children a voice on the campaign trail.

Through the **High 5 for Kids** campaign, we are asking candidates from both parties to prioritize kids if they are elected. In local, state and federal elections, we will ask candidates how they will ensure that **all kids deserve a strong start to life, no matter where they were born.**

If candidates repeatedly hear questions about early childhood education in America and the survival of mothers and children around the world, they will know these are critical issues to voters.

There are many ways to show candidates that voters and constituents want them to focus on these critical kids' issues. This toolkit provides you with tips, information and resources about how you can raise these vital issues with candidates.

Please keep us posted on your efforts and feel free to reach out with questions to the Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) staff in your area.

You have a powerful voice. In the next sections, we'll give you tips for how you can use it!

Save the Children Action Network is the political voice for kids.

Together, with our quarter of a million supporters around the country, we focus on two critical issues:

1. Expanding high-quality early childhood education in the United States, and
2. Ending preventable deaths of mothers and children globally.

As the political advocacy arm of Save the Children, we bring these issues directly to federal, state and local lawmakers.

Engaging Candidates: Birddogging 101

As candidates for local, state and federal office actively campaign, they will be out talking to voters at numerous events between now and the November elections. Even if you don't live in a large city, elected officials will likely still come through your area at some point during the campaign.

When a candidate is in your community, asking a question about kids' issues is a great way to show that their constituents want them to put kids first with smart policies and legislation. Called "birddogging" in campaign-speak, this tactic is an excellent way to get a candidate on record about a specific issue. Follow the steps described below, and you'll quickly become a birddogging pro!

Step 1: Find the Candidates

- Check their official website, especially the events page to find out where they will be.
- Read your local paper, including the events and local news pages.
- Join the candidates' email lists. They often will tell you when and where they are holding events.
- Follow them on social media. Most candidates have a Facebook page and Twitter handle and will share upcoming events that way.
- You can also reach out to the state and county party chairs or your own contacts within the campaigns. They typically have the inside scoop into where candidates will be.

Step 2: Get Ready to Hit the Campaign Trail

Talking to candidates about issues critical to kids can seem intimidating at first, but if you take time to prepare and work with SCAN staff in your state you will have a great experience. Below are some tips to help you get ready to hit the campaign trail for SCAN:

- **Work with SCAN staff in your state on a great question for the candidate.** Have your question ready and practice saying it out loud so you're comfortable.
- **Wear a SCAN t-shirt and bring a friend, if possible.** Showing up in a SCAN t-shirt makes you more visible and you'll be more likely to get the candidate's attention.
- **Arrive early.** The early birds get the best spots. Try to place yourself where the candidate is most likely to see you. Bonus points if you can seat yourself so you appear in press photos, too.
- **Be assertive. (Within reason!)** Oftentimes candidates are swarmed when they leave the stage. A friendly smile and eye contact will go a long way to you getting close to the candidate to ask your question.
- **Introduce yourself,** including your town and any relevant facts about you.
- **Stay on message.** Engage the candidate on only one issue and don't get distracted by other issues of the day. Use your time to advocate for kids!
- **If possible, take a picture with the candidate.** Ask the candidate to wear our High 5 for Kids foam hand and high five you with it! If you get a photo, please be sure to send it to the SCAN staff in your state. If you are on social media, you could share the picture there as well and tag the candidate's campaign in your post.

Step 3: Tell Us How It Went!

After the candidate interaction concludes, be sure to send your SCAN staff contact a brief summary of how it went. High 5 for Kids is all about getting candidates on the record, so be sure to write down what the candidate said right after you speak with him or her. Or, if the candidate gave you permission to record the interaction, please send the full video file.

Get Social with the Candidates: #High5forKids

Candidates and their staff watch their social media accounts closely. You can help raise awareness about critical kids' issues by asking candidates questions using social media. Social posts are quick and easy to do – and most importantly, they are public, so more people will see your message!

How to Ask a Question on Twitter

It's simple and effective to ask candidates a question on Twitter. Simply send your question to the candidate using his or her Twitter handle. Google the official website of the candidate to find their official social accounts. You'll often see the accounts clearly linked on their homepages. Keep your questions short and sweet. It's also a good idea to use one or two hashtags to help ensure more people see your question.

Sample Tweets:

[.@candidate's Twitter handle] Will you #InvestInKids by ensuring all kids have access to #earlyed so they can succeed in school & life?

[.@candidate's Twitter handle] If elected, what will you do to increase access to early childhood education like #HeadStart? #InvestInKids @SCActionNetwork

[.@candidate's Twitter handle] What programs will you support to #SaveMomsandKids around the world? [Congressional candidates only]

What Hashtags Should I Use?

Below are hashtags that the SCAN team is using with the High 5 for Kids campaign. The races you are focusing on may have their own hashtags (e.g. a congressional district) so feel free to incorporate those as well.

