

Greetings All-

Many of you have asked about whether you should try to bring young children to Capitol Day?

The short answer is a qualified "Yes" - but the following may help you to make a more informed decision for your family.

First of all, thank you all for your interest and desire to involve your children in civics learning - that is a BIG part of why TEACH organizes Capitol Day. Children will learn to be civically involved when they see it modeled by you!

The following is a detailed schedule of how we envision the morning unfolding based on the luncheon last year:

8:00 am - We will meet in Rm 310 of the State Capitol Building for coffee, refreshments, opening remarks, legislative briefing and tips on having conversations with legislators. HSLDA Attorney Peter Kamakawiwoole, will be on hand to speak with CT homeschoolers. If you are planning on having conversations with the legislators, please make every effort to attend during this time. We especially welcome older teens or homeschool alumni to be available for greeting legislators.

9:00 am - 11:00 am - A drop-in breakfast buffet for Legislators. Based on last year's buffet, there may be 5-10 legislators in the room at a time. They usually view a few displays, get some food and then we sit and chat with them while they eat. This may feel a bit awkward at first, but rest assured that the legislators understand that this is all part of why they are there - we are not bothering them - this is expected hospitality. The dynamic also changes as we become their hosts and they, our guests.

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY, PLEASE PERSONALLY INVITE YOUR LEGISLATOR TO CAPITOL DAY

Instructions for doing so are at this link: <https://www.teachct.org/resources/tips-for-meeting-with-your-legislator/> They have already received one email about it, but an invitation from you will help get them there. This makes it a richer experience for the whole family.

TIP: Try to pin down a specific time for your legislator(s) to meet you there so you don't have to hang out for the whole time!

If you are there with very young children, you may want to just focus on conducting simple greetings, or bring quiet activities to occupy them while you talk. **Generally speaking, legislators LOVE interacting with children.** They also seem to really enjoy talking with teens - and it is probably refreshing to them that there are teens who actually want to talk to THEM. Last year a teen was even invited by one of the senators to job shadow (which she did!). Most conversations will be short because they need to be on their way, but we should never underestimate the impact that a single encounter could have at some point down the road...when we need it. We usually invite the Governor too because his office is next door to Rm 310 - he just may come!

There will be a table set up with blank thank you cards for children or adults to write their representative a note of thanks for their service - these will be brought to the mailroom at the end of the day.

Attendees are welcome to stay for as little or long as they like. There is a free **tour of the Capitol building scheduled for 11:15** (well worth it if you haven't been) or you may want to continue on to a field trip in the Hartford area. We will have a listing of nearby field trips, maps for finding Capitol Rm 310, parking options and other details added to our website in the coming week. Please check back as these will save you a lot of time. www.teachct.org

Last but not least - while the main point of Capitol Day is encouraging engagement between home educators and representatives, we are open to increasing fun learning experience for children too. If you have a heart for organizing children's games and educational activities, we'd love to hear from you for next year. We can provide ideas if you need them and arrange free space at the Capitol, we'll work together on the rest. Contact us at teachct@teachct.org to find out more.

We hope that helps you decide - If this year doesn't work, there is always next! Thank you for being willing to involve yourself in the political process and help us to build goodwill at the Capitol.

God Bless! The TEACH Board