



# THE RAISING OF AMERICA

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND THE FUTURE OF OUR NATION



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## SCREENING TOOLKIT

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A guide to showing the  
documentary in your community

# Acknowledgments

**Healthy Start New Orleans compiled the information for this toolkit. However, the majority of the templates, timelines, and information were adapted from the following organizations' websites and work:**

**California Newsreel and Vital Productions:** These are agencies that produced the Raising of America film provide a planning guide for hosting a screening for the film. Most of the descriptions of the film come directly from this website.

**Website:** <http://raisingofamerica.com/plan-screening>

**The Civic Canopy in Denver Colorado:** This website provides a helpful Colorado-specific toolkit for screening different episodes of The Raising of America.

**Website:** <http://civiccanopy.org/home/early-childhood-initiatives/early-childhood-colorado-partnership/raising-of-america-toolkit>

**The Greater Good Movie:** This website provides an extremely helpful toolkit for creating screenings. Contact Celia F. Alario at [celiaalario@gmail.com](mailto:celiaalario@gmail.com) for more information.

**Website:** <http://www.greatergoodmovie.org/TGG/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/101012-TGGHostAScreening.pdf>





**W**elcome to your step-by-step guide to hosting of **Raising of America!** In this toolkit, you will find everything you need to create a memorable event and spark the conversation about early childhood and the importance of nurturing children and families in our community.

## WHY HEALTHY START NEW ORLEANS CREATED THIS TOOLKIT

Healthy Start is committed to promoting healthy communities by nurturing healthy pregnancies, healthy babies, and healthy families. We recognize the potential the community has to change attitudes and influence policies towards improving quality care and the wellbeing of children. The Raising of America documentary provides five episodes that discuss the important role environment, community, and policies have on children and family's wellbeing. We encourage individuals to use this documentary as a tool to spur discussion in their communities—whether at a local, state, or national level. We hope that this screening will provide an opportunity to build meaningful community discussions and encourage the public to take direct action.

## ABOUT THE FILM: THE RAISING OF AMERICA

The Raising of America documentary series reframes the way we look at early child health and development. Whether you are new to the issues or a long-time advocate, The Raising of America offers many ways to get involved and advance a vision where all our children matter, all are nurtured and all have opportunities to thrive. The series is broken into the following five episodes:

- **The Raising of America Signature Hour: Early Childhood and the Future of our Nation (60 minutes)**
- **Once Upon a Time: When Childcare for All Wasn't Just a Fairytale (32 minutes)**
- **Are We Crazy About Our Kids? (32 minutes)**
- **Wounded Places: Confronting Childhood PTSD in America's Shell-Shocked Cities (42 minutes)**
- **DNA is Not Destiny (episode in production for August 2015)**



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# Step by Step Guide to Hosting a Screening

Before you begin with the timeline outlined in step 5, we recommend you complete steps 1 through 4.

## 1. Determine Your Message & Select Your Episode

Decide the message you want your viewers to walk away with and select the episode you would like to screen based on what you think is an important message for your community. Table 1 outlines the topics covered in each of the episodes, the length of the episode, and a link to preview the episode.

*Note: The preview link leads to a page on The Raising of America website with additional information, including where each chapter (topic) of the episode begins on the time reel.*

### EPISODE: SIGNATURE HOUR - 60 MINUTES

This episode interweaves the latest discoveries from neuroscience with the stories of families and communities struggling to provide the nurturing environments all babies and young children need to thrive—while too often hindered by social conditions that put their children on low developmental trajectories. The episode explains families lives don't have to be this way. If the nation aspires to a healthier, safer, better educated, more prosperous and equitable future, we must find a way to enable all our children the opportunity for a strong start now.

**Topics covered:** Access to quality childcare, importance of early years for brain development, importance of relationships with caregivers, inequality, issues of paid family leave, parental/child stress and toxic stress.

### EPISODE: ONCE UPON A CHILDHOOD - 32 MINUTES

This episode discusses the importance of access for all to high-quality daycare and explores how things might be different if in 1971 Congress had passed a bill providing high-quality, universal childcare, home visiting and other services from birth to age five to every family that wanted it.

