

HOW TO SPEAK UP FOR GEORGIA'S INFANTS AND TODDLERS



WHY should I contact my elected officials?

Your voice can help elected officials:

- understand the needs of Georgia's youngest children and their families.
- create policies that increase access to affordable, high-quality child care, promote positive social-emotional health, and support families.

WHO represents me?



STATE SENATE
56 members

STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
180 members

Find your elected officials at the [Georgia My Voter Page](#) ¹



WHAT should I talk about?

Early relationships and experiences affect developing brain architecture. Brains grow fastest during the first three years, creating a foundation for the rest of a child's life.

A strong start in life, including access to high-quality early learning opportunities and health services, yields a significant return in the long run through more years of education, employment, and better health as an adult.

TOPIC

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

POTENTIAL ASKS



HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

High-quality early care and learning supports Georgia's youngest learners by increasing school readiness, improving health and well-being, and supporting working families. However, many families struggle to afford high-quality child care.

- **Increase access to affordable early care and learning**, particularly for Georgia's most vulnerable young children, through programs such as Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) and Georgia's Pre-K.
- **Improve the quality of early learning** by supporting initiatives such as Quality Rated, Georgia's quality rating and improvement system for child care.



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Research demonstrates that early prevention and treatment are vital to treating emotional difficulties in infants and toddlers.

- **Invest in growing Georgia's early childhood mental health workforce.**
- **Ensure Medicaid and private insurance provide adequate coverage** of young children's mental health services.



FAMILY SUPPORT

Babies' brains develop through their earliest experiences and relationships. They need extensive time with their primary caregivers in the first few years of life to grow up healthy and ready to learn.

- **Increase the amount of time parents and caregivers have to bond** with their babies through practices such as paid family leave.
- **Provide families with the resources and information they need** to best support their young children through initiatives like evidence-based home visiting.

¹ www.mvp.sos.ga.gov

HOW CAN I CONTACT MY ELECTED OFFICIALS?



PHONE CALL

Staff are available during the day to hear comments, questions, or concerns.

NOTE: Federal officials have both national and district offices.



EMAIL

Most elected officials make it easy by having “contact me” forms on their personal websites.



WRITE A LETTER

A personal, handwritten letter can go a long way to communicate your story and priorities.



IN PERSON

Schedule a visit or request a meeting. Elected officials like to hear from their constituents in person.



TIPS FOR BEING A SUCCESSFUL ADVOCATE

1. DON'T BE NERVOUS

Your elected officials want to hear from you.

2. BE RESPECTFUL

- Use proper titles (e.g., “Senator Smith”)
- If meeting in person, make eye contact
- Maintain a professional tone

3. INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Where are you from? What do you do?

4. KEEP IT BRIEF & DIRECT

Focus on the main reason you're reaching out and make a specific ask.

5. SPEAK FROM THE HEART

Use your own words and be authentic.

6. SAY THANK YOU

Thank your elected official for their time.

SHARE A PERSONAL STORY

Consider talking about...



- A time you or someone you know struggled to find quality child care.



- When early intervention or health services benefitted a child in your life.



- How family leave would have been helpful to you or someone you know.
- The most rewarding part about watching a child grow.