

Month of the Young Child

Celebrating Our Youngest Learners

All around Indiana, Month of the Young Child activities are organized and promoted by members of the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. (Indiana AEYC). As the state affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Indiana AEYC has 15 chapters with more than 2,000 members who are working to improve the lives of young children and those who care for and educate them.

First established in 1971 by NAEYC, Month of the Young Child focuses public attention on the needs of young children and their families and recognizes the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. Month of the Young Child is a time to plan how we—as citizens of a community, of a state, and of a nation—will better meet the needs of all young children and their families. Month of the Young Child serves as a time to reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that every child experiences the type of early environment—at home, at child care, at school, and in the community—that will promote learning.

Toolkit for Indiana Chapters of IN AEYC

This toolkit outlines a variety of ideas for ways that early childhood programs and other organizations can plan events that:

- promote early learning in your community
- thank teachers in your community
- influence public policy in your community, in your state, and nationally

In this package you will also find templates for proclamation requests, ideas for activities and events to hold, and information to help you and your organization celebrate children, educators, and members of your community that are dedicated to early childhood education.

Activities and Events

Celebrate Children

Early Literacy

- Developing early reading skills is crucial to children's success in school. Children who enter school with larger vocabularies start school ahead of children who have not been exposed to enriching language environments. Reach out and help children get the early literacy foundation they need to succeed in school.
- Organize a children's book festival to celebrate reading. Children and families can dress as their favorite book characters. Businesses or organizations might provide free books to children. Local celebrities or public officials can read stories.

Involving Families

- Create a children's art exhibit or gallery in your community at a local museum, mall, or business to show off children's artwork. Businesses or organizations might offer prizes or ribbons for the art.
- Partner with other events or organizations to offer children's activities at an event or to bring parents and children together to do activities. One example of an event to bring families together is *Touch-A-Truck*.
- Celebrate the Month of the Young Child. Designate a focus for each week, including themes such as Celebrating Community Partnerships; Promoting Healthy Children and Families; Recognizing Early Childhood Professionals; and Advocating on Behalf of Children and Families.

Thank Teachers and Educators

- Plan a community-wide early childhood professionals' recognition dinner. Ask directors and principals to identify teachers and caregivers who have made a difference in children's literacy development. Give those teachers special recognition and ask them to share their successful strategies.
- Plan a thank you breakfast or lunch for the teachers. Ask parents and families to participate. Have the children draw pictures and write notes to their teachers.
- Send letters to early childhood programs, thanking the teachers for all they do. Offer to display children's artwork in your offices.

- Take out an ad in a local newspaper to thank all early childhood educators.

Public Policy and Advocacy

- Ask the mayor to issue a proclamation for Month of the Young Child or Week of the Young Child. Invite elected officials to kick-off the Month of the Young Child event by reading the proclamation. Use the public appearance of elected officials as an opportunity to speak about specific initiatives and to thank them for their past support.
- Submit radio blurbs, editorial letters, newspaper ads, or press releases to local businesses and media to promote Month of the Young Child and raise awareness to the importance of Early Childhood Education.

Proclamation Template

Whereas, The [insert name of chapter] Region of the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. and other local organizations, in conjunction with the National Association for the Education of Young Children, are celebrating the Month of the Young Child throughout April ; and

Whereas, these organizations are working to improve early learning opportunities, which are crucial to the growth and development of young children, and to building better futures for everyone in Indiana; and

Whereas, the positive impacts of quality early childhood education and care are well documented for young children and their families; and

Whereas, It is important to recognize and support the people, programs, and policies committed to high-quality early childhood education and care;

**Now,
Therefore,** I, [name of mayor/city county council member], [position] of [name of town/city], do hereby proclaim April 2020 as Month of the Young Child in [name of town/city] and encourage all citizens to duly note this occasion.

**In testimony
whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Seal of [name of town/city] on this first day of April in the year 2020.

Signature

[Typed name of official issuing proclamation]

[Typed title of official issuing proclamation]