**Topics covered:** Childcare for the military, post-WWII subsidies, US Child Care legislation and women entering the workforce.



## **EPISODE: ARE WE CRAZY ABOUT OUR KIDS? - 32 MINUTES**

This episode brings to life the classic economic studies of Perry Preschool and other initiatives conducted by Nobel laureate James Heckman, former Federal Reserve economist Arthur Rolnick and others which illustrate how we can either invest early for success or pay more for failure later.

**Topics covered:** Closing the achievement gap, economic argument for investing in early years, high quality childcare and US lags behind.

## **EPISODE: WOUNDED PLACES - 42 MINUTES**

Too many children in America, especially children of color in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, are exposed to adversity, violence, neglect and other forms of trauma and show symptoms similar to PTSD. This episode chronicles the stories of children shook by violence and adversity and asks not “What’s wrong with you?” but “What happened to you?” and “How can traumatized children and neighborhoods heal?”

**Topics covered:** Adverse childhood experience study, family supports, life course stress, PTSD in children and youth in urban settings and toxic stress.

## **EPISODE: DNA IS NOT DESTINY - 32 MINUTES**

Early childhood environments change brain architecture and other bio-regulatory systems—from the stress response to metabolism. Early environments—be they chemical or socioeconomic—can alter not the genes babies inherit but the epigenetic “volume controls” which turn genes on and off. These epigenetic switches can influence the self-regulation of emotions and behaviors, cognitive function, even the susceptibility to chronic diseases as people age.

**Topics covered:** Early childhood environments, early childhood brain development, effects of stress, cognitive development and behavior regulation.



## 2. Decide on Partnerships & Co-Hosting

Collaboration is key! Getting the word out and having a lot of people attend the screening is not an easy task; it takes a lot of partners and sponsors. Here are a few tips for partnering to host the screening:

- Make sure you involve all community stakeholders early and often.
- If you choose to partner with other organizations, decide and invite who you would like to co-host and partner with you.
- Review the list of people you could consider inviting in figure 1. Also check out appendix 3 for specific ideas for your neighborhood.
- Consider using this opportunity to build relationships in your community that can last far beyond this event. Invite partners that can lend credibility and promote your screening on listservs, meetups, websites, and through social media.
- The key to approaching partners is to help them understand how the screening can raise awareness about an issue, help address a mutual cause, or concern in the community and strengthen and build membership base.
- Incorporate into your plan a way to recognize your partners at the event, and let them use the opportunity to promote and market their organization at the event.
- Set up a time to meet with partners ahead of time to determine responsibilities in terms of time, resources, venue, catering, funding, guest speakers, etc.



### **3. Determine Your Target Audience, Invitation List, And Presenters/panelists**

Make it an event; not just a screening! Plan and choose the style of the event keeping in mind your target audience and their interests and needs. In your planning include things that appeal to your target audience such as prominent public speakers or panelists, such as local celebrities, TV anchors, radio personalities, commissioners, chief executive officers of businesses, executive directors of non-profits, college professors and other public figures. (Appendix 2 includes some ideas for speakers/panelists) Keeping your main message in mind, decide whom you will invite to your screening. Some general categories to consider are included in the box to the right.

### **4. Determine Your Budget, Select A Venue And Choose A Screening Date**

Screenings may be small and can take place in a private home or be larger and reach a wider audience at a local library, community centers, place of worship, local theatre, or school campus. The cost for screening depends on where you choose to host the screening and the associated expenses for a reception, catering, custodial services, parking, law enforcement and other costs associated with the venue. Select a date and start the planning process at least six weeks before the event.

