



# Voter Registration Toolkit For Early Care & Education Advocates

**Welcome to the Illinois Action for Children Voter Registration Toolkit!**

Illinois once again finds itself in an important election season, and children across the state are relying on this campaign to make a difference. This toolkit will help you plan and carry out simple and effective voter registration activities in your communities this election year! With the help of this guide, we encourage providers, parents, and anyone with a stake in accessible, high-quality early care and education to get involved.

➡ **Guidelines & Instructions**

➡ **Election Activity Ideas**

➡ **Sample Flyers**

➡ **Other Resources**



illinois  
action for  
children

# Who We Are

Illinois Action for Children is a catalyst for organizing, developing and supporting strong families and powerful communities where children matter most. Over the years, we have successfully formed a common voice and vision for advancing high quality, accessible and affordable child care programs and early education opportunities. As a result, our successes have provided an important support to families and helped children to develop to their fullest potential.

## The Public Policy and Advocacy Program has four goals:

1. **Advocate** for systems of early learning that are responsive to the needs of families and their children and foster the development, health, and well-being of all children.
2. **Collaborate** with individuals and organizations to encourage participation in civic and community life and, in that way, bring about meaningful changes in the public arena.
3. **Promote** quality improvement to early care and education and best practices for providers, programs, and policymakers.
4. **Support** parents in making the best choices for their children and achieving economic stability.

## Contact us!

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[www.actforchildren.org/advocacy](http://www.actforchildren.org/advocacy)

# Principles for Effective Voter Registration

## 1 Focus on the month before the deadline

People are more likely to register closer to the deadline, so plan to conduct most of your activities in the weeks before that date.

## 2 Set a goal

Create a goal for how many people you want to register. Consider how many additional programs or organizations in your community you want to recruit to join you in registering new voters.

## 3 Decide your approach

Consider the capacity of your program, or organization and the relationships you have in the community when designing voter registration activities. Get creative!

## 4 Know what to expect

Many of the parents you serve may already be registered, may not be citizens and are ineligible to vote, or have moved to new home. Remind them to re-register at their new address.

## 5 Understand voter registration rules

To register in Illinois you must:

- ➔ Be a U.S. Citizen
- ➔ Be at least 18 years old by Election Day
- ➔ Reside in your precinct for at least 30 days
- ➔ Have two forms of identification, including one that shows your current address



### Don't Forget These Important Dates!

#### General Election

Nov. 8 2016

Last Day to Register to Vote

Oct. 11, 2016

#### Grace Period Registration and Voting

First Day

Oct. 12, 2016

Last Day

Nov. 8, 2016

#### Early Voting for Election

First Day

Oct. 24, 2016

Last Day

Nov. 7, 2016

# Instructions for Registering Voters

- Step 1:** In addition to any other promotional materials, make the *Illinois Voter Registration Form* available. You can print Motor Voter Registration Forms at: <http://www.elections.il.gov/infoforvoters.aspx>.
- Step 2:** Ask the person if they are registered to vote. Confirm that the person is allowed to vote (See Principles of Effective Voting). If they say “yes,” make sure they are registered at their current address and under their current name. If they need to be registered for the first time (or if they need to change their name or address on a current registration), have them complete a white Motor Voter Form.
- Step 3:** Once a person completes the *Illinois Voter Registration Form*, have them hand it back to you. Give them the *Registered Now Vote* fact sheet. Then, add their name and address to the Motor Voter Tracking Sheet to track your voter registration goals.
- Step 4:** Collect the completed *Illinois Voter Registration Forms* and send all the forms to your local election authority at the end of each week. You can find the address of your local election authority at: [www.elections.il.gov/electionauthorities/elecauthoritylist.aspx](http://www.elections.il.gov/electionauthorities/elecauthoritylist.aspx).

**Submit registrations to your local election authority by  
October 11, 2016 to ensure they are counted.**

**Online voter registration:** Eligible voters can register online at <http://ova.elections.il.gov>. The application must be printed, signed, and delivered to the election authority.

