

## Nonpartisan Electoral Advocacy for ECE Programs and Organizations

Early childhood education programs and organizations can play an important role during election seasons by making sure that child care and early learning are priority issues for voters and candidates alike! Some programs—like those that are 501(c)3’s—are required by law to engage only in electoral activities that are nonpartisan. Some other programs or organizations simply may not want to be partisan—they may want to talk with all of their staff and families about the importance of voting and they may want to engage with all candidates about the importance of early childhood education. This resource shares some activities that show the difference between being nonpartisan and being partisan to help programs understand what they can and can’t do. Partners such as the Alliance for Justice, and their Bolder Advocacy Program, provide updated electoral advocacy trainings and information to the public, and NAEYC encourages programs to review their resources here: <https://afj.org/bolder-advocacy/>.

Visit [www.americaforearlyed.org/ourvotes](https://www.americaforearlyed.org/ourvotes) for more resources and information!

| <i>What You Can Do</i>   | <i>What You Can't Do</i>   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Voter Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ help new voters understand elections and the voting process</li> <li>✓ sponsor nonpartisan candidate forums or debates subject to limits on lobbying</li> <li>✓ distribute nonpartisan questionnaires to candidates</li> <li>✓ distribute nonpartisan materials on ballot measures</li> <li>✓ distribute nonpartisan materials regarding all candidates or regarding election process</li> <li>✓ attend town halls or other forums to raise the issue of the importance of early childhood education</li> </ul> <p><b>Candidate Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ provide briefings to all candidates on the organization’s issues</li> </ul> | <p><b>Show Favoritism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ endorse/oppose a candidate</li> <li>✗ rate candidates on their support for early childhood or specific issues (through a report card, rating card, etc...)</li> <li>✗ publicize which candidates share the nonprofit’s views</li> <li>✗ nonprofit’s leaders say positive/derogatory items re: a candidate at nonprofit events (e.g., board meeting) or in nonprofit publications</li> <li>✗ ask a candidate to pledge their support for a cause</li> <li>✗ compare and contrast candidate’s responses to your organization’s views</li> </ul> |

| <i>What You Can Do</i>   | <i>What You Can't Do</i>   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Broad Voter Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ help people get to the polls on election day</li> <li>✓ register people to vote</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Voter Preference</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ targeting / registering voters for only one party</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Can Spend Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ activities that do not support a single party or issue</li> <li>✓ voter registration</li> <li>✓ voter education</li> </ul>              | <p><b>No Nonprofit Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ contribute or spend \$ to endorse/oppose</li> <li>✗ raise \$ for a candidate</li> <li>✗ let candidates use office space, equipment, mailing lists, etc.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ get out the vote</li> <li>✓ direct lobbying (within the limits of the IRS, state, and local laws)</li> <li>✓ ballot initiatives</li> <li>✓ grassroots lobbying</li> </ul> |  |

Please note that local and state laws matter, and they change. It is important to check with your local registrar's office to understand what activities are allowed to help people get to the polls, to support voting by mail, or to support workers and voters on election day.

Adapted from "The Do's and Don'ts of Electoral Advocacy." Originally prepared for NAEYC by Advocacy and Communications Solutions, 2014.



National Association for the Education of Young Children