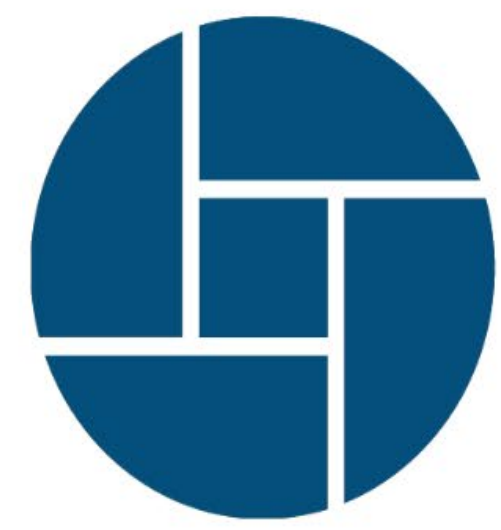




STRONG *START*

Circles of Trust



The Prichard Committee
Building a Groundswell for a Big Bold Future

May 14 and June 11, 2026

Building a **GROUNDSWELL**



The path to A LARGER LIFE begins with a STRONG START for every Kentucky child. Together, we can create a Groundswell of support to ensure every learner in Kentucky receives a high quality, equitable education, starting at birth, and every family can participate in the workforce.



AGENDA



- Strong Start Kentucky
- Strong Start Circles of Trust
- Who's Invited
- Why Circles of Trust Matter
- How They Will Work Locally
- What Participation Looks Like
- How You Will Be Supported
- Getting Started
- Brainstorming Groups
- Sharing Ideas and Next Steps



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WHO ARE WE?

Strong Start Kentucky is
a **statewide coalition**
focused on strengthening
early care and education
from birth through third grade
so that every Kentucky child
has a strong foundation
for lifelong learning and success.

Strengthening **high-quality early care and education systems**

Supporting **families with young children**

Building a **strong early childhood workforce**

Promoting **collaboration across schools, child care, and community partners**

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WHY DO WE EXIST?

- **Education begins at birth**—early experiences shape long-term learning, health, and economic outcomes
- Kentucky faces **gaps in access, quality, and affordability** across child care, preschool, and early learning systems
- Families, providers, and communities often operate in **fragmented systems** that need stronger coordination and shared goals
- Access to high quality early care and education is a **multi-generational strategy** that facilitates **adult preparation** for and **participation in the workforce**

Kentucky's children need **strong, coordinated early care and education systems** to arrive at school ready to learn and succeed and for families to **participate in the workforce and build upward mobility.**

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WHAT IS OUR VISION?

Strong Start Kentucky envisions a future where **early care and education is treated as essential public infrastructure** for families, communities, and the workforce.

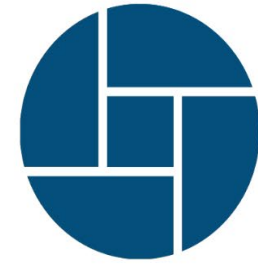
- ❖ **High-quality early learning environments** for infants, toddlers, and young children
- ❖ **Strong partnerships** among child care providers, schools, families, and community organizations
- ❖ **A supported and stable early childhood workforce**
- ❖ **State and local policies** that reflect the real needs of children and families



