



# MOTHERHOOD MEETUP TOOLKIT

GET CHILD CARE ON  
THE RECORD CAMPAIGN

GET  
CHILD  
CARE  
ON THE  
RECORD

THE  
MOTHER  
HOOD

MOMS  
F1RST



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

**— Margaret Mead**

## **WELCOME TO THE GET CHILD CARE ON THE RECORD CAMPAIGN!**

Moms First is mobilizing our Motherhood community to get as many moms as possible, to take as many actions as possible, in as many races as possible, so that in 2025, we have policymakers in office who are primed to prioritize child care in their first 100 days.

### **We can do this.**

In June, you and 15,000 other moms and supporters petitioned CNN to ask about child care on the debate stage – and they asked the question! But we can't stop there. We need answers not just from our presidential candidates, but from every candidate on the ballot.

It's time to take this fight beyond the top of the ticket – we need candidates up and down the ballot, on both sides of the aisle, proudly and loudly championing child care solutions. Because a president can't do it alone.

On August 14, we launched Moms First's next campaign: Get Child Care On the Record. Through this campaign, thousands of moms and supporters across the country will take three headline actions:

1. Attend a local event
2. Write a letter to the editor
3. Get loud on social media

Yes, moms can take these actions on their own, during the spare moments they might have before their kids' bedtime routine or between work meetings. But we also know that when moms (and aunties and dads!) come together, we can make even BIGGER things happen.

## **ENTER, MOTHERHOOD MEETUPS.**

If you're here, thanks for signing up to lead. We know your time is precious, so we've tried to make this as simple as possible. Let's get you oriented.

## WHAT IS A MOTHERHOOD MEETUP?

A Motherhood Meetup is a space for moms to come together, learn about big issues impacting moms, and commit to taking action to drive collective change. Moms First makes it easy for any mom to host a meetup, anywhere, to activate their community around key issue areas.

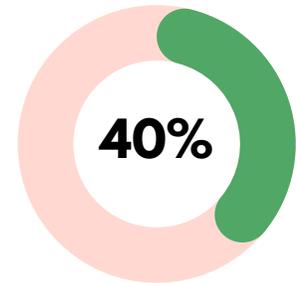
## WHY HOST A MOTHERHOOD MEETUP NOW?



Child care costs more than rent in all 50 states



60% of part-time or non-working parents say they would go back to work full-time if their child had access to quality and affordable child care



40% of families with young children are in debt because of child care costs

1

**The time is now:** The next few months are critical to ensure candidates understand why they should champion child care. If you've ever wanted to move from liking and reposting Instagram posts to actually raising your voice around getting affordable child care prioritized by your leaders, this is your time to shine. ✨

2

**Child care is a "gateway" policy:** Maybe child care isn't the single issue that riles you up. But it's critically and inextricably linked to paid leave, maternal mental health, you name it, and right now, child care has real momentum in the national narrative. Unfortunately it's for all the wrong reasons – and that's what we're here to change.

3

**We make it easy:** In this Motherhood Meetup, you'll provide your group with easy ways to get your local leaders talking about child care. Because, if candidates aren't held accountable to publicly prioritizing these issues during their campaigns, they sure as hell won't prioritize these issues after they're elected.

4

**You'll find your parent people:** We make it easy for you to connect with fellow, local moms (and allies!) who have raised their hands to take action on the issues you care about. You don't have to do this alone, and you'll have the opportunity to make lasting connections with folks who share your passion for making change.

5

**Hosting has its perks:** Our Motherhood Meetup leaders will get swag (ahem, new release Moms First t-shirts!), early access to future Moms First events, and a whole lot of love from the Motherhood community.

# GETTING STARTED



## Am I the right person to host a Motherhood Meetup?

Do you care about issues impacting moms? If your answer is yes, then yes. **Period.**



## Even if I know nothing about community organizing/politics/hosting an event/ I don't have a big network?

Yes. Whether you are a seasoned activist or are dipping your toe into this space for the very first time, bringing moms together toward shared action is better than doing nothing. And we've made it super easy to get started.



**Decide who to invite:** Think of all the places you engage with moms in your community and invite them to join you!

You can also invite members of The Motherhood to join your meetup by creating an event [here](#). (Don't worry, you can choose a setting that keeps your address hidden until a guest confirms attendance!)

### Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Friends, neighbors, and local extended fam
- Parents from work
- School and daycare parents
- Parents from kids' sports teams and clubs
- Online parent groups
- Parents from church or a community group



**Envision your Meetup:** Do you see a more intimate gathering at your home or a coffee shop with friends and friends of friends? Or are you thinking of hosting a large gathering at a park that you post into a big Facebook group? How about a meeting you host during lunch at the office? Start with a group that feels authentic and exciting to you. There are steps below for how to share your event with fellow Motherhood members.

We encourage you to activate as many moms as possible, but we understand you may want to start small!



**Pick a date & location:** Based on the size of the group you've envisioned above, pick a place and time.



## Meetup spots:

 **In-person:** Your home, backyard, park, coffee shop, classroom, local library, or community center conference room — you name it! Just make sure the space has enough room for your ideal group size. If needed, make any arrangements to book the space ahead of time.

 **Virtual:** If you're bringing a group together from far away, or hosting IRL just isn't feasible with your schedule, hosting a virtual meetup is a great plan B. Set it up via Zoom, Google Meet, or whatever tool you usually use.

 **Timing:** We've found weekday evenings starting after kid bedtime at around 7:30 pm or 8 pm to be a sweet spot. In non-summer months, weekend mornings also work great! Lunch is easy for office meetups.



**Consider food and drink:** Based on the time and location, decide whether it makes sense to ask moms to bring a snack or drink to share, whether it will be available for purchase, or whether you want to skip this altogether. You aren't required to provide anything unless you'd like to.



**Send invites:** Ideally, try to send your invites 2 weeks before your Motherhood Meetup, but this isn't a hard rule. You can customize the invite template on the next page and then send it to your community however you normally connect—as an email, text, via a social media post, etc. If you'd like to invite members of The Motherhood to join you, create your event [here](#).



**Register your event:** If you have space to include local members of The Motherhood, please list your event by registering [here](#).

**Example invite on next page**





## Example invite:



To **All Moms**

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Subject **RSVP: Moms, let's get in formation – for child care!**

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Hi name,

Election season is officially here, and it's time to go from scrolling to rolling up our sleeves. Too much is on the line for us to sit on the sidelines and watch the election unfold.

I'm inviting you to join me and other local moms and friends in our community for a Motherhood Meetup, one of hundreds of gatherings across the country, all powered by Moms First, a national organization leading the fight for America's mothers. The goal of these meetups is to ensure that every candidate up and down the ballot commits to prioritizing child care if they are elected.

**Why am I hosting?** I recently joined The Motherhood, Moms First's new, national community of moms committed to driving collective change because *[personal sentence on your "why" for getting involved – what has you pissed off, what has you motivated to make change, who/what you're fighting for? Examples: "I'm fed up with paying more for child care than rent," "I want something better for my daughter than we have today." "Child care was a major barrier to my staying in the workforce..."]*.

During the Motherhood Meetup we'll:

- Learn about the child care crisis and why it's important to take action now
- Commit to taking 1, 2, or 3 actions to get candidates (up, down, and across our ballots) to publicly release their plans to address the child care crisis
- Meet some amazing local moms (and dads and aunties!) who want to make a better world for all the moms that come after us

Our Motherhood Meetup is set for *[date/time/location]*, and I would truly love for you to join! Please RSVP here.

The Motherhood Meetup is open to everyone including non-mom allies who support our cause! Bring a friend, and feel free to forward this message to any other moms you know. If you can't make this one but want to stay in the loop for future gatherings, just let me know.

Please RSVP here: *[LINK]*.

I sincerely hope to see you there!

*[Name]*

*[Number]*

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SEND



# LEADING INTO THE EVENT



**Gather supplies:** Prep to have whatever you'll need on hand.

- Agenda (printable agenda on the next page)
- Sign-in sheet
- Name tags (optional)
- Printed resource guides
- A laptop or a phone with internet connection
- Pens, paper
- Food, drink, and plates/utensils if applicable
- A paper sign and tape to designate location (helpful in public settings like a library room!)



**Send reminders:** We recommend sending a reminder a week and also two days out (moms are juggling a lot!).



**Printable resource guides:** We made it as simple as possible – all you need to do is make a few printouts before your event. While it's nice to have a copy for everyone, all resources guides are available on the Moms First website, so as long as someone has access to the internet, they can access them.

