



# How to Host a Coffee Klatch for Parent Advocates

## **What you need:**

shoe box, tool box, or craftbox  
coffee, tea, or hot chocolate for 5-10 people  
coffee cup as sample (use your favorite advocacy or non-profit cup)  
business cards (if applicable)  
index cards  
invitations- premade, kidmade, or computer made  
stickers and balloons for children who may be attending  
pens  
Campaign literature and parent instructions  
Voter registration and/or absentee ballots (call the County Clerk's office)

## **Vote with Children in Mind: Parent as Voter Project**

***Vote with Children in Mind*** is a non-partisan, public education project created by a team of child advocacy organizations to facilitate a dialogue between parents as voters and candidates about children's issues.

**Background:** Many current human service planning efforts in Michigan have called for the input of consumers and parents at the community level. Voting by parents and young adults most likely to become parents are at all time lows.

**Goal:** To increase parental voting at the polls.

**Objective:** To facilitate parent participation in Vote with Children in Mind local activities.

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*(Note to parent involvement staff and volunteers: This is a great make it and take it project to use with parents because it not only provides all the materials for an activity, but it encourages parents to reach out to others for support and encouragement to use their vote for kids and to become involved in advocacy in a non-threatening way.)*

**Coffee Klatch Instructions:**

Do you ever sit around the table and talk with friends and family about politics and issues affecting your kids? If so you have what it takes to be an advocate for children. Here is a fun way you can join with your neighbors, friends, fellow PTA members, and family to become involved in Michigan’s Campaign for Children.

All you need is the items listed above, a date, and some food and beverages.

Invite 5 -10 people to join you for coffee and conversation.

When your guests RSVP ask them to bring some paper, 1 or 2 envelopes and some stamps.

If possible, get the names and addresses of candidates ahead of time from your local League of Women Voters, the paper, or the County Clerk’s office

**At the coffee klatch:**

Have all the materials out for your guests

Welcome your guests and explain why you wanted people to get together to talk about issues and the responsibility of using your vote for kids on election day.

Have everyone write down 1 or 2 issues or concerns they have about children and then discuss as a group.

With the paper that each person brought, have them write a letter to the local candidate(s) telling them you are using your vote for kids this election day, and encourage them to let voters know what their priorities are for kids. Make sure they have a signature and address. (See Sample)

Address and stamp the envelopes and collect them so you can mail them.

**Enjoy!**

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*Dear Candidate:*

*My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I live in your voting district. I am concerned about the well-being of children in our community (or neighborhood) and hope you are too. Specifically, (take one or two of the issues you brainstormed from the meeting and list them here). Therefore, I am using my vote for children this election day.*

*I encourage you as you are campaigning to think about your priorities for children and tell other voting parents like myself what you will do to improve the lives of our children if you are elected.*

*Sincerely,*

*Name and Address*