

OCDEL Provider Community Outreach Calendar, 2009-2010

A key part of building a quality early education continuum is community education and outreach to parents, school leadership, business, media and legislators. Contact your Community Engagement Group to become involved in their activities and learn more about outreach already taking place in your community.

This calendar provides you with basic information on what's happening in the state legislature, themes that you can use for outreach, and suggested activities to different audiences.

- Your goal – one activity per month
- You can find tools and templates online at http://paprom.convio.net/Community_Education.
- Two great toolkits to help: Media Tips (MT) and Building Relationships with your Legislators (BRL) are available online and referenced throughout the calendar.

Share your good news anytime! Any time you have a positive event at your program, you can send a letter to your legislator and press release to media announcing the good news, such as:

- Joining STARS or moving up a STAR level
- Teachers and other program staff receiving awards, CDA, or other credential, or college degree
- Former student from your program succeeding in school, winning an award or some other honor
- Special activities for parents, such as parent workshops or family fairs

Let us know how you are doing. Please report your outreach to legislators to your Community Engagement Group. You can submit testimonials online at www.papromiseforchildren.com to send to: PA Key, attn: Kelly Swanson, 301 Market Street, 9th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101, fax: 717-213-0584, email: kelswa@berksiu.org.

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August 2009 – January 2010

What's happening in the state legislature: During August – January, legislators spend a lot of time in their districts meeting with constituents. This is an excellent time to educate your legislators on the importance of early education and what early education programs are available in your community.

- Invite legislators to visit early childhood programs
- Meet with legislators in district offices
- Have classrooms adopt a legislator
- Help parents tell their story

Suggested Themes	Suggested Activities
August	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back to school – are kids ready? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Invite legislators to opening ceremonies or open houses (BRL p 11) <input type="checkbox"/> Submit letter to the editor – early education is key to school readiness (MT p8)
September	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classrooms open, parent open houses • International Literacy Day (Sept 8) • Grandparents Day (Sept 13) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Invite legislators to opening ceremonies or open houses, also invite media to attend (BRL p 11) <input type="checkbox"/> Ask kindergarten teachers that are now teaching your former students to write up testimonials and/or provide data on how your children are doing compared to their peers – did they enter school prepared for kindergarten? Were they better prepared than those children who did not have early education? Submit those stories to OCDEL – email kelswa@berksiu.org, fax 717-213-0584 <input type="checkbox"/> Have classrooms adopt a legislator for the year (BRL p16) <input type="checkbox"/> Ask grandparents to send a letter to the editor in honor of Grandparents Day explaining why they think quality early education is important (MT p8) <input type="checkbox"/> Ask grandparents to send letters to their legislators explaining why they think early education is important <input type="checkbox"/> Write a letter to the editor – that literacy begins at birth, which is why early education is so important (MT p8)
October	

BRL – Building Relationships with Legislators toolkit, available at <http://paprom.convio.net/BRL>

MT – Media Tips toolkit, available at <http://paprom.convio.net/MT>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell Your Story • PA Pre-K Counts 08-09 End of Year Report Released • Reach and Risk Report released • Parent Involvement Month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Collect stories from parents for PA Promise website, annual report, etc. Share the stories with your legislators <input type="checkbox"/> Ask parents to sign the PA's Promise declaration and send a copy of petition to legislators (please also fax or mail signatures to Kelly Swanson at PA Key, fax: 717-213-0584, so we can add them to all signatures) <input type="checkbox"/> PA PKC programs – issue press release on end of year report (MT p5) <input type="checkbox"/> PA PKC programs – write letter to your legislators and Governor Rendell, sharing positive stories from your PA PKC programs and refer to end of year report (they will all receive hard copies) <input type="checkbox"/> Visit legislators in their district offices – coordinate with your CEG (BRL p14) <input type="checkbox"/> Use template press release, letter to editor, and letter to legislator to share the Reach and Risk data for your county
November	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA's Promise for Children Week (select locations) Nov 8-14 • Thanksgiving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Make thank you cards for legislators, thanking them for supporting early education in their community <input type="checkbox"/> Host a legislator or VIP to do a reading at your program during PA Promise week (BRL p 11) <input type="checkbox"/> As a group, participate in holiday parades and family events, distribute PA Promise information (contact you CEG for more info)
December	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Invite legislators to holiday events (BRL p11) <input type="checkbox"/> As a group, participate in holiday parades and family events, distribute PA Promise information (contact you CEG for more info)
January 2010	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Year – New Year's resolutions • ECE teachers graduate from CDA/ college degrees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Send letter to the editor – New year, it's time to renew commitment to early education (MT p8) <input type="checkbox"/> Ask parents to share with their legislators their new year's resolutions for their children, and ask legislators to make quality early education a priority for Pennsylvania as a New Year's resolution <input type="checkbox"/> Visit legislators in their district offices (BRL p14)

