

Whereas & Therefore

#WOYC26 Proclamations to Support Early Childhood Educators



Every year, thanks to the great work of NAEYC Affiliates, partners, and friends, Week of the Young Child™ proclamations and resolutions are signed by governors, mayors, city councils, and more, all across America!

Follow these FIVE STEPS to make your proclamation a success as part of #WOYC26!

Why Secure a Proclamation?

A proclamation is an official designation of an event, like Week of the Young Child™. Proclamations are a powerful way to educate the public and spotlight the importance of high-quality early childhood education—a cause that NAEYC has championed for 100 years. This year, as a way of marking our centennial, proclamations take on added significance: they not only celebrate the contributions of early childhood educators past and present but also reinforce the ongoing commitment to strong policies and practices that support young children and families. A proclamation is effective for gaining public recognition—and serving as an advocacy and accountability tool for the future—because it carries the full support of a key government official in your state or community.

STEP 1

Coordinate With Your State Affiliates & Partners

To ensure a smooth and effective process, each elected official should receive just one request for a WOYC proclamation! Make sure you're connecting and coordinating with [your state NAEYC Affiliates](#) and partners to align on who will be responsible for making these requests. Here are some options to whom you might consider reaching out:

- **City Proclamation:** mayor, city manager, city marshal
- **County Proclamation:** county commissioners
- **State Proclamation:** governor

For states who secure a proclamation from their governor, NAEYC will provide a media toolkit to help amplify the proclamation statewide!

STEP 2

Contact Your Elected Officials

Once you've identified which offices to contact, visit their websites to review any forms or guidelines for submitting a proclamation request. You may also choose to call the office directly. In making your proclamation request, include:

- The purpose of the proclamation (e.g. Expressing Support for Early Childhood Educators during the Week of the Young Child and recognizing NAEYC's centennial year)
- The date when the proclamation is needed (if there is an event that you are trying to work around, be specific; otherwise, be flexible about the day during the Week of the Young Child)
- A brief history of your organization, including its connection to early childhood education in your community
- The name and contact information of the primary point of contact

Find out how they would like you to share the proclamation language that you will draft and note any deadlines or follow-up steps.

As NAEYC celebrates 100 years of advancing early childhood education, these outreach moments provide an important opportunity to build relationships and highlight the lasting impact of the field in your community. This year's #WOYC26 proclamations honor NAEYC's centennial while helping you connect with elected officials, foster partnerships, and strengthen advocacy for investments that support early childhood educators, children, and families.

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STEP 3

Write the Proclamation Language (Using the Template Options)

On the following pages, we've provided you with template language to use and adapt for your proclamations. As NAEYC marks 100 years of advancing high-quality early childhood education, these templates are designed to help you honor that legacy while elevating the priorities and needs of your own community.

A few things to remember:

- › You may need to fill in data to fit with your community and state. NAEYC has gathered links to state-specific fact sheets created by national organizations in one, easy-to-find and easy-to-access location. We encourage you to start with NAEYC's [new state fact sheets](#) and [workforce survey briefs](#) for extensive national and state data. If you need help finding data for your state, contact us at advocacy@naeyc.org.
- › You should not select all of the options in each category. Please pick and choose the messages and data points that will work best for your community and resonate with the elected official you've identified to sign the proclamation!
- › Adapt the language to fit your community's context, priorities, and voice—while reinforcing the shared commitment to children, families, and early childhood educators that NAEYC has championed for a century.

STEP 5

Tell Us About It!

Help us show the collective impact of early childhood advocates nationwide. As NAEYC celebrates 100 years of advancing high-quality early childhood education, let's track how many proclamations are signed across the country and demonstrate that policymakers at every level and across party lines are committed to supporting, advancing, and investing in early childhood educators during Week of the Young Child™.

SHARE YOUR PROCLAMATIONS

Don't forget to thank the elected officials who signed your proclamations and anyone who helped you get through the process. Following up is a powerful way to strengthen relationships—consider inviting them to upcoming events or scheduling a visit to a high-quality early childhood education setting in your community to see the impact firsthand.

Happy Proclaiming—and thank you for being part of NAEYC's centennial legacy!

STEP 4

Make It a Big Deal!

This is a moment to celebrate both Week of the Young Child™ and NAEYC's 100 years of advancing high-quality early childhood education. Whether your proclamation is a virtual or in-person event, you can invite members of your community, including educators and families, to join your elected official(s) as they sign and read the proclamation.

Be sure to capture the moment—take photos or screenshots to document the celebration and share the impact.

Promote your proclamation through social media using the hashtag #WOYC26, and tagging @NAEYC and your elected officials.

You can also promote the proclamation through traditional media by sending a copy of the proclamation to your local newspapers, television stations, and other news outlets and offering to talk about the critical and essential role early childhood educators play in providing high-quality child care and early learning—honoring a century of impact while advocating for continued support and investment in your community.

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Remember, you should pick and choose the messages and data points that will work best for your community and the person you've identified to sign the proclamation. Take this as an invitation to adapt the language to fit your community's context!

