

Photo By: Caroline Trutmann



# Helping Children Survive & Thrive

A Toolkit for Action

# Campaign to End Preventable Child Deaths: Background

## The World Has Made Huge Progress in Reducing Preventable Deaths of Moms and Kids

Since 1990, worldwide deaths from preventable causes of mothers and children under age 5 have been cut by more than half.

This is one of the great success stories in international development. This progress has been achieved with simple solutions and proven, inexpensive solutions that address leading causes of death, including diarrhea, pneumonia and malnutrition. U.S. leadership has also helped build the capacity of countries and local communities to care for their children.

## But there is More Work to Do

Despite this incredible success story, too many children continue to die from preventable causes. Consider:

- Every minute, 11 children under age five die of preventable causes;
- 800 women die every day due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth and
- In most developing countries, the poorest urban children are at least twice as likely to die as the richest urban children.

## We Know What Works to Solve this Problem

We know what works to accelerate progress toward ending preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths. Low-cost, high-impact strategies include:

- Distribution and use of bed nets to stop malaria;
- Antibiotics to treat pneumonia;
- Zinc supplementation to treat diarrhea;
- Vitamin A supplementation to treat malnutrition and
- Training health workers in their communities to increase access to health services.

“The future depends on what you do today.”

–Mahtama Gandhi

## The Roadmap to End Preventable Child Deaths

Bipartisan legislation called the Reach Every Mother and Child Act (S. 1911/H.R. 3706) would scale up the solutions we know work to end preventable deaths within a generation.

The Reach Every Mother and Child Act would:

- Reach more moms and children with proven interventions;
- Develop innovative ways to bring new resources to the table to ensure these programs are robustly funded;
- Focus on the poorest and most vulnerable communities and
- Help build country sustainability and ownership.

## Why this Campaign Matters

Nadya, featured on the cover of this toolkit, was born underweight in Tanzania. Luckily for Nadya, her mom Mwayuma was able to have the support of health workers who taught her to place her daughter next to her skin to keep her warm and encourage her growth. She was also encouraged to breastfeed exclusively for the first six months of Nadya’s life.

The impact of this low-cost support is huge. Now, at 8 months old, Nadya is getting a healthy start in life!

# What You Can Do to Inspire Action

You care about the lives of moms and kids around the world. Now it's time to put your passion into action!

Save the Children Action Network is working to secure support for this bill from the Illinois congressional delegation. We're collecting handwritten letters asking our lawmakers to cosponsor the Reach Every Mother and Child Act. Once we generate a large number of letters, we'll deliver them to congressional offices throughout the state.

## Who Should I Ask to Write a Letter?

Through short presentations to friends and family, you could explain the issue, walk them through how to write a letter to a member of Congress and then collect the letters.

Below are some ideas for who you can reach out to:

1. **Approach your faith community.** Communities of faith are often very supportive of helping children around the world. Ask your pastor if you could do a short presentation during a post-service coffee or to your social action committee.
2. **Think about community groups or clubs to which you belong.** Are you part of a book club? A service club, like Rotary? PTO? Ask to make a short presentation at the beginning or end of an upcoming meeting.
3. **On a college campus or at a high school?** There are so many opportunities to engage other students! First, think about clubs you're already a part of. The club doesn't have to be directly related to the issue. A sorority or fraternity, a drama club or a service club are all great options to approach.

Second, ask a teacher or professor from a related class, like sociology or political science, if you could give a short presentation and invite people to write letters. Finally, consider approaching clubs that have a direct interest in the topic. Even if you're not a member of the club, they may be excited to have you come talk about global child survival.

4. **Organize a small gathering of friends.** People have parties for all kinds of things, from selling candles to testing out new wines. Why not invite a few friends over to learn about an issue you're passionate about, write a letter and then enjoy refreshments?



*Meet Saif, 18-months-old. Saif is being weighed at Save the Children's mobile clinic in Holombi Khurd, India. The mobile clinic provides diagnosis, treatment and advice on medical conditions and nutrition for residents. The clinic reduces the chances of malnourishment which is a cause of death among poor children in Delhi. Effective programs, like the mobile clinics, are the kinds of proven strategies that could be scaled up if the Reach Act became law.*



# Crafting Your Own Brief Presentation

Below is an outline for how to talk about the issue and ask people to write a letter. Remember, the most important thing is to talk about why you care about the issue!

1. **Introduce yourself:** You can start as simply as saying “My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I’m a volunteer with Save the Children Action Network.”
2. **Start with a fact:** You could start off with “Did you know that every minute 11 children under age 5 die of preventable causes like pneumonia and malaria?”
3. **Then share the good news:** For example, you could explain that in the last two decades we’ve seen a 50% decrease in these deaths. This is a solvable problem!
4. **Explain why you care about the issue:** This part is all up to you! Perhaps you’ve traveled internationally and have seen the challenges some kids are living in. Perhaps you think about the mothers’ whose children die and feel moved to act. Perhaps your faith calls you to action. Whatever the reason, there isn’t a wrong answer!
5. **Briefly describe the Reach Act:** Don’t worry! You don’t have to be a policy expert to do this! You could simply say that new bipartisan legislation introduced in Congress called the Reach Every Mother and Child Act would:
  - Scale up the solutions we know work to and help end preventable child and maternal deaths within a generation;
  - Develop innovative ways to bring new resources to the table to ensure these programs are robustly funded; and
  - Focus on the poorest and most vulnerable communities.
6. **Ask the group to write a short letter:** Encourage the group to write a letter to one of their members of Congress. Senator Kirk (R-IL) is already a cosponsor, so they can choose to write to Senator Durbin (D-IL) or their House representative.

