

MAKE A CIRCLE



Electronic Press Kit



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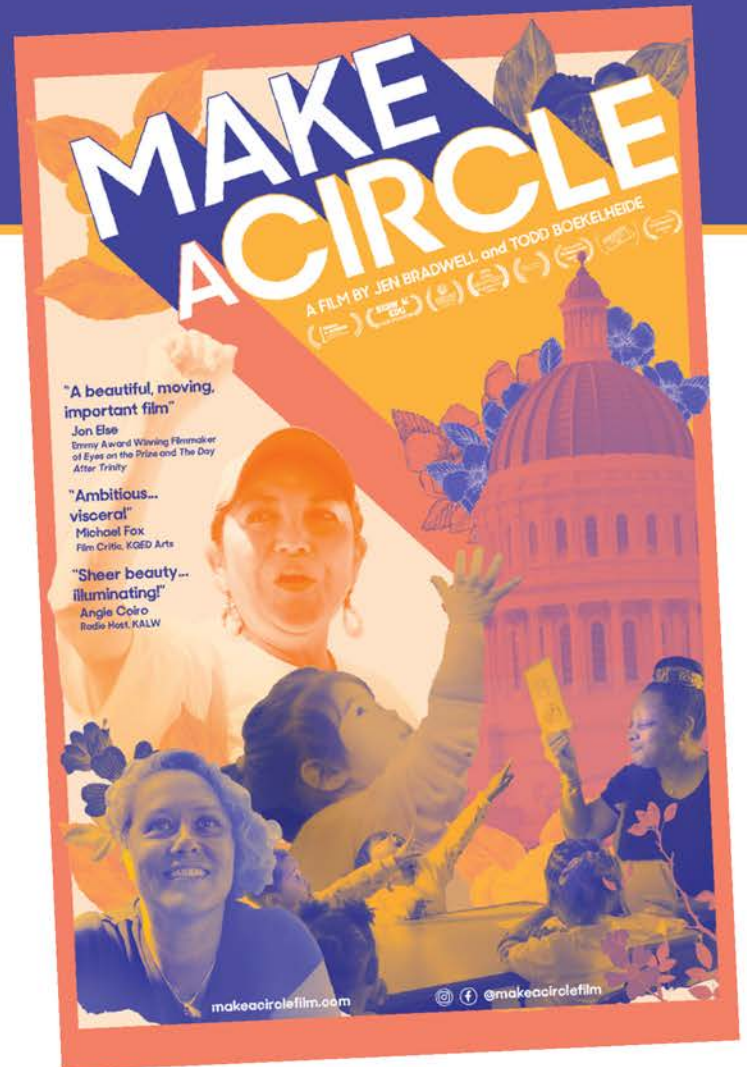
Make A Circle Film



Make A Circle Film

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This Electronic Press Kit is intended for use by public television stations, journalists and other publishers to support coverage of MAKE A CIRCLE and the issues that it presents. The film will begin airing on PBS stations across the country in Fall 2025 (check local listings) and streaming on the PBS website and app.



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Draft Press Release

XXX
For Immediate Release

[STATION LOGO HERE]

Contacts:

XXX
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New from PBS: Documentary Film on the Value of Early Childhood Education and Solutions to Our Child Care Crisis

*An exploration of the joy, impact and struggle
of early childhood educators*

San Francisco—The new award-winning and crowd-pleasing documentary feature film MAKE A CIRCLE explores the state of the system that provides early care and education to over 14 million American children through the lens of the early educators themselves. The film is made available to public television stations nationwide by PBS in association with KQED Presents, the national distribution service of San Francisco-based public media station KQED.

Public Television station [station name] in [city & state] will be premiering the program on [premiere date] and looks forward to providing viewers with the opportunity to learn more about this complex and important issue.

"MAKE A CIRCLE is a love letter to early educators and portrait of a child care system in crisis," says co-director Jen Bradwell. "The film delves into one of the greatest disconnects in American society: the importance of a child's first five years versus how the work of early care and education is valued."

MAKE A CIRCLE follows a group of charming and dedicated child care providers who are determined to change how society values the education of its youngest citizens. With a mix of humor, outrage, and passion, MAKE A CIRCLE captures the unfolding stories of those working in the field and their quest to stay in a profession that pays an average of \$13 an hour nationwide.



Draft Press Release

"KQED is proud to be the presenting station for MAKE A CIRCLE," said Amy Miller, Director, Video Production & Distribution for KQED. "We are committed to offering the finest programs to public television stations around the country through our KQED Presents service. MAKE A CIRCLE is a great example of how public media delivers value to communities and viewers nationwide, offering important perspectives of critical national issues like child care. And we are thrilled that the film will be distributed by PBS."

An official selection at a range of notable film festivals, including SXSW EDU, Doclands, Heartland International Film Festival, and the United Nations Association Film Festival, MAKE A CIRCLE offers a deeply intimate look at a critical issue facing parents, business owners and communities across the country.

"As one early educator in MAKE A CIRCLE says, 'Parents can't afford to pay and teachers can't afford to stay.' This is a pressing national issue that too often feels like a private struggle — but therein lies the opportunity. My hope is public television stations can use the film to uplift the early educators in their communities so that they can support families and fuel the economy," Bradwell says.

About KQED Presents

KQED Presents is the national television distribution service of KQED, the San Francisco-based PBS and NPR member station. Since 1987, KQED Presents has worked with independent producers to bring the highest-quality documentary films and series to public television stations across the country. KQED Presents guides producers through the complexities of public media distribution, ensuring their programs meet all technical, editorial, and funding standards necessary for national broadcast.

kqed.org/about/kqed-presents

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Film Descriptions

Film Logline (17 words)

A love letter to early educators and a portrait of a child care system in crisis.

Short Description (54 words)

From an award-winning filmmaking team, MAKE A CIRCLE follows a group of child care providers who are determined to change how society values the education of its youngest citizens. Weaving together the magic they create in the classroom with the children they serve, the struggles they endure at home, and their tireless dedication to their profession, MAKE A CIRCLE offers a rare, inside look at the lives of early childhood educators — the backbone of a child care system on the brink.

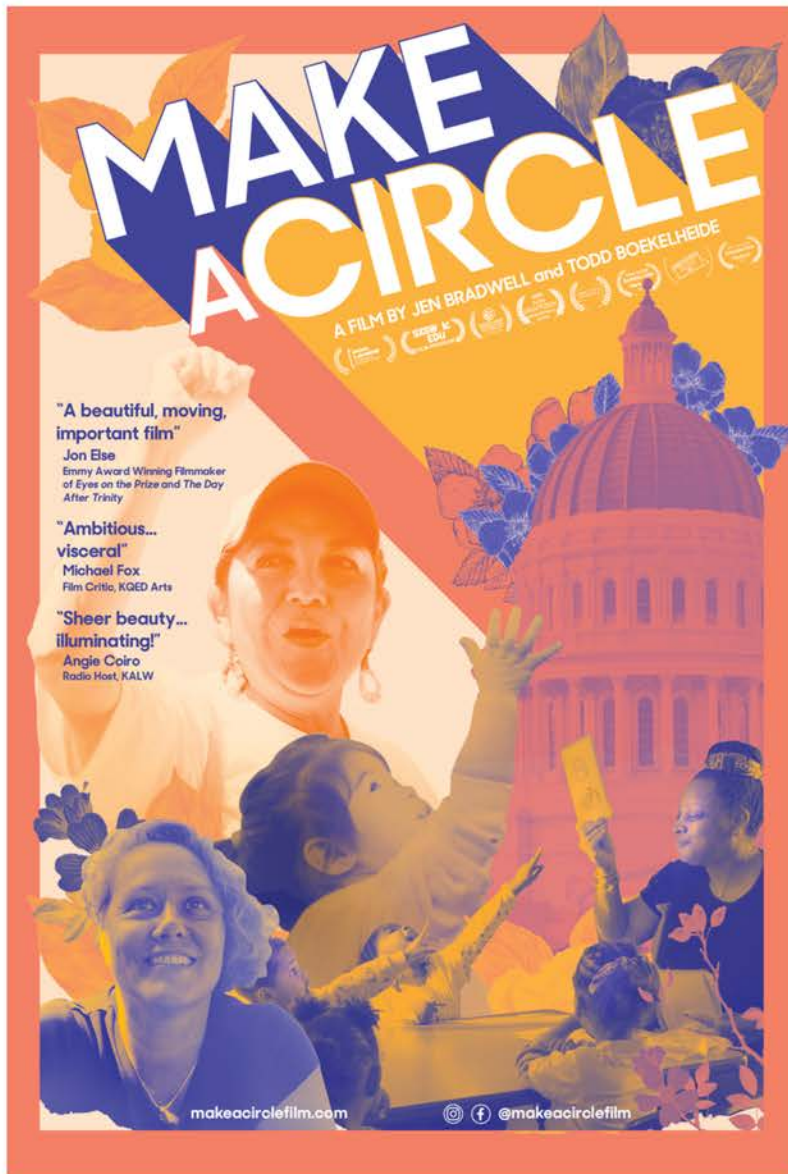
Long Description (217 words)

From an award-winning filmmaking team, MAKE A CIRCLE follows a group of child care providers who are determined to change how society values the education of its youngest citizens. With a mix of humor, outrage, and passion, MAKE A CIRCLE captures the unfolding stories of Patricia, a leader of the California child care workers union, as she fights on behalf of a largely immigrant workforce; Charlotte, a provider who tirelessly lifts up the low-income families in her care; and Anne, the director of a large preschool, who finds novel ways to value and support her teachers when jobs at Starbucks are offering higher pay.

Within their stories are interludes that offer a cinematic glimpse into the unique, imaginative world of the young children in their care. The film culminates as thousands of child care union members march on their state capitol demanding better working conditions just as their contract is set to expire. Weaving together the magic they create in the classroom with the children they serve, the struggles they endure at home, and their tireless dedication to their profession, MAKE A CIRCLE offers a rare, inside look at the lives of early childhood educators — the backbone of a child care system on the brink.



Logos & Key Art



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The Cast



PATRICIA MORAN is an Early Childhood Educator, advocate, and leader in the Child Care Providers United union. The daughter of a statesman turned indigenous rights activist and a prima ballerina in Bolivia, political turmoil forced Patricia to abandon her law school studies as a young adult. Becoming a refugee in the United States, she fell in love with the field of education and received her BA in Child Development. After several years as a teacher, she became a Coordinator at a child care development agency in Santa Clara County, and eventually opened her own family child care: the Creative Learning Center. Witnessing abuse and discrimination, Patricia joined efforts to create a union for family child care providers who receive subsidized children in California. Now on the negotiating team for her union, she brings her passion for supporting young children and families to gain economic justice for her fellow providers.



CHARLOTTE GUINN is the owner of Rose's Daycare, which has served families in Oakland for over 29 years. She left a steady career as a bank manager to pursue her dream of creating future leaders. Charlotte is the Vice President of Alameda Professional Childcare Association, and an active member of the Oakland Family Childcare Policy Program Team and the Child Care Providers United union. Bringing years of experience and dedication, Charlotte is committed to promoting quality early education and strengthening the child care industry. Giving her students a legacy of love and a zest for learning that follows them into their elementary school years, Charlotte's motto is: "Make learning fun." Charlotte is also an internationally competitive martial artist with a 7th degree black belt, and the proud mother of three beautiful adult children.





ANNE BAUER has cultivated an embodied expertise in early care and education over the course of over twenty five years working at Aquatic Park School, part of All People's School, starting as a teacher and now as a director. In her work, Anne emphasizes supporting social, emotional and identity development from a culturally responsive, strength-based framework for children and teachers, and to supporting the adult learning and wellbeing of educators. Anne was raised by the village of Yellow Springs, Ohio, and the foundational experience of engaged citizenry that this intergenerational, progressive community gave her informs so much of her professional passions in ECE. Earning her Doctorate of Education from Mills College in 2018, her dissertation research explored the professional identity of early educators. Anne is dedicated to ongoing practices that sustain her – meditation, anti-racism, writing – and is probably picking up a new, shortlived hobby as you read this.



The Filmmakers



JEN BRADWELL CO-DIRECTOR, EDITOR

Jen has edited more than 15 feature documentaries, including the Emmy Award-winning *TIME FOR ILHAN*, *THE BIG PICTURE: RETHINKING DYSLEXIA* (Sundance/HBO), Jennifer Siebel Newsom's *FAIR PLAY* (Hulu), and Erika Cohn's *WHAT YOU'LL REMEMBER* (NYT Op-Docs). Two seminal projects she wrote and edited (*RESILIENCE* and *PAPER TIGERS*) have had more than 50,000 community screenings to date, helping ignite a national conversation about childhood trauma. Jen has taught editing master classes at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism and UC Santa Cruz's Social Documentation program. Years of editing and story consulting have inspired her to direct her first feature doc.



TODD BOEKELHEIDE CO-DIRECTOR, CINEMATOGRAPHER

Todd's long and varied career began with editing picture and sound on *STAR WARS* and *THE BLACK STALLION*. He subsequently mixed sound on numerous Oscar-winning films, and won an Academy Award for *AMADEUS*. He then built a career composing music for documentaries, including *HEARTS OF DARKNESS*, *BALLETTS RUSSES*, *SEÑORITA EXTRAVIADA*, and *3½ MINUTES, TEN BULLETS*. He has worked with a stellar list of filmmakers: David Fincher, Carroll Ballard, David Lynch, Jon Else, Milos Forman, Philip Kaufman, David Peoples, Bill Couturié, Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine, Lourdes Portillo and many others. Todd brings his decades of experience to his directorial debut.





REBEKAH FERGUSON **PRODUCER**

Rebekah is an accomplished creative producer whose recent credits include *HELEN AND THE BEAR* (Hot Docs 2024), the Rory Kennedy-directed *ADRIFT* (Mill Valley 2023), the Academy Award-nominated Netflix Originals *CRIP CAMP* (Sundance 2020) and *END GAME* (Sundance 2018), and the Kevin Durant executive-produced *Q BALL* for Fox Sports (SFFilm 2019). She co-produced the Academy Award-shortlisted HBO documentary *THE CASE AGAINST 8* (Sundance 2013), directed *PELADA* (2010 SXSW) and was a cinematographer on *END GAME* and *PELADA*. Rebekah was an Impact Partners Producing Fellow and is a member of the Documentary Producers Alliance, Film Fatales, and FWD-DOC.



SABRINA SCHMIDT GORDON **CONSULTING EDITOR**

Sabrina is an award-winning documentary filmmaker from NYC. Her films employ provocative, nuanced storytelling to center marginalized voices, illuminate diverse experiences, and inspire around the issues that affect our global society. Recent projects include Sundance premieres *VICTIM / SUSPECT* (Netflix), *TO THE END* (Hulu), and *QUEST* (POV). Since her Emmy-winning editing debut, she has distinguished herself as a producer, editor, and director. Sabrina was honored with 2023's Reel Sisters Trailblazer Award. She is also a Women at Sundance Fellow, recipient of the Dear Producer Award, and is a member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.





It is one of the greatest disconnects in American society: the importance of a child's first five years versus how the work of early care and education is valued.

We are among the 25 million parents of young children in the US who have felt the struggle to access and afford quality child care, as well as the heartbreak of seeing talented early educators leave the field for better paying jobs at coffee shops and delivery services.

There is a common misperception that early care and education is just a form of “babysitting.” We believe the invisibility of the work helps perpetuate a system that pays poverty wages and offers little professional respect – that we cannot value what we cannot see. A mentality shift is needed about when “real learning” starts, the skill and expertise early educators bring to their work, and what voices we should be listening to for ideas about how to fix our broken child care system.

As filmmakers, we’ve seen first-hand how a viewer’s attachment to characters undergoing against-the-odds journeys can change minds, change culture and change policies. At the same time, we saw an opportunity to play with the form – to use the medium of cinema to invite viewers into the perspective of young children and to feel their joy, their frustrations, their sense of wonder and process of discovery.

MAKE A CIRCLE immerses viewers in both the imaginative, whimsical world of young children and the passionate, hopeful, but imperfect world of the adults who teach and care for them. The result is a portrait of the beauty, complexity, and impact of this work.





"Parents can't afford to pay, teachers can't afford to stay."

Child care costs more than rent in all 50 states, yet early childhood educators earn an average of \$13 an hour nationwide. (Sources: Fortune.com, Berkeley.edu) Reliable and affordable child care is a cornerstone of a strong economy, enabling millions of parents to stay in the workforce. However, many families face significant hurdles due to high costs and a shortage of providers. For years, these challenges have made it difficult for parents to balance their jobs and caregiving responsibilities, impacting both household stability and overall economic growth.

A "broken market" with huge potential.

Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen said, "Child care is a textbook example of a broken market and one reason is that when you pay for it, the price does not account for all the positive things it confers on our society." Studies have shown that every \$1 invested in early care and education can yield returns between \$4 and \$16. (Source: Firstthingsfirst.org)

Higher wages = less turnover.

Continuity of care is critical for quality early care and education. Yet the child care workforce has a turnover rate much higher than the average profession. Compensation is key. Child care centers with wages under \$10/hour experience high rates of turnover (23%) compared with centers that have wages of over \$25/hour (7.5%). (Source: childenslifetime.org)



An issue that touches all.

Approximately 25 million parents in the United States rely on child care, and over one million people make up the early care and education workforce. (Source: Cscce.berkeley.edu)

When child care is unreliable or unaffordable, parents often have to miss work, leading to reduced household income and, in some cases, job loss. Many parents are unable to enter or remain in the workforce due to the lack of accessible child care options. Expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care and early education would support working families and contribute to a more stable and productive economy.

A critical time for brain development.

80% of a child's brain develops before age 3, and 90% before age 5. (Source: Firstthingsfirst.org)

The first five years of a child's life are crucial for brain development, as the brain is highly adaptable during this time. Early learning experiences play a key role in preparing children for school by fostering essential cognitive and social skills. These include language development, focus, perseverance, empathy, and self-control, all of which are important for success both in school and beyond.

Building the future.

High quality child care increases high school graduation rates by 25% and college graduation rates by 13%. (Source: Buildthefuturescc.org)

Investing in early childhood education promotes long-term success and opportunities for all children by giving them a strong start in life. Children who participate in high-quality early education are more likely to earn higher incomes, lead healthier lives, stay out of the criminal justice system, build strong families, and make positive contributions to their communities. The advantages of high-quality programs from birth to age 5 extend beyond the individual child, benefiting their families both now and in the future.



A Note About Language

While the term “daycare” is in common use, and film participants Patricia and Charlotte sometimes refer to their programs as “daycares,” many Early Childhood Educators are trying to move away from the word because it doesn’t encapsulate the skilled work that is happening with children before the age of kindergarten. And, as teacher Leila says in the film, “Care and Education: you can’t have one without the other.”

Other terms to consider when writing about the film:

Early Childhood Educator or Early Educator:

A good, inclusive term for all the educators featured in MAKE A CIRCLE, whether they work in homes or centers.

Family Child Care / Home-Based Child Care / Provider:

Film participants Patricia and Charlotte operate their child cares out of their homes and often refer to themselves as Family Child Care Providers, Child Care Providers, or simply Providers.

Center-Based Child Care / Preschool / Preschool Teacher:

All People’s School in the film (with participants Anne, Leila, Dan and Margarita) is considered a center-based facility for early care and education. Preschool often refers to learning environments for children from 2 to 3 years old until they enter kindergarten at age 5. Infant-toddler care can refer to kids from babies up to age 2 to 3. The educators in these center-based facilities often refer to themselves as Infant-Toddler Teachers and Preschool Teachers



Research and Resources

Journalism and Articles

"In a Shift, More Republicans Want Government Investment in Children,"
THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Parents on the hunt for childcare say it feels like 'The Hunger Games,'"
THE HECHINGER REPORT.ORG

"One weird trick to fix our broken child care system,"
VOX MEDIA

"Fixing Childcare in America,"
EDCAST, HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

"Day care waitlists are so long, moms are quitting their jobs or choosing to stop having kids,"
THE 19TH

Organizations

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) promotes high-quality early learning for each and every child, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy, and research.

Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) works with a national network of more than 500 child care resource and referral (CCR&Rs) agencies and other partners to ensure that all families have access to quality, affordable child care. CCAoA leads projects that increase the quality and availability of child care, conducts research, and advocates for child care policies that positively impact the lives of children and families.

Community Change's Report Card is a great resource for parents and early educators to see how their congressman and senators stand on child care bills, and provides an easy take action tool. Community Change also produces annual "Day Without Child Care" actions to demand more support for early educators and families.



Research and Resources

The Alliance for Early Success works on state policies, and offers an interactive map that links to helpful information and advocacy organizations within each state in the U.S..

Zero to Three offers a helpful toolkit that includes a fact sheet, talking points for engaging community members and policy makers, easy to share graphics, and instructions on writing an Op-Ed as an advocacy tool.

National Association for Family Child Care offers a toolkit for family child care (home-based) providers that offers a one-pager on the issue in English and Spanish, templates for individual programs, fact sheets, a federal advocacy toolkit, social media toolkit and guide to hosting a site visit.

Moms First is an organization that is transforming our workplaces, our communities, and our culture to enable moms to thrive.

Parent Voices, through grassroots organizing and leadership development, activates and centers the wisdom of parents to transform child care and ensure all systems that impact our families are just, fair, and inclusive.

Power to the Profession: Learn about a collaboration with national stakeholders to develop a unified system of accreditation, training and compensation for early childhood educators across the country.

WeVision EarlyEd: What does an ideal early care and education system that works for both families and early educators look like? The Bainum Foundation's bold WeVision initiative is designing one.

Elliot Haspel: Nationally-recognized child & family policy expert and commentator Elliot Haspel's articles are always provocative and solutions-oriented. His forthcoming book will mention MAKE A CIRCLE!

