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GFWC Education and Libraries Community Service Program Community Connection Initiative: Support High-Quality Early Learning Program

Children enrolled in a high-quality program have a safe space to grow and learn. They can explore the world around them, build relationships with trusted, caring adults, feel accepted, and gain confidence to become active learners. High-quality programs engage families in meaningful ways. Positive family-program connections have been linked to greater academic motivation, grade promotion, and socio-emotional skills across all types of young children, including those from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

An early learning program overlaps with a child's development of gross and fine motor skills, physical coordination (hand-eye coordination, biking, running, etc.) and their understanding of healthy skills like handwashing, regular exercise, and balanced eating.

High-quality early learning programs can increase earning potential and encourage and support educational attainment. Early childhood development and education programs can also help reduce educational gaps.

Establish a working relationship with an early learning program in your area. Engage your members to participate with their ideas, talent and time. Engagement can be volunteering to read, supporting a parent meeting, providing needed supplies for arts and crafts, providing books for the children to take home, and hosting a library card sign-up drive.

Collaborate with the local elementary school to ensure that first-time parents can visit the school prior to their child's enrollment so that they feel comfortable enrolling their child.

Other ideas:

- Members can be classroom volunteers ~ this offers flexibility in time and skill level. Volunteers can help with art projects, reading, field trips, and many other activities.
- Special event Volunteers ~ programs often have parent nights and family fun nights. Club members can help with event logistics, silent auctions, registration, and beverage carts.
- Facility Volunteers ~ plan a club project for a clean-up day. This may include yard work, painting, cleaning, and playground repair.
- Members can volunteer to do clerical work to relieve office staff.
- Members can hold a library card sign-up for children in the program. This can be coordinated with the local library to be done when parents are there to pick up children from the program instead of making a separate trip to the library.
- Host a Scholastic Book Fair, handling all the logistics of organizing the program. Perhaps the club can purchase a book for each child.
- Celebrate the Week of the Young Child, held each April as well Advocates for Children week held in October.

To see the full GFWC Manual page for the Education and Libraries, go to gfwcma.org > About GFWC > What We Do~GFWC Manual > Scroll to Education and Libraries.