



2023 EARLY LEARNING MATTERS WEEK

24-28 JULY 2023



Invite your local representatives to an event

Inviting your local Member of Parliament (MP) to an Early Learning Matters Week event (24–28 July 2023) can be a great way to demonstrate the value of early childhood education and care. Meeting face-to-face with the early learning community is important for those who are elected to public office. Your event is your opportunity to show your local representative how much your staff and the families in their constituency value early childhood education.

A visit from your local MP is a fantastic opportunity to:

- strengthen your relationship with the local representative
- raise the profile of your event and your service
- get photos and media coverage
- publicly demonstrate your MP's support for early childhood education.

Things to consider when planning an event

- **Size:** How big would the event be? Larger events need more planning and resources.
- **Time and location:** What time and space suits your community the most? Ideally, host the event at your service during opening hours.
- **Who will help:** Do you need volunteers or donations for your event? Source these at the earliest.
- **Promotion:** How will you let people know about your event? Plan your channels in advance.
- **Speakers:** Who would speak officially at the event? Assign roles as soon as possible.
- **COVID safety:** Follow guidelines from your local health authorities to ensure everyone involved feels safe to participate in the event.

Decide what role your MP might take

What do you want your MP to do at your event? Requests could include asking them to spend the day working at your service, meet with educators, read a story to children, take a tour of your service, make a short speech about early learning, join a discussion panel, present awards or acknowledgements to educators, or launch a new initiative.

How to reach out to your MP

Give plenty of advance notice about your event, as MPs are often busy and away from their electorates. Early Learning Matters week is intentionally planned during a non-sitting week for federal parliament, when MPs are more likely to be in their home electorates.



The first step is to ring your MP's office, explain that you'd like to invite the MP to your event and ask about their availability on the proposed date. Follow this up with a written request outlining key details, including:

- aim of the event and activities planned
- date, time, location, duration and directions to the event
- estimated number of attendees and details of other invited guests, if any
- details of a designated contact at your end
- information about the organisation(s) hosting the event.

We have created a template (attached) to help you write your invitation letter.

Don't be disappointed if an advisor is sent in place of your MP. The advisor may become a very useful ally if you build a relationship with them.

Invite the local media

MPs welcome publicity, especially in their own electorates, but ask them if they are happy to have the media attend your event.

The best way to let the media know of your event is by sending them a media invite via email, with a follow-up phone call. Contact details for your local newspaper or magazine can be found in the print version (usually on the first page or inside front cover).

Check out our guide to media relations for more information.

If you need help inviting your MP or the local media, please email Early Childhood Australia (ECA) on EarlyLearningMatters@earlychildhood.org.au and we will be in touch.



On the day of the event

Meet and greet your MP

Schedule a meet-and-greet session for your MP at an appropriate time (e.g. before the official start of the event if they are opening it) and allow time for introductions. Make sure they know the order of the event and where they slot in.

Introduce your MP

At the start of the event, introduce your MP and give a brief explanation about why they are attending. It may also be helpful to announce whether or not there will be a question-and-answer (Q&A) round later.

Take lots of photos

Consider setting up an area for photos. You may like to display Early Learning Matters posters or messages that reinforce this year's theme, 'Learning through play'. Organise for someone at the event to take good-quality photos that you can use in your own communications and share with the media and ECA (see below). Your MP's staff may also take photos for their own communications—you may need to have someone available to ensure photographs are taken with the appropriate level of consent. When taking photos that include members of the public, make sure you ask for their permission and follow any consent processes you have in place, especially if children are present. It's a good idea to ask before you take the photo and explain how you would like to use it. You may also like to record some quotes from attendees at your event. Share your photos on social media using the hashtag **#EarlyLearningMatters**.

After the event

Consider sending a post-event media release

Local media thrives on stories of community events and activities. Send photos and a media release with details of what happened at the event, who was there and what your MP and others said. Be sure to highlight key information about the issue.

Thank your MP

Send a letter or card to your MP, thanking them for their participation. Include any follow-up information you may have promised them.

Let ECA know what happened

We want to know if your MP attended an event at your service. Please tell us! To help inspire others, send us photos of your event so we can upload them to the Early Learning Matters Week website and Facebook page. Email us the photos and details on EarlyLearningMatters@earlychildhood.org.au. This will also help us track the MPs who support early learning and target them better.

When posting your photos and event details on social media, please use the hashtag **#EarlyLearningMatters**.

Sample run-sheets

1. Centre visit during operating hours

Time	Activity	Opportunities
10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MP arrives at the service and is greeted by the service manager Sign-in and COVID-prevention steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service manager provides overview of service— number of families, children and educators
10.05 am–10.30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service manager escorts MP on a walk-through of the service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss play and learning, planning and the role of educators
10.30 am–10.45 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MP engages in a play-based experiences with children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photos of children’s engagement with MP
10.45 am–11.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MP meets with service manager and educator(s) to discuss the importance of early learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share key issues— concerns and achievements—with the MP
11.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MP departs the service 	

2. Network meeting: Evening gathering of local MP and educators from a number of services

Time	Activity	Opportunities
6.00 pm–6:05 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MP arrives at host service and is greeted by the organiser Sign-in and COVID-prevention steps 	
6.05 pm–6.45 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MP meets with educators and shares views on importance of early learning Q&A session Educators share their experiences, issues and achievements as well as information about Early Learning Matters Week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss play and learning, planning and the role of educators Share key issues— concerns and achievements—with the MP
6.45 pm–7.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrap-up and discussion about other opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationship and ask for the MP’s support on key issues
7.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network meeting ends 	



SAMPLE LETTER TO MP

<Insert Date>

<Insert name and title of the MP>

<Insert designation of the MP>

<Insert postal address of the MP>

Dear Minister <Insert surname>,

Early Learning Matters Week: 24—28 July 2023

<Insert service name> is excited to invite you to the Early Learning Matters Week 2023 celebrations on <insert date and start and end time> at <insert location name>.

Our planned activities this year include <insert key activities> which will be guided by the national theme of *'Learning through connection'*.

Early Learning Matters Week, an initiative of Early Childhood Australia, is a national celebration that aims to recognise and raise the profile of high-quality early childhood education and care and all the ways it supports children to thrive. It is an opportunity to celebrate the importance of early learning and the difference it makes to children's learning, development and wellbeing.

As members of your constituency, your presence will be beyond valuable to us and will make a huge difference to our educators, families and community, and to help demonstrate your ongoing commitment to early learning.

Now in its sixth year, Early Learning Matters Week is a chance for educators, families, politicians and the broader community to come together—through face-to-face events—and celebrate the value of early learning to children, families and the wider community.

To confirm your presence at the event, please contact <insert name and designation of your contact person> on <insert contact number> or <insert email>

Sincerely,

<insert name>

<Insert designation>