

## GREAT IDEAS

### Issue Nights

It is our civic duty to educate ourselves about critical issues. Help voters make informed decisions based upon the issues that speak most strongly to them. Host "Issue Nights" on diverse topics of interest to your community.

- Invite people to speak on both sides of the issue. Presenters may be local, state or federal advocates, non-profit professionals, academics or others with expertise in the policy area under discussion.
- Pick an issue that is important to your community. Think about issues of importance to the community and your program: early childhood education, health insurance, local economic issues. Be sure to present the issue objectively, fully and in a non-partisan manner.
- Include an introduction by a parent or program leader to provide content and explain why the issue is important to the Head Start community, without endorsing one policy position or candidate over another.



### Candidate Forums

Become informed about the policy positions of the candidates running for office in order to make intelligent choices in the voting booths. Candidate forums allow community members to learn about the positions of the candidates on a range of topics from the candidates themselves. Here are some tips for planning your own candidate forum:

- Invite candidates well in advance to ensure they can add it to their campaign schedules.
- Invite all candidates who are running for a particular office; don't neglect county or municipal elections. Special care must be taken regarding minor party candidates.
- When introducing the event, be sure to state that the program or organization does not endorse candidates, whose views are their own and do not represent the sponsoring organization.
- Choose a non-partisan, knowledgeable moderator. Give all candidates equal time during introductions, Q & A, and concluding remarks.
- Publicize in the local community.
- In advance, prepare questions on a wide variety of issues.
- Be sure to involve program leaders to clarify Do's and Don'ts.

### Additional Program Ideas

- Host a family movie night with politically-themed films. Suggestions include: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The American President*, *Election*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *All the Presidents Men*, or episodes of *The West Wing*.
- Register to be a poll worker. Encourage fellow congregants, youth groupers, etc. to join you in the polls on election day.