

# Campaign Roadmap

## Planning a Private Equity in Childcare Campaign



# PLANNING A PRIVATE EQUITY IN CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN

## GENERAL ISSUE CAMPAIGN ARC

Setting up a campaign on private equity in childcare uses several of the same steps as traditional issues campaigns.

The below guide accompanies slides in the [PE in Childcare Training Deck](#), where indicated.

SLIDE 2	<b>Identify Your Base</b>	WHO has a common set of experiences or pain points that would give them a reason to unite to make improvements?
		The childcare community consists of Providers, Early Ed and Care Teachers, Parents and Kids! Who is your base?
	<b>Identify the Issues</b>	WHAT are the conditions/practices that impact your base, and may lead them to act to make change? How are private equity takeovers exacerbating these conditions or creating new issues?
		Issues affect bases differently. How does an issue impact parts of the childcare community differently? How do you keep people united? Are there specific companies or chains that are showing up or where your base is having issues?
	<b>Understand the Root Problem</b>	WHY does this issue occur? Who benefits from it persisting?
		Seeing the problem is key to fixing it. How do you uncover where the problem lives? How do you know it is the root problem? Analyzing the childcare provider landscape to see how big a share private equity has, and which are the largest private equity-owned chains in your geography already will help with this step.
	<b>Identify the Decision Makers (s)</b>	WHERE does the power to change/stop this live? This is the step where a campaign team will do a power mapping exercise. Usually, there are some people or institutions where you do not know where they stand on the issue. At that point, research meetings are helpful to have a better understanding of the political landscape, who is on your side, who you need to move, and what motivates those actors.
		Knowing who has the power to change things, and what they are motivated by helps develop your strategic hypothesis about how to tackle the problem.
SLIDE 3	<b>Create Demands</b>	WHAT actions could a decision-maker(s) take that would remedy issues you've identified?
		Demands are the solutions to the problem you see.
	<b>Create a Strategy</b>	Strategy is an idea for how you turn the resources you have into the power you need to get the change you want.
		How do you get decision makers to implement your solutions? What is your north star goal? What campaign steps do you need to win along the way to get there? Do you need legislative, communications, basebuilding, and/or other strategies?

SLIDE 3	Develop Tactics	WHAT actions put pressure on decision-makers to act on the demands? What would motivate them to want to fix your problem?
		What happens if your solutions are rejected by the decision maker? What other actions pressure them to act differently?
	Escalate	WHEN do you plan to use these tactics, in what sequence and why? Tactics should build pressure. When will you reach peak pressure?
		Some tactics are more combative than others. How do you sequence those actions to build pressure and support for your demands?

SLIDE 4	Theory of Change	HOW we win, is by executing strategies and tactics aligned to those strategies that build enough pressure on decision makers to implement your demands
		If we _____, then we can win _____ from _____.

## SLIDE 13

### STRATEGIES TO CURB PRIVATE EQUITY'S POWER IN CHILDCARE

SLIDE 14	CORPORATE CAMPAIGNS	1. Select a private equity-owned chain with sizable market share in your geography where members of your base have identified issues with the quality of care.
		2. Identify the true corporate owner of the chain and its financial situation.
		3. Generate a list of demands that would improve conditions at the chain.
		4. Request meetings with the company to share your issues and demands.
		5. Organize direct actions at corporate sites to bring attention to your demands and engage the company.

SLIDE 15	EXAMPLE: PARENT VOICES AND LA PETITE ACADEMY	1. California-based <a href="#">Parent Voices</a> has been organizing parents with children enrolled at La Petite Academy, a childcare chain owned by Learning Care Group. La Petite Academy has <a href="#">dozens</a> of locations in California.
		2. Learning Care Group is the <a href="#">second largest</a> child care provider in the country, operating <a href="#">1,100</a> schools in 40 states. Learning Care Group is owned by New York private equity firm <a href="#">American Securities LLC</a> . American Securities manages <a href="#">\$26 billion dollars</a> in assets and its CEO, Michael Fisch, has a reported net worth of <a href="#">\$10 billion dollars</a> .

## EXAMPLE: PARENT VOICES AND LA PETITE ACADEMY

3. Demands were generated from an organizing meeting of parents and teachers learning about American Securities, identifying their problems, and demanding to speak with decision makers. They included issues about refunds and hidden fees, guaranteed hours and staffing ratios for workers, cleaning and sanitizing protocols, and teachers trained to work with children with disabilities.
4. The La Petite Academy district manager refused to meet parents after they sent a meeting request via letter, instead offering to meet with parents individually.
5. Parent Voices' Contra Costa chapter held a [press conference](#) outside a La Petite Academy location. During the press conference, Learning Care Group agreed to take a meeting with the parent group.