## Additional Resources

For additional resources on voter registration and election information, visit:



Illinois Board of Elections  
<http://www.elections.il.gov/>

Nonprofit VOTE  
<http://www.nonprofitvote.org/>

National Women's Law Center  
<http://www.nwlc.org/our-issues/a-women's-agenda/voter>

# Activities You Can Do!

**Elected officials pay attention to who votes.** An important step to being a voice for early care and education is registering to vote and voting! As an advocate, you can increase voter and civic engagement by registering the families and the communities that you already serve.

## 1 Publicize and Promote

- ➞ Promote voter registration deadlines and instructions in the weeks before the election.

### Tip!

Announce registration deadlines and offer details on how to register to vote at trainings and meetings, in newsletters, and on your website.

- ➞ Display posters and other flyers at your site showing voter registration deadlines, along with where to obtain and submit voter registration forms.



## 2 Conduct On-Site Voter Registration

- ➞ Incorporate voter registration into your ongoing activities and interactions with families and providers.
- ➞ Assign a staff member to plan and direct voter registration activities. Train staff on how to conduct voter registration using materials from this toolkit and resources from your local elections office. One person should be in charge of promptly returning forms to the local elections office once a week.
- ➞ Make voter registration forms widely available and offer people the opportunity to register at your site.

### Tip!

Set up a space at your site with voter registration forms, instructions, and a drop box for completed registrations.

Provide a **sample registration form** highlighting all the required fields.



# Activities You Can Do!

## 3 Mobilize and Partner with Your Community

- ➔ Depending on your capacity and resources, extend your voter registration efforts outside your organization by working with others in your community.
- ➔ Identify partners in your community and encourage them to register voters – like child care associations, early childhood collaborations, schools, public libraries, volunteer groups, or small businesses.

### Tip!

Have staff or volunteers set-up a voter registration table at community events or high traffic areas. Good locations are where people from the community gather – grocery stores, shopping centers, school and sports events, places of worship, transit stops, etc.

### Mark Your Calendar!

Celebrate **National Voter Registration Day** on **September 27, 2016** with one of these ideas!



# You're Registered- Now make a Difference and



# VOTE!

Take an important step for children and families, and VOTE on **November 8, 2016!** Send a strong message to your elected officials that children should be healthy, eager to learn, and ready to succeed when they enter school!

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How will I know I'm officially registered to vote?**

You should receive a voter ID card in the mail within 3 weeks of when you register.

### **I have not received my voter registration card. What do I do?**

If you have not received your voter registration card, call the State Board of Elections at (312) 814-6440 in Chicago or (217) 782-4141 to get the number of your County Clerk's office. Even if you do not receive your voter registration card by election day, GO TO THE POLLS to vote. Your local polling place should have your information, or you might get a provisional ballot.

### **I didn't get a chance to register to vote?**

That's okay! **Grace Period Registration** takes place October 12 through November 8, 2016. Grace period registration and voting is the only way to register or change your address or name after the regular registration period ends. It is also the only way to vote if you are not registered or if your voter registration is not up to date.

### **Where can I participate in Grace Period Registration?**

To see where your county is holding Grace Period Registration, visit [www.election.il.gov](http://www.election.il.gov) under Election Authorities.

### **What if I am already registered?**

You don't have to wait until Election Day to vote! **Early Voting** will take place from October 24 to November 7, 2016. To find an early voting site near you, visit [www.election.il.gov](http://www.election.il.gov) under Voting Information. Just remember to bring your voter ID and a government-issued photo ID such as a passport, driver's license, or military ID. All Early Voting is conducted on touch screens. Voters who participate in Early Voting must vote in person.

### **What do I need to bring to the polling place on November 4<sup>th</sup>?**

If you are registering and voting for the first time, you will need to provide identification when you vote. Acceptable ID includes your voter ID card, a driver's license, other current valid photo ID, a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address.

### Where do I go to vote?

You should receive a notice in the mail that gives your voting place. If you have not received this notice, call your local county clerk's office. Contact information by county can be found on [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov) under Election Authorities.

