

Community Engagement

If we really want to change the conversation about child care in our communities, we need to engage the public. One of the best ways to do this is through one-to-one conversations. Effective community engagement tactics can include: leafletting on the street (mainstreeting); tabling at a farmer's market, local festival or other community event; or door-to-door canvasses.

With the federal election coming up in October, this is a great time to speak to our neighbours about the importance of government support for child care. People will be expecting political candidates to stop them and will often be more receptive to a non-partisan, issue-based campaign like ours. It's all about listening to people's priorities and interests.

Over the summer and fall, the OCBCC will be working with our member organizations to set up community engagement trainings – in person and online - and group canvasses. Look out for one of our events and join in! If you want to get involved email: childcarecampaign@gmail.com.



Ready to go? Quick tips for success.

- **Go with a group.** Whether you are tabling at an event or knocking on doors, always work with a friend or a group of friends and colleagues. It makes the experience more fun, safe and interesting. You can debrief with your friends, take turns doing the talking, and help each other tweak your messages depending on what works.
- **Listen more than you talk.** Community engagement is all about listening to people, trying to understand their priorities and then making a connection.
- **Stay non-partisan.** Our campaign is issue-based and non-partisan, meaning that we don't tell people who to vote for or which party to support. We want everyone to understand the importance of child care and tell their politicians and candidates that child care matters.
- **Handling unfriendly people.** Occasionally you will encounter someone who is vehemently opposed to investment in early childhood education and care. ("Why should I pay for other people's children?!" etc., etc.) Do not feel obliged to listen for long or engage with people who are highly resistant or rude. We probably cannot change their mind and the longer we spend debating them the less time we have to talk to someone who we could motivate to get involved in our campaign. To tactfully remove yourself from the situation just say something like, "Perhaps if I had your life experiences, I'd feel the way you do. Have a nice day." Then head off, head held high. 😊
- **Have fun!** Mainstreeting and canvassing are fun and friendly way to meet neighbours and people with similar interests.