



Right from the Start Early Childhood Coalition Member

Why: Education is the single most important investment that can be made to ensure community and individual development, including improved health status, and successful participation in the new, knowledge-based economy. High-quality early education is an imperative building block to ensure that children are arriving at school ready to learn, and thriving on their journeys to post-secondary success. If we can get it right in the first years of life, when the brains in young children are being wired and the foundations are being created for all later cognitive, social, and emotional learning, then each step along the educational continuum is easier to both address and conquer.

The U.S. Department of Education is projecting that 60% of new jobs in the 21st century will require skills that only 20% of our current workers possess. This is a scary proposition and time is growing short to fully address this challenge. With flat population growth and the oldest population in the country, Maine needs each and every child to grow up healthy, educated and ready to prosper in whatever future endeavor he or she chooses. Yet many children face various stressors during their earliest years that can impair their healthy development. What children need to thrive is to be in a safe environment with caring adults who are invested in their well-being and development. This begins with the immediate family and extends out to early care and education. Maine needs this entire system of care to be coordinated, strong and vibrant. Maine's children, who represent our collective future, are too vital for less.

What: The Right from the Start Coalition seeks to achieve a bipartisan early childhood public policy environment where children are a priority and are supported from birth forward. We will establish a comprehensive early care and education system with an integrated continuum of policies, investments, programs and services. The system will maximize the growth and development of all children 0-8, laying the groundwork for vibrant communities and a strong economy for all Mainers.

How: The Right from the Start Coalition will promote an early childhood policy platform that is ambitious and connected to the larger issues impacting the experiences of vulnerable children and families. Our advocacy coalition will have operating principles and well-defined roles that leverage the strengths of each member. Our platform will have clearly defined immediate- and long-term goals and cohesive strategies for achieving success, as well as metrics for tracking progress over time, and the capacity to make adjustments to goals and strategies as necessary.

We are working to build a broad coalition to reflect widespread support for educating the public and policy makers and guiding legislative and administrative action on matters pertaining to early childhood care and education for ages 0-8. The Coalition seeks to ensure access to high quality programming for children and families and to develop and advance the profession for educators. Founding organizations include Maine Children's Alliance, Educate Maine (including Fight Crime: Invest In Kids, ReadyNation and Mission: Readiness), Maine Association for the Education of Young Children, Maine Community Action Association and the Maine Head Start Directors Association.

The membership structure includes:

- The **Leadership Team** includes a core set of founding organizations whose role is to articulate and advance the Coalition’s vision, mission, guiding principles and goals and to oversee and coordination the Coalition’s functioning.
- **Coalition Partners** include key community partners whose role is to advise/provide feedback to the Leadership Team on matters pertaining to the Coalition and to advance the Coalition’s priorities.

___ Yes, we would like to be a member of the *Right From the Start* Coalition.

Organization Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Number of members our organization represents: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Preferred contact method: _____