



A CONGREGATIONAL Covenant



EDUCATE
A
Child

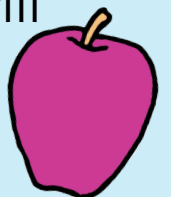
Educate a Child

Transform the World

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Educate a Child calls Presbyterians to our common commitment to join in God’s ongoing transformation of the world by working and advocating to ensure equitable, accessible, quality* public education so that all people, created in the image of God, may grow into the fullness of life. ”

*Quality education is an effective means to fight poverty, build democracies, and foster peaceful societies. Quality education empowers individuals, gives them voice, unlocks their potential, opens pathways to self-actualization, and broadens perspectives to open minds to a pluralist world. There is no one definition, list of criteria, a definitive curriculum, or list of topics for a quality education. Quality education is a dynamic concept that changes and evolves with time and changes in the social, economic, and environmental contexts of place. Because quality education must be locally relevant and culturally appropriate, quality education will take many forms around the world.



UNESCO,(2005), pg. 1 Contributing to a More Sustainable Future: Quality Education, Life Skills and Education for Sustainable Development. Paris: UNESCO. Available online at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001410/141019e.pdf> .



Because scripture calls us to

love kindness, do justice and walk humbly with our God, to love our neighbor as ourselves, to care for the least of these, and to care for all children created in the image of God**

We believe...

- Our baptismal vows engraft us into the Church Universal, a covenant community, that calls us to faithful work of justice with and for all children,
- The radical hospitality of the Lord's Table compels us to welcome children in ways that transform the lives of children and the community,
- Life of the mind is in service to God and an expression of the love of God and neighbor
- Every child has a right to access equitable quality education.

Therefore, we Covenant to

live into child advocacy ministries of **Direct Service**, **Consciousness Raising**, **Systemic Change** and **Christian Disciplines** that continue Christ's transforming ministry so that all children may grow in the fullness for which God created them.

**Genesis 1:26-27...Micah 6:8...Matthew 22:36-40, Mark 12:28-31, Luke 10:27...Matthew 25:31-46

DIRECT SERVICE

providing concrete ministries that embody God's compassion and commitment to meet the needs of children and youth - especially those who are vulnerable, discounted and marginalized.

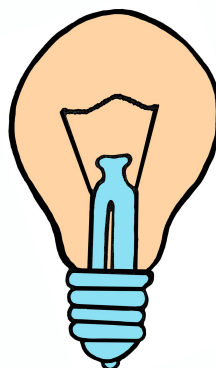
- Develop relationships with schools to support children, teachers and administrators as together you work to strengthen children's potential and promise.
- Listen to families and work with community and church leaders to determine where the gaps are in support and to move forward to meet those needs.
- Invest in structures that already exist in the community to support children and families and explore partnerships and collaborate with other congregations to create and/or deepen ministries that meet the needs of children and families.
- Provide, expand and/or support quality accessible early childhood programs for preschool aged children in congregations and communities – with particular emphasis on children in poverty or who are otherwise at-risk or underserved including scholarships and/or sliding-scale fees.
- Provide academic and social enrichment for students, nurture and care for families, teachers and administrators, partner with a school, fill backpacks with school supplies at the beginning of the school year, provide extras for new students who move in during the year and replenish school supplies throughout the year.
- Sponsor a Freedom School during the summer
<http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/freedomschools/>



CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

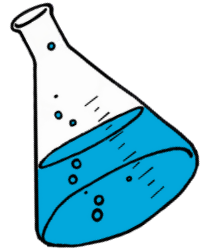
joining the journey of solidarity by seeking to understand the root causes of injustice through critical examination and reflection on the most pressing challenges of children and families living in at-risk settings.