There is a sample letter on page 6 that you can walk people through. You can instruct people to write short letters that:

- Start with a fact;
- Share why the person cares about this issue; and
- Close with an ask to the member of Congress to cosponsor the Reach Every Mother and Child Act.

If you have access to the Internet where you are speaking you could share a short video about this issue at [www.SavetheChildrenActionNetwork.org/SaveKids](http://www.SavetheChildrenActionNetwork.org/SaveKids).

That’s it! The entire presentation, including the letter writing, could take 10 minutes.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What if someone asks me a question and I don't know the answer?

If someone asks you something and you're not sure about the answer, no need to panic! Just explain that you aren't sure but that they can go to our website – [www.SaveTheChildrenActionNetwork.org/SaveKids](http://www.SaveTheChildrenActionNetwork.org/SaveKids) – to learn more.

## What if people aren't sure who their representative is?

If someone isn't sure who their representative is, first work to make sure they don't feel embarrassed. Tell them that it's okay and you can help them find out.

To find out who a person's representative is go to <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find>. This website enables people to type in their zip code to find out who their representative is.

If no one has a smart phone or access to the Internet, they can simply write a letter to Senator Durbin who represents everyone in Illinois.

## Can I co-lead a presentation with a partner?

Absolutely! If you feel more comfortable talking about this issue with a friend or another volunteer, please do so.

## Will these letters really make a difference?

A single letter on its own probably won't make much of a difference. But a stack of letters coupled with passionate constituents who deliver the letters will.

## What do I do with the letters I collect?

Once you collect letters, contact Diana Onken at [donken@savechildren.org](mailto:donken@savechildren.org), and she'll provide you with an address to mail them to.

## Where can I learn more about this issue?

Visit [www.SaveTheChildrenActionNetwork.org](http://www.SaveTheChildrenActionNetwork.org) and click on the help kids survive tab to learn more about our campaign.

## Are there other ways I can get involved?

Yes! Below are some other ways you can get involved to help build a movement to end preventable child deaths worldwide. Contact Diana Onken at [Donken@SaveChildren.org](mailto:Donken@SaveChildren.org) if you want to get more involved in any of the activities listed below.

1. **Engage with us on social media:** To receive more regular updates, like us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/SaveTheChildrenActionNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/SaveTheChildrenActionNetwork) or follow us on Twitter at [@SCActionNetwork](https://twitter.com/SCActionNetwork).

We also have a Facebook group just for Illinois volunteers. If you are interested in joining that Facebook group, contact Diana, and she'll invite you.

2. **Write a letter to the editor:** Letters to the editor are one of the most read pages in the newspaper. We'll provide you with a guide on how to best write your letter along with talking points about the issue.
3. **Staff a booth at an event in your community:** One of the best ways to spread the word is by helping to staff a Save the Children Action Network booth at a community event. We'll provide you with all the necessary materials and training.
4. **Participate in meetings with your member of Congress:** When members of Congress are back in the state, we meet with them to ask for their help with key issues. We'll train you before you go, and you'll be part of a group.

# Sample Letter to Congress Urging Support of the Reach Every Mother and Child Act

Dear Senator Durbin OR Representative \_\_\_\_\_:

[START WITH A FACT]

Each minute 11 children under the age of 5 die from preventable causes around the world.

Every day, 800 women die from complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

While the number of preventable child deaths has decreased by 50% worldwide, we have more work to do.

[TALK ABOUT WHY YOU CARE]

As a parent, I empathize with parents around the world who lose their children too soon.

As a student, I want to live in a world where no child dies from preventable causes.

Investing in maternal and child health reduces poverty, stimulates economic growth and, most importantly, saves lives.

[MAKE THE ASK]

Please cosponsor the Reach Every Mother and Child Act. This bill would help improve the lives of children and their mothers by scaling up the most cost-effective, proven health and nutrition programs.

Thank you.

Your name  
Street address  
City, State, Zip

# Outreach Worksheet

Taking a couple of minutes to sketch out a plan for who you will reach out to will help you stay focused on your goal! This worksheet will guide you through the creation of your outreach plan.

How many groups of people do you plan to contact? \_\_\_\_\_

What groups are you already involved with?

Group	Contact name	Contact information

What groups are friends of yours involved with?

Group	Contact name	Contact information

By what date will you reach out to the groups on the lists you created above?

\_\_\_\_\_

# Presentation Worksheet

Complete the worksheet below to develop your own presentation. Take this outline with you when you do your small group presentations so you feel confident and comfortable!

Presentation Element	Your Response
Introduce yourself	<p>My name is _____</p> <p>I'm a volunteer with Save the Children Action Network.</p>
Start with a fact. You can find facts in this toolkit and at <a href="http://www.SavetheChildrenActionNetwork.org/SaveKids">www.SavetheChildrenActionNetwork.org/SaveKids</a>	Did you know that
Share the good news	The good news is
Explain why you care about the issue. There is no wrong answer!	I care about this issue because
Describe the Reach Every Mother and Child Act	<p>New bipartisan legislation introduced in Congress called the Reach Every Mother and Child Act would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale up the solutions we know work to and help end preventable child and maternal deaths within a generation;</li> <li>• Develop innovative ways to bring new resources to the table to ensure these programs are robustly funded; and</li> <li>• Focus on the poorest and most vulnerable communities</li> </ul>
Make the ask. Remember to bring a sample letter to share.	<p>To help build momentum for this bill, we're asking people to write short letters to their representative or Senator Durbin.</p> <p>Writing a letter is easy! You just need to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fact</li> <li>• Why you care</li> <li>• A request to cosponsor the Reach Every Mother and Child Act</li> </ul>
Thank the group	





Save the Children Action Network mobilizes Americans in a commitment that cannot wait – investing in early childhood now. Together, we focus on securing early education for every U.S. child and helping kids survive around the world – ensuring a better future for us all.