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February – April 2010

What’s happening in the state legislature: In early February, the Governor releases his budget proposal for the following year. The legislators spend the following months reviewing the proposal and deciding their own budget priorities and if they support the Governor’s proposal.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees will hold hearings on the Governor’s proposal This is an excellent time to:

- Educate legislators on the early education items in the budget
- Answer their questions or concerns about early education using data and local stories
- Remind them that their constituents believe early education should be a priority in the budget
- Mobilize parents to tell their story to legislators and become involved in legislative outreach

Suggested Themes	Suggested Activities
February	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governor’s budget proposal released • Valentine’s Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Send letters of support to legislators for early education in the 10-11 budget; ask them their position on early education <input type="checkbox"/> Send letter to the editor supporting public investment in early education <input type="checkbox"/> Explain budget proposal and impact to parents <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage parents to contact their legislators to make early education a priority <input type="checkbox"/> Invite legislators to visit your classrooms (BRL p11) <input type="checkbox"/> Have children make Valentine’s Day cards for legislators and share why they love their early education program/teacher, etc.
March	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to sign up for pre-k/Kindergarten next year • Mid year outcomes for PA PKC released • Spring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate with your CEG to participate in legislative/leadership breakfasts – you can help invite legislators, be a panelist, and recruit parents to speak as well (BRL p19) <input type="checkbox"/> Send press releases to local papers and TV/Radio announcing enrollment for pre-k/early education for next school year (MT p5) <input type="checkbox"/> PA PKC programs: use template press release, letter to editor, and letter to legislator to share mid-year outcomes for PA PKC and examples of progress in your program <input type="checkbox"/> Send “Watch our children grow” flowers to legislators – create paper flowers and have children write what they want to be when they grow up on the petals (BRL p16)
April	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week of the Young Child (April 11-17) • One Book, Every Young Child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate with your CEG to participate in WOYC events in your community, including parent events, parades, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Host a VIP to read at your program during One Book, Every Young Child <input type="checkbox"/> Invite legislators to visit your program in honor of WOYC (BRL p11) <input type="checkbox"/> Continue the conversation with legislators – if you haven’t heard from them on their position on early education, contact them again (BRL p6) <input type="checkbox"/> Send letter to the editor – in honor of WOYC, let’s celebrate early education – explaining why early education is so important to our children’s future (MT p8)

BRL – Building Relationships with Legislators toolkit, available at <http://paprom.convio.net/BRL>

MT – Media Tips toolkit, available at <http://paprom.convio.net/MT>

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May - June 2010

What's happening in the state legislature: During May-June, legislators start to make choices as to priorities for state funding for the budget. They will be telling their caucus leadership what items they think should be priorities in the budget. They will be voting on bills, and probably debating the bills on the House and Senate floor. They spend most of their time in Harrisburg. This is an excellent time to:

- Mobilize parents to contact their legislators in support of early education funding
- Ask supportive legislators to tell their caucus leadership to make early education a priority and to speak in favor of early education on the floor to their colleagues.
- Write letters to the editor – encourage your colleagues and parents to do the same.
- Sign up for PA Promise action alerts to stay informed on breaking developments at <http://paprom.convio.net/alerts>

Suggested Themes	Suggested Activities
May	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-k graduation • Mother's Day • ECE teachers graduate from CDA/ college degrees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Invite legislators and media to graduation events (BRL p11) <input type="checkbox"/> Ask parents to write letters to their legislators, sharing how their child progressed over the year <input type="checkbox"/> Send letter to the editor –reflections on progress over the year, support early education (MT p8) <input type="checkbox"/> Send letters to your legislators announcing the staff that earned their CDA or degree this year
June	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA PKC end of year child outcomes released • Early Childhood Public Policy Forum (June 7) and ECE Action Day (June 8) • Budget deadline – June 30 • ECE teachers graduate from CDA/ college degrees • Father's Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Generate as many emails, letters, calls of support for early education as possible from providers, parents, colleagues, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Send letters to your legislators announcing the staff that earned their CDA or degree this year <input type="checkbox"/> Attend Early Childhood Public Policy Forum (June 7) and Action Day (June 8) in Harrisburg