## GUARDRAILS FOR FUNDING CAMPAIGNS

The largest factor bringing private equity into childcare is successful efforts by advocates to increase funding and access to childcare. This provides private equity firms with a steady revenue stream that they are eager to capitalize on. Advocates in several states have worked to structure programs or funding streams that can protect these resources from the worst extractive practices of private equity firms. Many of these campaigns take place during the state budget session. See the case studies for in depth discussion of examples of these types of campaigns—and what worked and what didn't— from Massachusetts, Vermont, and Colorado.

- [In Massachusetts](#), childcare and early education advocates built guardrails into the successful C3 grant program through the state budget process for Fiscal Year 2025, creating alignment with state legislators for the need to support the childcare provider ecosystem and prioritize small providers. The high profile collapse of private equity-owned hospitals in the Steward Health Care system, which received constant front-page coverage in the Boston Globe, created fertile ground for these efforts.
- [In Vermont](#), advocates built a coalition for increased public investment in childcare through a new payroll tax where the business community played a key role. Publicizing the example of a childcare program where families faced steep tuition hikes after a private equity takeover helped illustrate the need for guardrails.
- [In Colorado](#), research had found that private equity firms already owned or backed 15 percent of the state's childcare providers. Lawmakers sought to ban harmful practices and create a separate provider category for investor-backed programs. Because they took a "behind-closed-doors" approach without a public campaign that was not tied to a funding stream, the bill did not withstand multiple rounds of watering down and failed to win passage.

As a few of these case studies illustrate, it may be useful to incorporate elements of the corporate campaign strategy, including identifying a corporate target that exemplifies the private equity model and some of its most common problems, as part of a public education campaign to create the basis for a successful legislative strategy.



EXECUTIVE/  
REGULATORY  
ACTION

Agencies that administer childcare programs and funding have significant discretion over how those programs are run, and can be a key ally in making sure there is an appropriate provider mix and creating and implementing guardrails that can prevent private equity takeovers in their jurisdiction. Strategies that focus on educating and aligning agency personnel so they have a deep understanding of the childcare landscape and the issues posed by private equity in the sector can help advance the fight for a more just childcare system.

In a number of states, groups have organized to win structural changes to the administration of their child care programs, in addition to new investments. New agencies solely focused on early childhood have been created in [New Mexico](#), [Oregon](#), and Minnesota, for example. Minnesota's [campaign](#) focused on establishing a new Department of Children, Youth, and Families that pulled together dozens of initiatives and programs to create a holistic public sector approach to the issues affecting children and families. Creating this agency allowed advocates to build a co-governance model with a centralized decision maker, hosting [listening sessions](#) and community events to inform implementation and identify priority issues. Establishing a standalone agency can create a strong framework for tackling the threats from private equity.

For more on the process created in Minnesota to facilitate this transition, see this [report](#).

## READING LIST

[What is Private Equity?](#) - ProPublica

[The ABCs of Private Equity: A Coloring Book](#) - Americans for Financial Reform Education Fund

[Investors Extracted \\$400 Million From a Hospital Chain That Sometimes Couldn't Pay for Medical Supplies or Gas for Ambulances](#) - ProPublica

[New analysis reveals private equity firms own at least 10% of all U.S. apartments](#) - Private Equity Stakeholder Project

[Blackstone Comes to Collect: How America's Largest Landlord and Wall Street's Highest Paid CEO Are Jacking Up Rents and Ramping Up Evictions](#) - Private Equity Stakeholder Project

[Americans are shelling out thousands per month on childcare. Private equity could be making the crisis worse](#) - Fortune

[Wall Street on Your Doorstep: Protecting Home Care from Private Equity Abuses](#) - Americans for Financial Reform Education Fund

[The long, bloody lineage of private equity's looting](#) - Cory Doctorow

['How can they walk away with millions and leave workers with zero?': Toys R Us workers say they deserve severance](#) - Washington Post

## CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

[Elements for powerful Campaigns](#)

[Political Education ahead of their La Petite Campaign](#)

[Slideshow/agenda to kick off parent organizing in La Petit.](#)

[Letter to Leadership of La Petit of parent demands](#)

[Sample Press Release](#)

## SM CONTENT

