

Kids Know What Matters!

Washington State Legislators are faced with a choice: Kids, or outdated tax preferences. What matters more? Let's send them some opinions from the kids!

Videos, notes, and pictures from Washington's kids and youth will definitely get our legislators' attention, especially while they are neck deep in budget numbers.

This is an opportunity to connect kids to their own power to speak up for what's right AND get our legislators to step up and choose kids over outdated tax preferences!

Here's what to do:

Step 1: Talk to a child or young adult you know about the choices that legislators are making now about the state budget – and how it impacts kids.

Step 2: Help a child or young adult prepare a message to legislators. For example:

- Interview a child, (or group of kids) and record the interview.
- Have a child make a sign ([or print this one](#)) that says CHOOSING KIDS MEANS CHOOSING REVENUE and take a photo with the sign.
- Help a child or young adult call the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000. It's a free and friendly service that allows you to speak to a real person and leave a message for your legislators and the governor. (Please take a picture or video of your child in action!)
- Help a child to write a letter to legislators, make their own sign, or draw a picture about the choices legislators should make.



Step 3: Deliver the message to legislators, and then share it with Children's Alliance and your friends! Please send your message to *all three* of your state legislators and the Governor. You can look up your legislators' names and contact information at www.leg.wa.gov. You can send Governor Inslee a message at <https://fortress.wa.gov/es/governor/>. Please also send your messages to us at action@childrensalliance.org.

Get started now, or read on for more tips and resources to help you with steps 1-3!

Talking with kids

YOU know best how you want to have a conversation with kids or youth about what's at stake in the state budget. Below are questions and resources that you may want to use to start a conversation. You can adapt and use as you think is appropriate for the age and stage of development of the child(ren) you are talking with.

If you work with groups of kids – and want to set up a lesson or activity with this project, that is wonderful! We want to help, so let us know how we can be of service.

Questions you could ask:

- Do you know what voting is? Do you know what happens after we vote?
- What do legislators do?
- Why is it important for kids to have healthy food?
- Why is it important for kids to be able to a doctor or dentist?
- If you see a kid who needs help, what will you do?
- What should we do to help kids? In school? To help families?
- What do you think, should the legislators choose kids' health, or help oil companies?
- Should legislators choose to make sure all kids' families have enough food or let oil companies pay less taxes?

Pictures and graphics can help start a discussion



Invest in this...

- Smaller class sizes
- Caretaking services for the elderly
- Housing assistance for vulnerable families
- Full-day kindergarten
- Childcare for low-income families
- Basic needs for people with disabilities

...or protect this?

- Tax breaks for Microsoft and Google
- Tax break for Oregonians
- Tax break for oil refineries
- Tax break for prescription drug wholesalers
- Tax break on bottled water
- Tax break for importers
- Tax break for insurance brokers

It's All About Choices.



WE HAVE A CHOICE
OUR FUTURE

OR OUTDATED TAX BREAKS

- Some legislators think it's a good idea to ask everyone to give a little more money to fund schools and food programs and health care. Others think that we should just cut back on money we spend on food for kids, health care, child care and other things that help families. If you were a legislator, what would you do?
- Do you think legislators should listen to kids? Why?

Some helpful things to explain to kids.

- The people who get the most votes are chosen – we call it “elected.” They are legislators. They have to work together to make decisions about what's best for all the kids and grownups in our state. They make some big decisions. The grownups in your family make a lot of decisions about taking care of you. Legislators make decisions about kids too. They decide how to help out parents have enough money to buy food. They decide how to make sure kids can stay healthy and be able to go to a doctor or dentist if they are sick or hurt. They decide how to make our schools better for all kids.
- Legislators are making choices for kids right now. Even though kids can't vote, kids CAN speak up for what's right and tell legislators what they need.
- Our government collects money from people who live and work in our state to help pay for all things we need from our government (schools, road, health clinics, food programs). The money they collect is called taxes, or revenue. Everyone who can afford to, should pay their fair share.
- Some people and companies have been getting breaks on their taxes. That means there has been less money for the things we need like schools and health care. Some people are asking legislators to make sure we have more revenue by asking everyone who can afford to to pay their fair share.

Delivering your message:

Here are some ways you can make sure your message gets to your legislators:

- If you make a video – upload it to a video site like YouTube, and then send legislators the link with a note from you and/or your child.
- Write down a quote from what your child said. Add your child's name and age, and a photo of your child, and send it to your legislators.
- Send your legislators a photo of your child holding their sign.



- Send your legislators a photo or scan of a child's sign, drawing, or letter, or make copies and snail mail it to their offices.

Need help finding your district or how to contact legislators? You can look up your legislators' names and contact information at www.leg.wa.gov, or contact us for help.

Please be sure to email whatever you send to legislators to action@childrensalliance.org, or post directly to our [Facebook page](#). **We will assume that we have permission to share your image or message via our website and social media, unless you tell us otherwise.** If you submit information from a group of kids, we won't share any images of children without all their guardians' permission, so please make sure you get permission written down.

Additional Resources

Budget analysis from the Washington State Budget & Policy Center:

<http://budgetandpolicy.org/schmudget/special-legislative-session-the-big-picture>

<http://budgetandpolicy.org/schmudget/senate-budget-weakens-communities-quality-of-life>

<http://budgetandpolicy.org/schmudget/kids-need-more-than-k-12>

Civic Education resources from the state legislature:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/CivicEd/Pages/StudentsK-5.aspx>

Video of one mom testifying at a state budget hearing:

http://www.tvw.org/index.php?option=com_tvwplayer&eventID=2013040092A#start=6989&stop=7195

Jane Addams Children's Book Award Winners – books about peace and justice.

<http://www.janeaddamspeace.org/jacba/about.shtml>

American's Who Tell the Truth: Portraits and Biographies

<http://www.americanswhotellthetruth.org/portrait-galleries>

If you have questions, suggestions, or need any help, let us know! Contact Siobhan Ring, Mobilization Director at siobhan@childrensalliance.org or 206.324.0340 x13 or Emijah Smith, Community Organizer at 206-324.0340 x25 or emijah@childrensalliance.org.

Download this document at: <http://www.childrensalliance.org/resource-center/kids-speak>