

## Organizing a Children's Movement in Election '08

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With volunteers and partner organizations at our side, Every Child Matters has jumped into the Presidential election campaigns with an ambitious series of events to accomplish a formidable goal: getting the candidates to make children a priority and fulfilling that promise after the election.

[See our Events Calendar.](#)

2008 is a milestone year. In this unique electoral season, we are riding the wave of opportunity that a new election offers. This is the year to insert the cause of children's well being into the campaigns and build a mass movement around children. We can poise the Presidential candidates to address poverty, education, and health care for kids while public scrutiny is heightened. We have a winning message to protect and provide for children. There's no controversy or partisanship here. The solutions are realistic and present. The people's role is to remind those seeking the highest office that children must be atop their campaign agendas and a main focus in their administrations.



To start, we placed our grassroots organizing on a sound foundation of research. The release of the second edition of [Homeland Insecurity](#) lays bare the harms millions of children are facing and provides a realistic plan for investing in programs that can uplift children who are not getting enough food, schooling, parental support, or protection from abuse. All the polls indicate overwhelming support for increased government investment in children.

Now, we turn to the campaign trail.



The Democratic National Convention will be held in Denver, CO in August, and all expectations are that this will be a media circus. We love a circus. In fact, we're organizing a [Tykes on Trikes](#) parade before the convention to grab some attention of the politicos and journos and show them that children are a constituency that won't be overlooked this year.

Following on the heels of Denver, it's the Republicans turn in the limelight in St. Paul, MN. We are hosting a [Children and Youth Convention](#) before the Republican's gather on August 27th. Our convention will demonstrate the importance of civic engagement and how to turn one's personal interest in kids into political action, along with some fun and games, too.

Just after the political parties officially endorse the candidates, people will gather together as a nation for an extraordinary day of action on Sept 16. [Step Up for Kids Day](#) is a nation-wide day of awareness Every Child Matters is organizing on the Capitol steps in DC and all 50 states to draw public attention to children. Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, the respected pediatrician and child advocate, will kick off the day at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., as people in every state raise their voices in a shared call to our next President: Please support children in word and deed!



After the conventions, the President and VP candidates go through a series of televised debates, and we'll be at each one making noise. Local kids and advocates will hold a [Kids Convention](#) in Mississippi; the first Presidential debate will be held in Oxford, MS on September 26. ECM is also planning public rallies before the VP debate in St. Louis (Oct 2) and the Presidential debates in Nashville (Oct 7) and Long Island, NY (Oct 15).

And before we catch our breath, Halloween is upon us, which is a great day for kids, and a great chance to ask adults to consider children when they vote. Our [Treat Kids and Vote Day](#) will be the final get-out-the-vote push in swing states across the country. You might spy one of our orange pumpkin trick-or-treat bags in the hands of a little princess, batman or Transformer on Halloween night (with a voting info card inside for their parents).



The finish line, of course, is Election Day November 4. Our next President is not likely to take decisive action on children's issues unless he sees a citizenry who votes for children. We have only a number of weeks to inspire the public to match their concern for kids with their civic duty in voting. Let's organize.

—Mick Schommer in Washington, DC



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