



Advocacy Action Guide

Take action today!

Early Education and Child Care Reform

Child Care Advocates from around the state are in the midst of an exciting legislative session. The first big action we took was showing up on October 17th at the Massachusetts State House for a long-awaited legislative hearing for two child care bills (H.489/S.301) that have been in the making for the past 4 years. Now, we need you to get involved in helping to get these bills passed! You can show support by spreading the word on social media, calling your local senator and representative, and sharing your own child care story.

Here's How to Contact Your Legislator

- **Find your local legislators' contact information here** and urge them to support current child care legislation.
- The subject line of your email should be: "Please Support Child Care Legislation (H.489/S.301)."
- In your email, provide your name, organization or town/city, and your phone number.
- Introduce yourself and where you live.
- State what bills you are emailing about (H.489/S.301) and why you support them.
- Tell your story and be sure to talk about what's most important to you when it comes to fixing child care.



Here's a Four-Step Template for Writing Testimony

1 Introduce yourself:

Hello, I am _____, a resident of (Insert Your Town), (Insert Your Zip Code), and I am writing in favor of H.489/S.301, commonly known as the Common Start bill. Our child care system is broken and we need a high-quality early education and care system that is equitable, affordable, and accessible for ALL families. If passed, the Common Start bill would make care more affordable for more Massachusetts families, make essential direct-to-provider operations grants permanent, and promote increased compensation for early educators.

2 Tell your personal story:

Remember that **your story matters** and it's important for lawmakers to understand the issue from your perspective.

Your writing doesn't need to be fancy, here are a few prompts you can use to help you get started:

If you are a parent	If you are an educator	If you are a provider	If you are an advocate
<p>How does the cost of care impact your family? How much of your income are you spending on care?</p> <p>Describe how hard it is to find care. How does not having care impact your family or career?</p> <p>Describe any hard personal or career choices you've made because of care obstacles.</p> <p>What can't you do because you spend so much money on child care?</p> <p>What positive impact has having quality child care had on you and your family?</p> <p>Tell any part of your story you think is important to hear</p>	<p>How does your salary impact you and your family?</p> <p>Have you left the field or thought about it, why?</p> <p>How are your working conditions being impacted?</p> <p>How is this impacting your students and their families?</p> <p>What are the biggest issues you face being an early educator?</p> <p>What are your biggest worries?</p> <p>What would it mean for you and your family if your salary and benefits were increased?</p>	<p>Describe what it takes to run your business/program?</p> <p>Have you had staffing challenges?</p> <p>What are the resources your students, families or educators need? Is it hard to provide those resources for them?</p> <p>Do you find it challenging to access state resources, why?</p> <p>What would losing c3 grants mean for your center/FCC?</p> <p>What would C3 being permanent mean for your center/FCC?</p> <p>What could you provide children and/or teachers if C3 and/or reimbursement rates were increased?</p>	<p>Are you a grandparent or family member watching your loved one struggle with care? Describe what you're seeing.</p> <p>Are you a business owner/employer who is struggling to find workers because of their inability to find or afford child care? How are your current employee's struggling with care? How does that impact your business?</p> <p>Are you a non-profit professional whose work and stakeholders are impacted?</p> <p>Are you a social worker, K-12 educator, doctor or mental health care provider, how does child care and early education impact your work?</p>

3 Suggest Solutions

Lawmakers need **your help** to solve problems. Use this section to tell them what would help fix child care for you.

These are some examples of what we have heard from stakeholders:

If you are a parent	If you are an educator	If you are a provider	If you are an advocate
<p>“It would help my family if state financial assistance eligibility was increased to include families like mine so that care was more affordable.”</p> <p>“We need more providers, finding care for my child took months”</p> <p>“The people who care for my children need to be invested in, it’s not ok to keep asking teachers and families to pay the price”</p>	<p>“A better salary would mean that I can also care for my family”</p> <p>“If we had more teachers my job would be less stressful”</p> <p>“I love my job, but it’s hard to convince new teachers to enter the field. We need to be treated like our job matters. With better pay, benefits and time off when needed”</p> <p>“Stop asking educators and parents to bear the weight, we need the government to do it’s part”</p>	<p>“C3 grants have helped keep our doors open but our margins are still razor thin. We need these grants to be permanent and funded at a higher level to create sustainable change and help keep our doors open.”</p> <p>“As a small business owner, the low voucher reimbursement rate and the cumbersome process makes it almost impossible for me to serve families. We need a fairer system and much higher rates”</p> <p>“With the salary I’m able to offer, it’s hard to find/keep staff, they deserve more but I need gov help.”</p> <p>“Public investment would ease the stress educators feel”</p>	<p>“If employees can’t find care, they can’t come to work”</p> <p>“Something has to be done or the economy is going to pay the price”</p> <p>“This needs to be implemented quickly, another generation of children can’t wait”</p> <p>“Children and families having access to quality early learning and care experiences save us so much time and resources later on”</p> <p>“We need to make sure this is funded and has a timeline so we don’t continue to fail children, families and our economy”</p>

4 End with call to action

“As your constituent, I urge you to support this bill so that we can help the many children, families, and educators in Massachusetts who are struggling under the weight of the child care crisis. Families need child care fixed now. Thank you.”