- Listen to the stories of those who live every day in the midst of struggles and at-risk situations
- Build relationships beyond racial and socio-economic divides
- Establish relationships and get involved with organizations that educate and advocate in the intersectional nature of work on behalf of children – local, state and national.
- Attend and pay attention to local School Board meetings to listen and ask questions while paying attention to state and national policies and initiatives related to education
- Engage in book studies, film discussions and bible studies (see last page for suggested resources)
- Host panel presentations, film studies and discussions series (consider poverty, race, class, school to prison pipeline)
- Study our Presbyterian historical commitment to living out our faith in the public life - especially as it engages and supports public education.



SYSTEMIC CHANGE

working for social transformation that addresses the root causes so often codified in our structural and institutional structures as a society so that we join the Spirit's work of shaping a world more consistent with God's best intention for all people.



- Sign up for Action Alerts from the Office of Public Witness (http://capwiz.com/pcusa/mlm/signup/?ignore_cookie=1)
- Organize members of your congregation and create teams to regularly attend School Board Meetings, City Council and Zoning Meetings paying careful attention to public transportation, school zoning/funding/closings, affordable housing, etc., all of which affect education. Testify in open hearings and write summaries to share with others.
- Make an appointment with and visit your Representatives and Senators when they are back in their districts and express your views and expectations of his or her vote on issues related to education and child advocacy. Write letters and/or emails when advocating for safety net programs for children and families such as Childhood Nutrition Reauthorization Act; Woman Infant Care; and Children Health Insurance Program.
- Attend campaign town hall meetings and ask specific questions about educational issues and hold public leaders accountable
- Write letters to the editor in newspapers presenting informed and rational arguments for supporting affordable, accessible, quality public education
- Plan and participate in acts of public witness that showcase the places in which positive change needs to happen

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINES

propelling, grounding, and sustaining our work of justice with and for children and their families. We participate in spiritual disciplines (e.g., worship, prayer, bible study) that mediate God's grace and embolden our acts of faithful witness including celebrating, honoring and supporting those involved in educating our children.

- Worship God together as the community of faith across socio-economic and racial divides.
- Celebrate Children's Sabbath worship service in your congregation
(<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/child/childrens-sabbath/>)
- Commit to pray personally for children, families, teachers, administrators, and local schools.
- Include children, families, teachers, administrators, schools and all who work with children in the prayers of the people and liturgies in worship.
- Engage in the intentional study of scripture exploring the bible's overarching care and concern for children, the least and our neighbors.
- Deliberately and carefully build bridges between the insights gained from the serious study of scripture and the decision we make that affect our public and common lives.





RESOURCES



Book Discussion suggestions

- Peter Edelman's Not a Crime to be Poor: The Criminalization of Poverty in America;
- Jonathan Kozol's, The Shame of a Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schools in America;
- Patrick Reyes' Nobody Cries When we Die: God, Community and Surviving to Adulthood;
- Ta-Nehisi Coates' Between the World and Me;
- Diane Ravitch's The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education;
- Michael Gurian's Saving Our Sons: A New Path for Raising Healthy and Resilient Boys;
- Lisa Damour's Untangled: Guiding Teenage Girls through the Seven Transitions into Adulthood;
- Gary Younge's Another Day in the Death of America: A Chronicle of Ten Short Lives
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's Racism without Racists: Color-blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America;
- Bryan Stevenson's Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption;
- Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow: Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness;
- Marian Wright Edelman's A Measure of Our Success.

Bible Study Suggestions

- Amos, Micah, Luke or Matthew 25

Word Studies Suggestions

- justice & righteousness, covenantal steadfast love, widow/orphan/alien

Film Discussions

- Thirteenth, When They See Us, Just Mercy, Waiting for 'Superman', Freedom Writers, A Lesson Before Dying, American Teacher, The Line: Poverty in America, Frontline: Poor Kids, Living on One Dollar, Minimalism: A Documentary About the Important Things, The Kindness Diaries



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SPECIAL OFFERINGS

COMPASSION
peace
AND JUSTICE

To become an

Educate a Child Congregation

& for more information visit

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