



Position Title: Parent Advocacy & Community Engagement Specialist

About Us

Children First (formerly Public Citizens for Children & Youth, PCCY) is a regional policy/advocacy organization devoted to improving the lives and life chances of children by defining and building public will behind policies that increase opportunity and address educational and health inequities, racism, structural barriers to upward mobility and family instability. Children First is a fast-paced organization that uses research, people power, and coalition building to create the momentum for reform of public policies that enable more children to grow up healthy, well-educated, and ready to take the reins of their communities.

Position Summary

The Philadelphia School District Kindergarten programs are under-enrolled citywide, which is defined by enrollment falling far below program capacity by the priority deadline of **May 31st**. Even more pronounced are the under-enrollment levels of schools in areas with the highest concentration of poverty.

At Children First, we know equity in early childhood education is rooted in providing every child with a strong foundation to realize their full potential which is strengthened by every child being enrolled in kindergarten in advance of the priority deadline. On-time enrollment ensures proper students-to-teachers ratios and helps families have access to schools that are proximate to their neighborhoods. When enrollment lags far beyond the priority enrollment deadline, schools are not able to make accurate predictions on staff and classroom needs, consequently resulting in schools and students suffering. The role of the Field Research Associate is to build, cultivate, and leverage relationships with families, schools, community organizations, and extended networks across Philadelphia to increase the Philadelphia School District understanding of what parents need to know:

- To ensure their children are enrolled in kindergarten on-time (defined as May 31st)
- To ensure schools are ready and prepared to support each new class of kindergarten students

This strategy recognizes that when parents are equipped with the right information and are working together with early childhood providers, centers/schools, children are more prepared to enter kindergarten and are more successful academically throughout the school years. The Parent & Community Engagement Specialist will play a lead role in the execution of that strategy – learning from the communities we seek to impact and analyzing the information to inform recommendations for School District enrollment strategies and initiatives. Our goal is to align district practices and policies to the community needs.

990 Spring Garden Street
Suite 200
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Office 215-563-5848
Fax 215-563-9442
Email info@childrenfirstpa.org

Web: childrenfirstpa.org
Social: [childrenfirstpa](https://www.facebook.com/childrenfirstpa)

Key Duties:

- Identify critical school staff and community allies/networks across 20 elementary schools – within The Philadelphia School District and its surrounding neighborhoods – to build local networks of support
- Cultivate a pipeline of early childhood parents to participate in enrollment events, educational workshops, focus groups, and 1:1 interviews
- Leverage local network of supports and parent pipeline to create opportunities for parent engagement – to examine the root causes of late kindergarten enrollment – to understand what will motivate parents to take advantage of the kindergarten transition programming and ensure their young children are registered to start their first year of public school on-time
- Collaborate with families, schools, and community organizations to gather qualitative and quantitative data to inform district wide recommendations for enrollment strategies and initiatives
- Organize school-based enrollment events in partnership with Director of Parent Advocacy & Engagement and Philly Mobilization and Policy Director to boost priority Kindergarten enrollment for targeted schools
- Solicit feedback on proposed enrollment strategies to the ecosystem of parents, school staff, and community partners for implementation

Position Description

- Listen to parents in 20 schools and learn from them what actions the School District and other partners can take to support more parents to choose to enroll their children in kindergarten, and to do so well before or on the annual registration deadline
- Examine the root causes of late enrollment to understand what will motivate parents to take advantage of the district's kindergarten transition programming and ensure their young children are registered to start their first year of public school on-time
- Solicit feedback and information from families of young children about their perceptions of and need for kindergarten through 1:1s, focus groups, and outreach events to help inform the district's ongoing strategies to ensure that all available seats are filled citywide
- Plan and execute enrollment events targeted at boosting the enrollment levels of target schools to 70% or greater
- Assist in the identification of families affected by suspension and expulsion policies in early childhood education (ECE) programs
- Coordinate with other CF staff members on projects related to suspension and expulsion of children of color from ECE programs

Qualifications, Education, Experience & Skills:

- Bachelor's degree preferred, but not required
- Hybrid work environment
- Required to be in person at pickup and drop-off within the school scope on a rotating basis
- Flexibility working afterschool and weekend hours
- Bilingual (Spanish) – strongly preferred
- Track record of successfully securing rapport with diverse and low-income communities

Important Skills:

- Highly organized and keen to pay attention to detail
- Ability to work independently and with others
- Works well under pressure
- Strong systems orientation
- Ability to prioritize and manage multiple projects
- Ability to collect, interpret, and simplify large datasets
- Very strong written and oral communication skills
- Ability to travel to communities across the Philadelphia region and must have reliable transportation
- Proficient in Microsoft Office (Excel, PowerPoint, Word) and Google Suite (Docs, Sheets, Slides)

Reports To: Director of Parent Advocacy & Engagement

Salary: \$52,000 plus benefits and generous paid time off.

Apply: Resume and cover letter to info@childrenfirstpa.org.