- Attend a Local Event
- Write a Letter to the Editor
- Get Loud on Social



**Printable agenda on next page**



## AGENDA (PG 1/5)

[5 minutes]

**Welcome and set the tone:** Extend a warm welcome and set some ground-rules. Feel free to make them your own and ask the group for any additions:

- Everyone's welcome – moms and non-moms
- This is a non-partisan, non-denominational space
- Be kind and get curious as we come together to share our lived experiences, resources, and talents
- Assume good intent and take responsibility for our words and actions – so if you inadvertently offend someone, apologize and learn
- Remember, we are powerful – together we can drive collective societal change
- Any additions?

**Host introduction:** Thank everyone for coming. Share a few sentences about yourself, your own “why” for hosting, and the Moms First campaign to Get Child Care on the Record.

### Campaign talking points

- Moms First is a national organization leading the fight to fix American motherhood.
- Today, we're here because the cost of child care – the cost of motherhood – in the U.S. has become untenable. No one should be forced to make the impossible decision between caring for their family and putting food on the table.
- Moms First is mobilizing moms and supporters to share their child care stories to ensure child care is prioritized this election season – and you are all in on the ground floor of this campaign.
- Moms are taking nonpartisan actions in their communities to “Get Child Care on the Record” asking candidates to commit to prioritizing child care within their first 100 days if elected
- If we can get thousands of moms across the country talking to their candidates on both sides of the aisle, we could send a new class of policymakers to Congress, all of whom have gone on the record in support of child care. Then, it's up to us to hold them accountable – now that's some powerful stuff.

### Our goals for today:

- **Connect:** Get to know one another and our “why's” for showing up for moms.
- **Get smart:** Get up to speed on the child care crisis, and why it matters that we get candidates on the record leading up to the election
- **Take action:** Learn three easy, direct actions we can take to get candidates on our ballots to commit to prioritizing child care if they are elected.

## AGENDA CONTINUED (PG 2/5)

[20 minutes]

**Your “Motherhood Why”:** We’re going to start by giving everyone a moment to reflect on why they’re here. In addition to helping us get to know one another, your “why” can be a valuable tool in pushing for change. Our brains are wired to pay attention to stories, and telling your story can be a valuable way to get people in power – including candidates, elected officials, and the media – to pay attention to what you’re fighting for. In fact, your “why” is the heart of each of the three main actions of our campaign!

I am going to give us five minutes to fill out this worksheet prompt, and then we’ll break into small groups to share our 1-minute versions of our “why’s.” Note: If it’s a group of 10 people or fewer, you can do this all together.

### WORKSHEET:

Why did you decide to come today? \_\_\_\_\_

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How did you become the type of person who cares about changing society to support moms? \_\_\_\_\_

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Can you share a story of a specific experience that shaped you into becoming this person? It can be about something that specifically happened to you, or learning about something that caused you to be motivated to drive change – but be sure to center your story on your own experience.

## AGENDA CONTINUED (PG 3/5)

### Here are some real examples:

*"After my son was born, I was forced to leave the workforce against my wishes, because child care was more expensive than my take-home pay. Now, I am back in the workforce but my career took a big hit. I don't want this to happen to other moms, and I started researching ways to speak up."*

*"I had a really hard time returning to work despite having access to paid leave. I suffered from postpartum depression and almost left the workforce. Ultimately, I made it through but I can't imagine what my experience would have been like if I had to return sooner. Now that I am done having kids, I want to fight for the next generation of moms so they never have to be in that position."*

*"I moved cities in 2021, and finding affordable child care that had openings for my two toddlers and aligned with my work schedule was 10x harder than finding our family affordable housing. I searched for months, managed a giant spreadsheet, and cold-called dozens of providers... no one had spots for us. I lost sleep, I and suffered through a period of extreme anxiety during an already stressful time, wondering if I would be able to find the care I needed to simply keep my job."*

*"I'm paying more on child care than our rent, and we're dipping into our savings to make it work. It's not working. I want to be part of getting candidates to make concrete changes in the year ahead."*

*"My sister had to return to work shortly after giving birth because her state offers no paid leave. She's a nurse who devotes her life to taking care of everyone else but had no time to take care of herself or her newborn. When I heard about this I got upset and started to do research, where I learned this is unfortunately really common: 1 in 4 moms return to work within two weeks of giving birth. From then on, I decided to start supporting organizations fighting for state and federal paid leave, and using social media to drive attention to the issue."*

Break into small groups and have moms share their experiences, starting with a brief introduction [name, # of children/ages or relationship to kiddos who have inspired you to join tonight]. Have a volunteer from each small group share back a specific story or a common theme with the large group.

