

## Engage Your Community on Maternal & Child Health

An Education & Action (E&A) meeting is a community gathering where participants learn about an issue and then take action (write letter to Congress or the media, make phone calls, take photos holding messages, etc.). E&As are a great way to demonstrate to Congress that there is broad constituent support for them to take action on an issue. We can use E&As to engage our action networks, coalition partners, faith communities, colleagues, friends, families, clubs & organizations, and all levels of students. It is a key tactic for creating overwhelming political will. It's also a great way to build a RESULTS group and foster new friendships.

In the months leading up to the RESULTS International Conference July 18-21, let's generate community and media support for the forthcoming maternal & child health (MCH) legislation.

Below is a guide for organizing an E&A meeting:

### Preparation:

1. Decide on a location, time, and date. Consider organizing E&As on the same day every month or two months. Top tip: Food always makes meetings better!
2. Prepare a strong meeting outline, share roles, and practice beforehand.
3. If you are organizing an E&A meeting focused on generating letters to the editor, select a couple of [media outlets](#) to which you could write. Scan the media outlets online for local media hooks so you have ideas to share. Bring some hard copies of the papers to the meeting and/or have them available online.
4. Print out the [May 2015 Global Action and the MCH Fact Sheet](#) for the meeting (and read them). Bring paper and pens as well.

### Inviting:

1. Have everyone in the group invite at least two people to come. Ask them in person or by phone. Make a phone call or in person reminder the day before or day of the meeting.
2. Tell them why you think they would benefit from being there. For example, "We want to give every child a chance to survive and thrive. Right now we have a great opportunity on this issue. We're organizing a letter-writing meeting on (date). We'll have fun, learn about this critical issue, and take some meaningful action. I know you care about this, will you join us?"

## **The meeting:**

1. Opening: Build in a bit of socializing before starting and consider an icebreaker (name, why they came, favorite hobby, etc.).
2. Overview: Go over the meeting agenda and let people know why it is important for the group to be taking action now. Let them know you'd like everyone to walk away having taken action.
3. Centering: Engage participants in the issue with a moving story or video. You can use your own story, something you've read or seen, or invite a guest speaker. Also, see a list of stories and videos below or find them on [our MCH resource page](#).
4. Inform: Read through the [May 2015 Global Action Sheet](#) out loud having people take turns reading. Open things up for questions and answers.
5. Take Action: Let everyone know how important it is for members of Congress to hear from us, and let them know that it makes a difference. Consider showing them [this slide from the Congressional Management Foundation](#) study. Other tips:
  - a. If you are writing letters to the editor, brainstorm hooks with the group and remind folks to keep the letters brief (100-200 words)
  - b. Encourage everyone to personalize his or her letters with a story or insight.
  - c. Try to finish the actions in the room or have a solid follow up plan to make sure people finish their actions. Help those who need help submitting letters to the editor.
6. Sharing: Ask one or two people to read their letter to the group.
7. Process: Ask people how it felt to learn about the issue and take action.
8. Close the Loop: Let participants know what you will do with letters to your members of Congress and encourage everyone to keep an eye on the paper for LTEs. Tell them that their action matters.

**Invite Again:** Invite participants to your next E&A or group meeting.

# Global Maternal and Child Health Stories

Whether you are speaking with members of Congress, hosting an outreach event, or looking for some inspiration, use the stories the below to advocate for a healthier future for all mothers and children, regardless of where they are born. Check these out:

## Stories

- [The World's Mothers Don't Always Get The Care They Need](#)  
Physician and mother Dr. Bina Valsangkar shares her pregnancy story, a tale of two cities.
- [Health care workers are making a difference for #EthiopiaNewborns](#)  
Dr. Abeba Bekele explains why she is committed to promoting maternal and newborn health in Ethiopia.
- [Meet Vusi - A Lucky Little Boy](#)  
After four years advocating for rotavirus vaccine introduction in developing countries, Hope Randall meets Teresa and her son Vusi, a child who lived because of this life-saving vaccine.

## Videos

- [Ending Preventable Deaths of Moms and Babies](#)  
The world has made incredible progress to reduce child mortality. But there is still more work to do.
- [#MomAndBaby are Just Fine: India](#)  
Satyawati is a mother of three living in a village in Mewat District, India. With help from a local health worker, she gives her kids the care they need to thrive.
- [The difference a midwife makes](#)  
Shagufta Shahzadi, a community midwife in Pakistan explains the difference a midwife can make to stop preventable maternal and child deaths.
- [A Promise Renewed: Global progress towards ending preventable child deaths](#)  
A 2013 UNICEF report on child mortality trends shows that the world won't meet MDG 4, to cut preventable children's deaths by two thirds, by 2015.
- [Living Proof Project: Rotavirus Vaccine's Remarkable Impact](#)  
Meet a father and daughter who benefited from the rotavirus vaccine.
- [A Journey of Motherhood](#)  
UNICEF and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria followed six women living with HIV throughout their pregnancies.