

# 2024 Voter & Advocacy Education Guide



Photo is courtesy of Indigenous Visiting



# Join the Prenatal to Three Coalition as we fight for every infant, young child and family in Minnesota!

Imagine a community where babies, toddlers and young families have access to preventive health care, healthy foods and safe, affordable housing.

This image is out of reach for too many Minnesota families. Families with babies and toddlers are stressed managing rising costs and decreased access to critical services. Too many families struggle taking time to care for themselves and their families – and feel alone rather than supported.

Minnesota's future prosperity depends on the well-being of every family, every infant, and every young child. Universally offered policies and funding for infant and early childhood programming improve the healthy development of babies and toddlers and position families for long-term success.

## What is Advocacy

Advocacy is the act of educating others about a community concern, issue, or topic; and encouraging decision makers to do something about the issue. Being an advocate provides the opportunity to tell your story, share your concerns, and influence the government's response to the problem. Elected officials and candidates rely on parents, families, and people like you to learn about issues and identify possible solutions for your community.

We know parents and caregivers of young children are busy working and caring for their families. However, it is important for every elected official to know what types of maternal and early childhood community supports are needed to ensure young children have a strong start in life and are positioned to meet their full potential. If parents and caregivers cannot advocate, you can!

It is very common and completely legal to present your concerns to elected officials. No matter who you work for, everybody has the right to let their elected officials know what concerns them as residents—government agency employees included! There are different ways to connect with your elected officials depending on your strengths and comfortability!



### About the MN Prenatal to Three Coalition

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition strives to ensure all children have healthy births and supportive mothers, fathers, families, and communities with resources to develop, grow, and flourish without being defined by one's income, race, ethnicity, or zip code. We believe targeted policy opportunities aimed at those who experience economic, geographic, and racial inequities to ensure the first 1000 days of life include quality experiences for infants, toddlers, and their families.

### Our Vision

By focusing on children facing racial, geographic, and economic inequities, all children in Minnesota will be born healthy and able to thrive within their families and communities.

### Our Purpose

- To raise awareness among voters and policymakers about the importance of a child's early years to ensure the youngest members of our society are meeting important developmental benchmarks and ready for kindergarten.
- Increase smart investments in Minnesota's young children and their families.

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## Why Should I Contact Candidates & Politicians?

Discussing prenatal, infant, and early childhood issues with your community and candidates running for office is a great way for legislators to learn about the needs of the community. and the maternal health, prenatal and early childhood programs that serve families in the community.

Visit the Office of the Secretary of State's Website by scanning the QR code to learn who is running for office in your new legislative district and visit their website to see where they stand on prenatal, infant, and early childhood issue.

Or, visit the U.S. Department of the Interior to find your Tribal Leader from the Directory at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ois/tribal-leaders-director>

### View your Ballot & Meet your Candidates!



## Why Should I Vote?

Elections are determined by the people who vote, children and infants are relying on you to vote for informed candidates who will invest in their care and development. Candidates and elected officials running for reelection rely on community support and communication to address concerns in the community and to stay in the office.

In the state of Minnesota, all citizens over the age of 18 are eligible to vote, including those who have been convicted of a felony so long as all parts of their sentence has been served. Scan the QR to register to vote!

### Register to Vote or Update your Registration!



# How to Contact Politicians & Candidates Running for Office

## 1. Reach Out Online

Most candidates have their policy priorities clearly listed on their website, this is a great way to learn about candidates, submit questions, and request more information. Social media allows users to publicly or privately bring awareness to issues, to share support or concerns about policies, and ask questions.

**Tip:** Tag candidates or elected officials for a greater engagement!

## 2. Attend a Town Hall or Public Event

Visit your candidates' upcoming events for a chance to meet them, share your story, and advocate for increased investment in maternal, prenatal and early childhood programs. Upcoming events or town halls are usually found on their social media, or may be requested from the candidate's website!

**Tip:** Bring a list of questions about the issues you care about, this will help you get direct answers and help you determine if that candidate shares your priorities.

## 3. Schedule a Meeting

Politicians and candidates have public phone numbers and email addresses on their websites, consider reaching out to ask your questions, to request a phone call, or ask to schedule a meeting. These personal interactions are a great opportunity to share your story, educate your candidates on emerging issues of the early childhood workforce, share the challenges families are facing, and urge them to adopt policies in support of maternal health, infants, and toddlers.

**Tip:** Consider how you are advocating for the families you work with in these interactions with policy makers and policy influencer.

## Questions to ask Candidates Running for Office & Re-Election:

1. How do you plan to improve access to quality perinatal healthcare for all Minnesotans, especially for more rural communities in Greater Minnesota?
2. How do you plan to improve access to infant and early childhood mental and behavioral health services, especially for rural communities in Greater Minnesota?
3. How do you plan to address racial disparities in Minnesota's maternal health and birthing outcomes?
4. Do you support a robust investment to increase reimbursement rates for mental and behavioral health providers who serve infants, toddlers, and their families?
5. How do you plan to sustain the work of community-based programs that provide culturally congruent child care and early learning opportunities?
6. What will you do to help community-based providers access timely and equitable reimbursement for their services?
7. What strategies do you believe are most critical to support the infant and early childhood care and learning workforce?