### How do I know who is running in my area?

This year, federal races include Presidential, one US Senator, and all US Representatives. State races include the race for Comptroller, all state representatives and 19 state senate seats. All of these officials are up for election on Tuesday, November 8, 2016. You can find out who is running for all these offices on [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov) under Offices Up for Election. *If you do not have the Internet, call the Illinois State Board of Elections at (312) 814-6440 in Chicago or (217) 782-4141 in Springfield and ask who is running in your district. Your registration card will tell you your voting district.*

### How do I know who to vote for?

Illinois Action for Children is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization and does not endorse candidates for elected office. However, since elected officials get to make policy decisions about programs that matter to children and families, we do encourage you to learn more about each candidate. Consider how the candidate stands on the issues that matter to working families and children, such as early care and education. To help you, below is a list of programs that support children and families. Be sure to find out where the candidates stand on these issues.

## State Budget Issues

- ➔ **A lack of a state budget** for FY16 has resulted in lost services for children and families, closing of programs and uncertainty for providers and the people that depend on their support. If legislators do not enact a full budget for FY16 and FY17, Child Care Assistance Program and Preschool for All are only some of the human service and education programs facing cuts and closures in the coming year.
- ➔ **Child Care Assistance Program** supports low-income working parents' ability to access quality, affordable child care. Due to the lack of a budget, the Department of Human Services and the Governor lowered income eligibility and eliminated child care services for parents in the full-time school. It is critical that the state restore child care eligibility and continue its investment to support children's learning while also supporting their parents' ability to work and reach economic self-sufficiency.
- ➔ **Preschool for All** is Illinois' nationally recognized high-quality prekindergarten program for 3-5 year olds. After six years of cuts reducing Preschool for All enrollment from 95,000 children served in high quality early education settings to 75,000, the program finally received a needed increase. Continued advocacy is needed as over half of low-income, at-risk children do not have access to this vital kindergarten readiness service.

## Federal Budget Issues

- ➔ **Head Start and Early Head Start** provide comprehensive early education services to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in poverty. Head Start and Early Head Start currently serve more than 41,000 children in Illinois.
- ➔ The **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** provides a portion of the funding to Illinois' Child Care Assistance Program which helps low-income families afford child care while they work or attend education or training programs and supports activities to improve the quality of care for all families. Nearly 150,000 children are served each month.









**MAKE EARLY LEARNING  
A PRIORITY IN ILLINOIS**

# REGISTER TO VOTE HERE

DATE/TIME:

LOCATION:

It's easy and takes just a few minutes! To register you must:

-  Be a U.S. Citizen
-  Be at least 18 years of age by election day
-  Be a resident of your precinct at least 30 days
-  Have two forms of identification, including one  
That shows your current address

**REGISTER TO VOTE BY OCTOBER 11, 2016  
CAST YOUR BALLOT ON NOVEMBER 8, 2016**





**YOUR CHILDREN CAN'T VOTE,  
BUT YOU CAN!**

## Did you know?



The deadline to register to vote in the November 8 election is October 11, 2016.



There is a race for President, a US Senate office, State Comptroller, all federal & state representative seats, and 19 state senate seats in this election – these elected politicians will make decisions regarding early learning and child care.



Officials elected on November 8 will decide how much money Illinois should spend on early care and education – including whether to restore eligibility for parents who need child care assistance, and increase access to high quality early education for all children.



The decisions made by politicians elected on November 8 will affect your children for generations to come.

**REGISTER TO VOTE BY OCTOBER 11, 2016 AND  
CAST YOUR BALLOT ON NOVEMBER 8, 2016**



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# Activity Tracking Report



**Please fill out one form for each voter registration activity that occurs.  
Send this form to the Community Engagement Team by fax at  
773-561-2256 or email [advocacy@actforchildren.org](mailto:advocacy@actforchildren.org).**

*If you coordinating ongoing events, fill out 1 form for each week.*

## Contact Information

Program/Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Events and Registration Activities

Please describe the activity: (i.e. on-site registration booth, mock election, etc.)

What date(s) did the activity occur? \_\_\_\_\_ How many people attended the event? \_\_\_\_\_

How many voters did you register (including first time voters and name/address changes)? \_\_\_\_\_

## Comments

Please share any stories or experiences you encountered while trying to register voters: