

# MAKE A CIRCLE

A FILM BY JEN BRADWELL and TODD BOEKELHEIDE



"A beautiful, moving, important film"

Jon Else

Emmy Award Winning Filmmaker for *Eyes on the Prize* and *The Day After Trinity*



## Interim Screening & Discussion Toolkit



# Mini-Discussion and Activity Guide

## Discussion Questions

As you screen MAKE A CIRCLE, use the following questions to prompt group discussions with audiences and/or featured speakers at your event.

- **You can conduct a large group discussion** posing the questions in turn or you can break the audience into small groups or pairs to talk through some of the questions; in a small group model, you can have each group present back to the larger audience the main points they came up with in their conversations.
- **For small groups or pairs**, consider assigning one question to each group with the aim of having each of the questions answered so that reports back cover the most ground. If there is time, you can facilitate a larger group conversation around the points that surfaced in the small group discussions.

1. After watching MAKE A CIRCLE, from your perspective, what are the biggest challenges the field of early childhood education is currently facing? What struggles did you resonate with? What human stories in the film made the most impact on you as a viewer?

2. MAKE A CIRCLE shows the unique work of early childhood educators, debunking the common notion that preschool teachers' primary job is to "babysit." In the film we see clear examples of the many roles early childhood educators play in the lives of young people and their families. What are some of those roles?

3. Across the film, we see early childhood educators being diminished in their importance through lack of access to fair pay and health benefits, but also in the career field. For example, in the film, Dan struggles to transition to elementary teaching because his experience in the early education field is devalued. What is needed to help the general public understand the importance of care and education in the early years of life?



4. "Kid-world" moments light up the screen in MAKE A CIRCLE—the secret inner world of children that all early educators witness, but have rarely—if ever—seen celebrated on screen. How does it feel to watch children play? Citing examples from the film, or your own lived experience, how is play, in fact, human development? And why is it important?

5. As part of the union campaign to increase pay and provide access to health insurance for state-funded early educators, workers answered the question, “What would you do if paid more fairly?” on signs that were sent to politicians. If you were to advocate for the challenges noted in your answer to question #1, what strategies would you employ to catch the attention of decision-makers?

6. Over 1 million people—mostly women and disproportionately women of color—work in the field of early care and education in the United States. After watching the film, what other social issues do you see as directly connected to the challenges facing early educators?

## Brief Activity

Create a mini-campaign, taking inspiration from discussion question five:

As part of the union campaign to increase pay and provide access to health insurance for state-funded early educators, workers answered the question, “What would you do if paid more fairly” on signs that were sent to politicians.



Take the question provided, or create your own unique question that touches on issues presented in MAKE A CIRCLE, and invite participants to answer them on a whiteboard, or pieces of paper, and snap photos of the creator holding up their sign. Where can these signs be displayed? Collectively determine if the location is physical—is there a community board in town?—or if the signs can be sent to local politicians, or posted on social media.

## Further Resources

- [Learn more about the annual “Day Without Child Care” action](#) to demand more support for early educators and families.
- Listen to a podcast covering America’s childcare crisis: [No One is Coming to Save Us](#).
- Find out how parents are making their voices heard: [Parent Voices \(CA\)](#), [MomsFirst](#).
- [Find child care related resources in your state](#).
- [Why advocacy at the federal level matters](#) - See how additional federal funding would affect each state across the U.S..