WHEREAS

Start With Children

- The first years of a child's life are the period of the most rapid brain development and lay the foundation for all future learning.
- Children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional, and language and literacy development are built on a foundation of children's positive interactions with adults, peers, and their environment.
- There are [NUMBER] children birth through age 8 in our [STATE/COMMUNITY].

Working Families

- [PERCENTAGE] of children in our state have all parents in the workforce.
- [NUMBER] children receive child care assistance per month on average.
- [PERCENTAGE] of eligible children receive child care assistance per month on average.
- On average, families spend [PERCENTAGE] of their income on child care.
- [PERCENTAGE] of people living in a child care desert.

Benefits of High-Quality Early Childhood Education

- High-quality early childhood programs provide important benefits to children, families, and our state and national economies.
- High-quality early care and education helps build strong developmental foundations for young children during the years of greatest brain development, leading to positive outcomes for individual children.
- Increasing access to high-quality early childhood education saves taxpayer dollars, makes working families more economically secure, and prepares children to succeed in school, earn higher wages, and live healthier lives.

WHEREAS

Role of Early Childhood Educators

- High-quality early childhood education depends on well-prepared early childhood educators who ensure that children, supported by families, have the early experiences they need for a strong foundation.
- Early childhood educators need access to equitable, affordable early childhood education credentials and degree pathways.
- Too many early childhood educators earn low-level wages and lack basic workplace benefits, such as health insurance and paid sick leave. [PERCENTAGE] of child care workers in [STATE / NATIONALLY] are paid so little that they must access public benefits to support their own families.
- Low compensation results in high turnover, with many early childhood educators leaving their positions each year. [PERCENTAGE] of early childhood centers in [STATE/ NATIONALLY] experience turnover each year.
- [PERCENTAGE] of child care programs report staffing shortages that limit the number of slots available for families.
- [PERCENTAGE] of educators indicate they are more burned out than they were in the previous year.
- The average wage for child care providers, who are skilled and valuable professionals, is less than \$[DOLLARS] per hour.

Cost of High-Quality Early Childhood Education

- Tuition from fee-paying parents and subsidy rates for families with low incomes are typically insufficient for programs to attract and keep highly-qualified early childhood educators and pay for low child-to-educator ratios that ensure the safety of children.
- Payment rates provided to early childhood educators to provide early care and education services to low-income children do not cover the costs of quality.
- [PERCENTAGE] of child care programs report they had to increase tuition in the past year.
- Costs are rising all around. [PERCENTAGE] of programs indicated their rent costs went up, [PERCENTAGE] indicated their materials costs went up, [PERCENTAGE] indicated their liability insurance costs went up, and [PERCENTAGE] indicated their property insurance costs went up.

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AND WHEREAS YOUNG CHILDREN NEED

- Skilled, educated, caring, consistent, and compensated early childhood educators.
- Developmentally appropriate and accessible early care early care and education settings.
- Access to an early childhood education workforce that reflects a rich diversity of linguistic, racial, and cultural identities.
- Early childhood educators who are supported to provide high-quality, inclusive care to those with disabilities.

AND WHEREAS WORKING FAMILIES NEED

- Paid family leave.
- An early childhood education system that allows them to choose quality child care programs that best meet their needs.
- A system that ensures that their children are safe all early care and education settings.
- Accessible, affordable high-quality child care spaces beginning at birth in their communities.
- Robust grants, subsidies, scholarships, and tax credits that help them afford true cost of quality early childhood education.

AND WHEREAS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS NEED

- Opportunities to acquire critical skills and knowledge through pathways to ECE credentials and higher education degrees, without incurring college debt.
- Workplace benefits such as health insurance, retirement, paid sick leave, paid vacation, and professional development leave.
- Professional wages that is commensurate with the required education and skills they bring to the complex and valuable work they do.
- Access to supports and services for themselves and the children in their care, including infant early childhood mental health consultation, coaching from early intervention therapists serving children, support staff providing comprehensive services, and more.

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Therefore, be it resolved that the [STATE/CITY/COUNTY] of [STATE/CITY/COUNTY] does hereby proclaim April 11-17, 2026 as the Week of the Young Child, and:

- does hereby recognize that the National Association for the Education of Young Children is celebrating 100 years of advocacy for children, families, and educators.
- does hereby recognize that high quality early childhood education, provided in a mixed-delivery system, is a public good, and should be financed as such.
- does hereby recognize the complex, valuable, essential, and demanding work of early childhood educators.
- does hereby recognize that when our society invests in educators, we also invest in children and families.
- declare that early childhood educators should be valued, respected, and compensated for the important roles they play.
- calls on the Governor / legislative body to advance policies and legislation that increase access to ECE credential and degree pathways.
- urge all members of our community to support efforts that increase children and families' access to high-quality early childhood education.
- commit to investments that stabilize, sustain, and support child care and early learning so this essential workforce can continue to support children, families, and our economy.
- commit to investments that ensure all young children with developmental delays and disabilities have access to early intervention and special education services, alongside inclusive early learning opportunities, to help them thrive.