#High5forKids

#InvestInKids

#EarlyEd

#SaveMomsandKids



How to Ask a Question on Facebook

Facebook is one of the most popular sources for news and a great way to stay in communication with friends, family – and candidates. There are a few ways to engage with candidates on Facebook, including:

1. Posting the question on your own page and tagging the candidate's campaign page,
2. Sending a direct message to the campaign's page with your question, and
3. Leaving a comment on the candidate's page.

Sample Facebook Posts

How will you ensure that every child will have the opportunity to receive early childhood education so all children will have a fair chance to be able to succeed in school? #InvestInKids

What initiatives would you support, or might you design, that would improve maternal and child health around the world? #SaveMomsAndKids [Congressional candidates only]

Note: Both Facebook and Twitter will indicate that an account has been verified to prove that a politician's account is really the person he or she claims to be. There are many fake candidate accounts, so please look for the check mark to make sure you have the real candidate!



Writing and Submitting Letters to the Editor

Using your Local Paper to be the Political Voice for Kids

Writing a letter to the editor (LTE) of your local or regional newspaper is an effective and easy way to reach a candidate and a large audience with your message. LTEs are printed on the editorial page, which is one of the most read pages in the paper. Campaign staff monitor local newspapers every day to track the mood and views of constituents, making it a valuable way to use your voice to support critical kids' issues.

Here are a few tips for writing your letter to the editor:

1. **LTEs should be about 150-200 words long.** Each newspaper has different requirements, so make sure to check the paper's website before you submit your letter.
2. **Think about including a personal story that tells why you're passionate about the issue.** Maybe you are a teacher so you care deeply about early childhood education or maybe you went on a mission trip to another country and saw the urgent health care needs of moms and babies firsthand. If you can briefly write about a personal experience, it will help readers connect to your piece.
3. **Include state-specific statistics.** You can find information on Head Start enrollment here and child care expenses in your state here. Our staff is also happy to help you find relevant information.
4. **Make an "ask."** Whether you're asking the candidate to pledge support for a piece of legislation or encouraging community members to get involved with SCAN's work, you want to write in a way that will encourage others to take action.
5. **Many newspapers will have a submission form on their website.** To find that, go to the Opinion section on your local newspaper's website and look for "Submit a Letter to the Editor." SCAN staff can also help you find this information or contact information for editorial staff at the publication.



Sample Letter to the Editor for the 2018 Elections:

Early Childhood Education

[INSERT PERSONAL ANECDOTE/Head Start or child care information] Optional and depending on the word limit for your paper.

With the 2018 midterm elections fast approaching, it is a critical time to make sure that kids' issues are prioritized at the local, state and national levels.

I am proud to be involved with Save the Children Action Network's High 5 for Kids campaign. This is an ongoing effort to raise awareness with voters and educate candidates running for local, statewide and national offices about the critical need to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and the value they have for children, families, and our country as a whole.

These issues are vital because all kids deserve a strong start to life, no matter where they were born.

Save the Children Action Network advocates across the country are urging candidates from both parties to prioritize kids if they are elected.

I hope this community will join us because we are stronger when we work as one powerful voice for kids. Together, we can make sure all children have the opportunity to thrive.

Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival

[INSERT PERSONAL ANECDOTE.] Optional and depending on the word limit for your paper.

With the 2018 midterm elections fast approaching, it is a critical time to advocate for kids' issues at the local, state and national levels.

I am proud to be involved with Save the Children Action Network's High 5 for Kids campaign. This is an ongoing effort to raise awareness with voters and educate candidates running for statewide and national offices about ensuring no mother or child around the world dies from a preventable illness.

These issues are vital because all kids deserve a strong start to life, no matter where they were born.

Save the Children Action Network advocates across the country are urging candidates from both parties to prioritize kids if they are elected.

I hope this community will join us because we are stronger when we work as one powerful voice for kids. Together, we can make sure all children have the opportunity to survive and thrive.

Additional Resources:

The Save the Children Action Network website has even more resources.

- **Learn more about the issues:** At [SavetheChildrenActionNetwork.org/issues](https://www.savethechildren.org/usa/issues), you can learn more about early childhood education and maternal and child survival.
- **Learn more about our campaigns:** At [SavetheChildrenActionNetwork.org/act](https://www.savethechildren.org/usa/act), you can learn about our current campaigns and participation in actions – online and off – to help kids.
- **Read our blog:** Our blog – called the Voice for Kids – has stories from volunteers like you, staff and coalition partners and more. Read inspiring and informative stories at [SavetheChildrenActionNetwork.org/blog](https://www.savethechildren.org/usa/blog).



Thank you!

We appreciate your tireless advocacy on behalf of children!

Your help is vital to ensuring that our future elected leaders create real change for kids. Together, we can give every child a strong start in life.

We are here to help you every step of the way. Please keep us posted on your efforts and feel free to reach out with questions or ideas to your SCAN staff contact.