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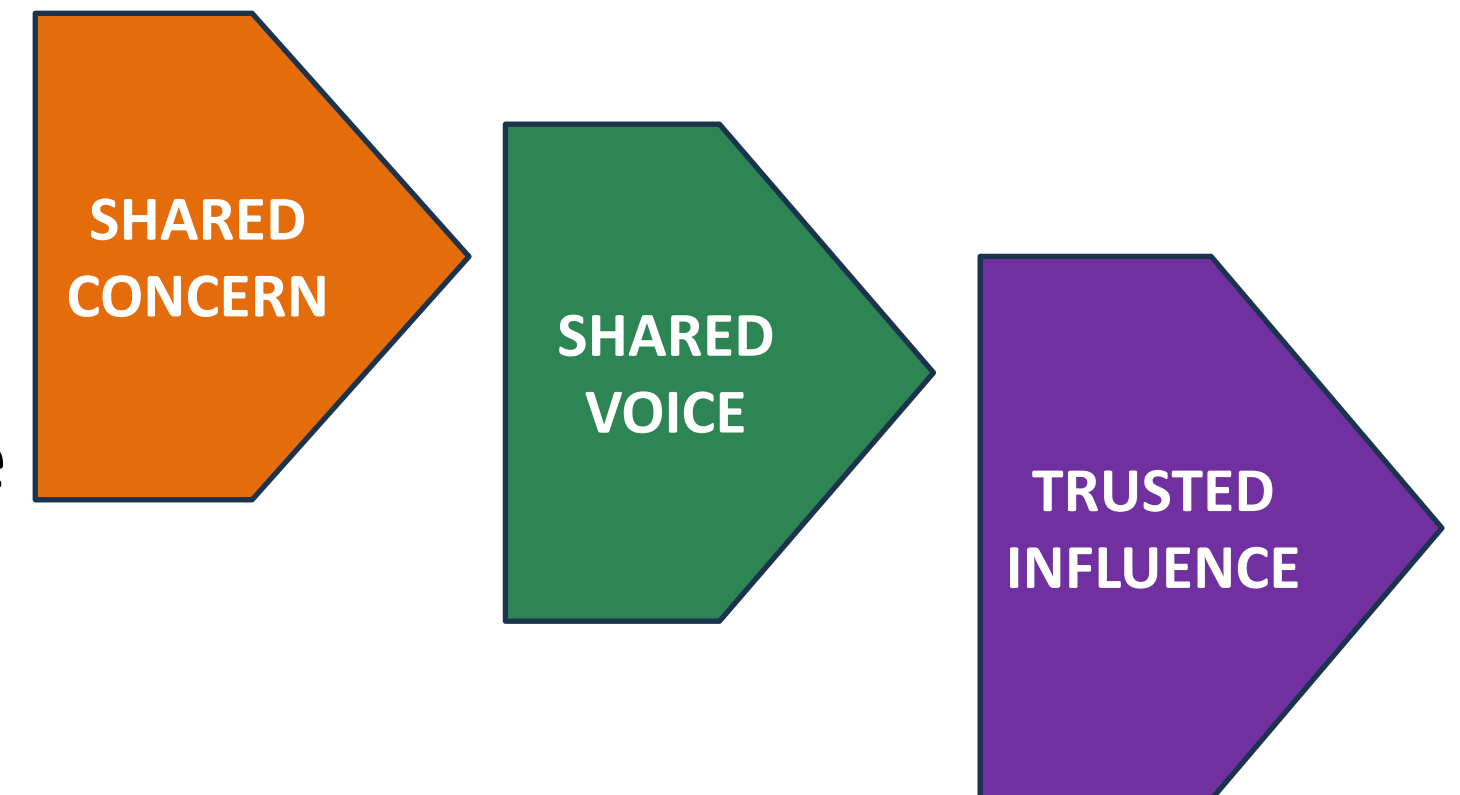
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WHAT ARE THEY?

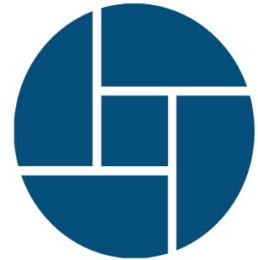
Strong Start Circles of Trust are a **community-based approach** to building champions for early care and education across Kentucky communities.

- ❖ A Circle of Trust brings together Kentuckians who believe in the **power of early care and education**
- ❖ Circles intentionally build **trusted relationships** among community members and state and local policy leaders
- ❖ Circles operate at the **local level**, grounded in **community priorities** and **lived experience**



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WHO'S INVITED TO ENGAGE?

