

3. Children need ample time and space to engage in free play every day.

Advocacy Strategies

**potential for DEY mini-grant funding*

1. Educate Others with Evidence

- **Strategy:** *Share research and real-world examples that show how play supports brain development, academic readiness, and emotional well-being.
- **Suggestions:** Use infographics, videos, and articles from trusted sources (e.g., NAEYC, DEY Teacher Speak Out videos). Present at PTA meetings or staff development sessions. *Share learning stories or observations from the classroom/home, showcasing growth through play.

2. Use Social Media and Community Platforms

- **Strategy:** Raise awareness publicly by sharing examples of play-led learning in action.
- **Suggestions:** Post photos (with permission), short videos, or anecdotes about children engaged in meaningful play, along with captions highlighting the learning. Start or contribute to blogs, newsletters, or community forums on child development and education.

3. Build Alliances and Speak Up

- **Strategy:** Join forces with other educators and families to advocate for play-friendly policies and practices in schools and communities.
- **Suggestion:** *Form or join parent/educator coalitions, early childhood networks, or advocacy groups. Speak at school board meetings or write letters to decision-makers to support mandated time for child-led, unstructured play.

4. Embed Play in Policy and Practice

- **Strategy:** Advocate for play to be embedded in official policies, curriculum frameworks, and educational standards.
- **Suggestions:** Propose curriculum guidelines that include play-led learning outcomes. Help draft school or district policies that protect time for unstructured play and reflection. Advocate for professional development on play-led teaching.

5. Share Research on Harms of Academic Learning in the Early Years

- **Strategy:** Build awareness of the results of the Tennessee Pre-K study.
- **Suggestions:** Host a group discussion that reviews the troubling findings from the Tennessee Pre-K study (see resources). Share blogs with parents and educators that provide an overview of the iceberg model of developmental competencies (see resources).