## AGENDA CONTINUED (PG 4/5)

[5 minutes]

**Get smart on the state of child care:** Next, we'll review Moms First's briefing on the child care crisis to quickly get up to speed about what is at stake at a local and national level. Take 5 minutes to read quietly, and put your papers down when you are done.

Ask the group if they have any questions or reactions to what they've reviewed. Does their own personal experience resonate with the briefing? Remember, your own lived experience matters just as much as these fast facts. You don't need to be a policy expert to be an effective participant in our campaign.

[25 minutes]

**Now that you've clearly defined your "why's," and learned about what's at stake, we're going to go through how to get loud and get candidates talking about child care.**

Why? If candidates aren't held accountable to publicly prioritizing their plans to combat the child care crisis leading into the election, they sure as hell won't prioritize them once they're elected and in office.

Moms First's Get Child Care on the Record Campaign has 3 easy actions mapped out for us to get child care on the record. We can choose to do them as individuals, or as a group – but what's most important is that we make a commitment to taking action.

I will spend 5 minutes walking through the 3 actions for the group as you review your resource guides.

### **Get Child Care on the Record Campaign Resource Guides (printable)**

1. Attend a Local Event
2. Write a Letter to the Editor
3. Get Loud on Social

Discussion prompts:

- Which of these feel most doable for you, based on your skills, interests, and bandwidth?
- What additional ideas do we have for how we can show up — as individuals and together — to let candidates know they can't stay silent on this issue? Don't be afraid to think outside the box!
- Is there one thing each of us can commit to doing this week? Write it down on your "why" sheet. Can we all commit and email the group when our action is complete? Or could we do something together?

## AGENDA CONTINUED (PG 5/5)

[Optional]

Before we wrap, I want to open the room for anyone to share additional ways they are showing up to put moms first in the upcoming election. If you have any upcoming community events, nonpartisan local or national organizations you're engaging with, or volunteer opportunities to share with the group, let's hear it!

[5 minutes]

**Wrap up:** Thank you for your time and energy today – I am so inspired by this group!

Closing:

- I would love to get together a second time between now and the election, and Moms First will provide me with another toolkit to help us activate our community and get out the vote.
  - Who is interested in meeting again? Is anyone interested in hosting? What is an ideal time and location?
  - How would we like to stay in touch as a group? [email, text, WhatsApp]
- Snap a selfie, tag @MomFirstUS, include the hashtag #GetChildCareontheRecord, and a caption like: "Moms in CITY are fired up and ready to #GetChildCareontheRecord with @MomsFirstUS!"

[30 minutes]

**Reception:** optional time to socialize, network, and get to know one another better

- **Prompt:** What is your super power you can bring in this fight?
  - **Fun prompt:** What is your favorite secret spot in the city to take a minute as a mom?

## AFTER THE MEETUP... IT'S THE AFTER PARTY

**You did it!** Take a moment to recognize you've just created a meaningful space for change while bringing moms together for connection. And then be sure to send a note to your attendees within 1-3 days that covers three things:

🎉 **Recognize:** Make your gratitude personal – include photos, a few highlights or key themes that came up, something that inspired you, and call out any attendees who helped with things like bringing supplies, food, or co-hosting.

💪 **Mobilize:** Clearly share the action items you discussed, any next steps, and calls to action. Attach the worksheets you went through as PDFs in case any got left behind. If you've already taken an action yourself, this is a great chance to share it!

🔄 **Repeat:** Send an invite for your next gathering, with a call to action to bring a friend, or share a Doodle to find a new time/volunteer to host.

### **Make your Motherhood Meetup count & Share with Moms First:**

We are aiming to have 100 Motherhood Meetups nationwide before the election. Make yours count! Take five minutes to fill out this [Post-Motherhood Meetup Survey](#), and we'll send you a super special thank you from Moms First!