Strong Start Circles of Trust are designed to connect **diverse local leaders** who can shape community life and public decisions

- ❖ Parents and family leaders
- ❖ Early childhood professionals and providers
- ❖ Civic and community leaders
- ❖ Business and industry leaders
- ❖ Early childhood advocates

*Circles of Trust elevate
community wisdom
as an essential part
of policymaking.*

LEARN WHAT MATTERS
MOST TO YOUR
COMMUNITY

SHARE PERSPECTIVES ACROSS
ROLES AND SECTORS

SPEAK WITH ONE
COORDINATED, TRUSTED
VOICE

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WHY DO THEY MATTER?

Strong Start Circles of Trust strengthen both **relationships and results** for communities and policymakers.

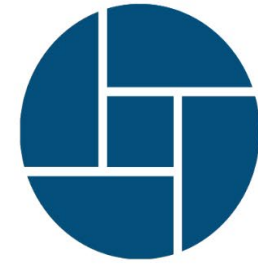


- ❖ Citizen-leaders become **informed, engaged, and trusted constituents**
- ❖ Policymakers hear directly from people rooted in their communities
- ❖ Early care and education becomes a **shared, local priority**

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HOW WILL THEY WORK?

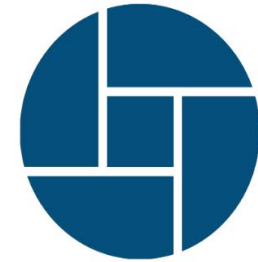
- ❖ Connect regularly as a group of committed community members
- ❖ Are **ideally supported by a local host or convenor organization**
 - ❖ (e.g., a nonprofit, school, coalition, or community group)
 - ❖ A host is *helpful but not required*
- ❖ Build trust and shared understanding across different roles and sectors
- ❖ Learn together over time—not just at one meeting

Strong Start Circles of Trust are **locally-grounded, relationship-driven** and **learn and act together.**

*Circles of Trust are shaped by **local leadership and local context**, NOT a one-size-fits-all model.*

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WHAT MATTERS LOCALLY?

A key role of **Strong Start Circles of Trust** is to build **shared knowledge** about early care and education in their community.

Local Data

- Availability
- Access
- Affordability
- Workforce challenges

Community Assets

- Providers
- Programs
- Partnerships
- Existing efforts

Gaps and Needs

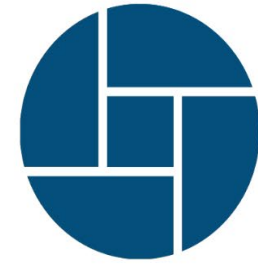
- Family experiences
- Provider experiences
- Employer experiences

Circles identify **shared priorities** for:

- ❖ **Policy and advocacy**, and
- ❖ **Local action** and **problem solving**.

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HOW CAN THEY SHAPE POLICY?

Circles of Trust are designed for **ongoing, year-round engagement** with policymakers – not just during legislative sessions.

- ❖ Meeting with legislators on key early childhood issues
- ❖ Inviting legislators to **experience early care and education locally**, such as:
 - Community events involving young children and families
 - Visits to child care programs or early learning settings
 - Hosting **community conversations** about early childhood needs and solutions

Strong Start provides
Warm hand-off to
policy leaders



Circles engage year-
round with policy
leaders

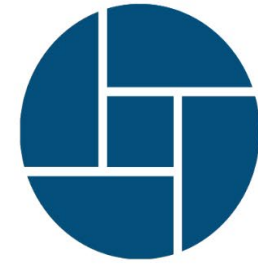


Circles become
trusted, informed
constituents

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WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION LOOK LIKE?

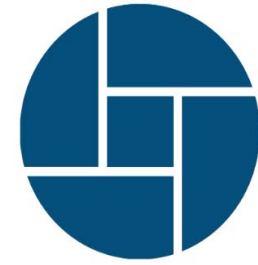
Participation in a **Strong Start Circles of Trust** is a **meaningful, flexible commitment** that fits local context.

- ❖ Participate in regular Circle conversations (frequency set locally)
- ❖ Learn together about early care and education issues affecting their community
- ❖ Help identify **shared priorities** for advocacy and local action
- ❖ Engage with policy leaders **year-round**, not just during legislative sessions
- ❖ Serve as **trusted messengers** grounded in lived experience and community knowledge

Impact comes from **consistency, relationships, and shared purpose** over time.

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HOW WILL THEY BE SUPPORTED?

Strong Start KY Coalition partners provide **ongoing infrastructure, learning, and connection**, while communities lead locally.

- ❖ **Membership in the Strong Start Kentucky Coalition**
- ❖ **Regular online updates** on early childhood policy developments and initiatives
- ❖ **Access to Strong Start quarterly meetings**
- ❖ **Training opportunities** facilitated by Strong Start partners
 - ❖ Including the **United Way** on effective grassroots relationship-building and advocacy
- ❖ **Prichard Committee and other partners' tools and resources:**
 - ❖ *Groundswell Initiative MAP*
 - ❖ *Community Profiles*
 - ❖ *Early Childhood Toolkits* with ideas and resources for local action
 - ❖ *Bright spots* highlighting exemplar practices in other communities

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NATIONAL ALLIES



National Association for the
Education of Young Children



Sixth Street Associates

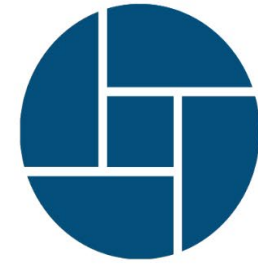


...AND SO MANY MORE!

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GETTING STARTED AND NEXT STEPS

Our Call to Action: Help ensure that **early care and education** remains a **strong, visible priority** in your community!

- ❖ Signing up to **join or help form a Circle of Trust**
- ❖ Identifying potential Circle members and local convenors
- ❖ Connecting with Strong Start staff for guidance and support
- ❖ Participating in upcoming **Strong Start meetings, trainings, and updates**

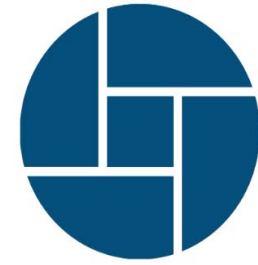


[Strong Start KY Circles of Trust –JOIN US!](#)

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POLLING ACTIVITY

What are the **top three early childhood issues** in your community right now?
Think Birth through Age 8

Let's ground this work in your community experience.

Examples might include:

- ☐ Child care access or affordability
- ☐ Workforce shortages
- ☐ Kindergarten readiness
- ☐ Family economic instability
- ☐ Health, mental health, or developmental supports

- ❖ Select your **top three priorities** in the live poll
- ❖ There are no "right" answers—this is about **your perspective**

Poll: Top Three Early Childhood Issues

1 question



Use your phone's camera to scan the QR code

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15 - minute BREAKOUT GROUPS

Purpose:

To generate ideas for building effective **Strong Start Circles of Trust** in your community.

Discussion Questions

1. Who should be invited?
2. How should they be invited?
3. Who could partner to host or convene a Circle?
4. What community events could legislators be invited to?
5. Relationship-building ideas



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KEY TAKEAWAYS AND NEXT STEPS

- ☐ Sign up yourself (if you want to join us!).
- ☐ Share about Circles of Trust with key stakeholders in your community.
- ☐ Invite them to the June 11 session.
- ☐ When they are ready, ask them to sign up using the link or QR Code.
- ☐ Let rina@prichardcommittee.org know if you are willing to be a host for your community.
- ☐ After June 11, schedule a first get-together and invite us.
We will provide you with a list of your circle.



[Strong Start KY Circles of Trust –JOIN US!](mailto:rina@prichardcommittee.org)

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CONTACT US



BUILD A GROUNDSWELL WITH US

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Thank you!



Building a GROUNDSWELL
in partnership with the Prichard Committee