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#### **Potential Community List**

**Church & Religious Leaders**  
**Neighbors, Friends, Parents & Grandparents**  
**Agencies Addressing Issues In Childhood, Family And/or Community Development**  
**Business Leaders**  
**Schools & Universities**  
**Health Care Professionals**  
**Parent-teacher Associations**  
**Board Members Of Advisory Councils Or Coalition Members**  
**Youth Representatives**





# Step by Step Guide to Hosting a Screening

## 5. Follow a Timeline for Developing the Screening

After completing steps 1 through 4, follow the timeline below to make sure you have covered all the bases.

### SIX WEEKS BEFORE THE SCREENING

- **Contact the Healthy Start Representative:** Contact the Healthy Start representative (Kristen Kirksey at [kkirskey@nola.gov](mailto:kkirskey@nola.gov)) to get all the necessary materials to plan your screening.
- **Confirm the date and time for the screening.** Pay attention to any other events that may be happening on the same date and time that may draw people away from your screening.
- **Visit, confirm and book the venue for the event:** Contact the building management and visit the venue to make sure it fulfills all of the requirements for your screening and event.
- **Contact and book guest speaker (s):** Discuss time requirement, compensation and double check that there are no conflicts with the schedule for your event. Ask them to provide a brief bio on themselves that you will include in your promotional materials. Select and send discussion questions (appendix 20) to your speaker so they fully understand how to facilitate the post-film discussion.
- **Decide on how to invite people to the event:** there are many free electronic invitation services that can track RSVPs, such as [evite.com](http://evite.com), [punchbowl.com](http://punchbowl.com), [meetup.com](http://meetup.com), or [SureToMeet.com](http://SureToMeet.com). You can also send emails or text messages (see appendices 5 and 6 for invitation examples). Make sure your invitations include the link to The Raising of America website (<http://raisingofamerica.org/>)





## FIVE WEEKS BEFORE THE SCREENING

- **Compile the Guest List:** Consider whom you would like to invite and determine the number of people to invite. Consider inviting a diverse group so that you have a wide representation and lively post-film discussion. Include community members, educators, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, faith leaders, business owners, health professionals etc.
- **Review Your Goals and Expectations:** Go through the following set of questions and take the time to clearly outline your responses with all the partners involved.
  - Is the screening consistent to your initial desired message?
  - Is the message of your screening clearly defined and focused?
  - What are three specific actions you want your audience to walk away with or act on after the screening?
  - What outcomes are you expecting from this screening?
  - Are the big ideas you want the audience to discuss clearly covered in the discussion questions?



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# Step by Step Guide to Hosting a Screening

## FOUR WEEKS BEFORE THE SCREENING

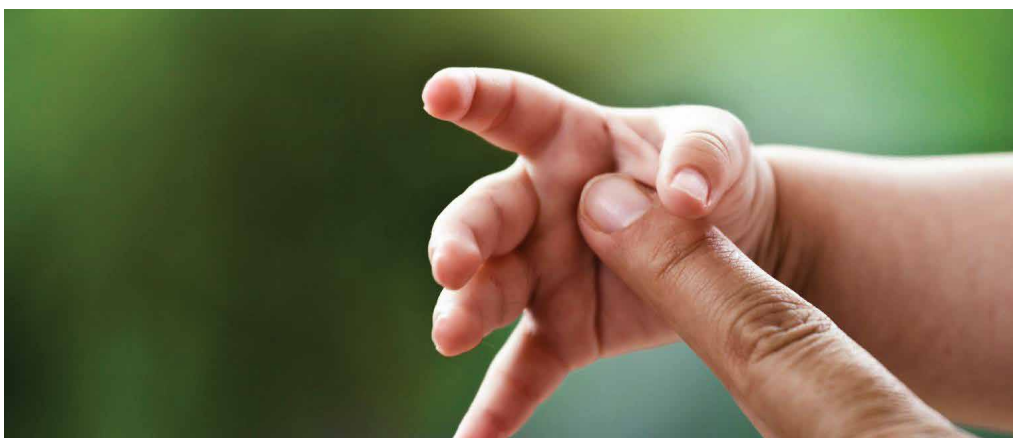
- **Send invitations** to a large number of people understanding that only 50%-70% of the people who receive and or RSVP will actually come to the event. If you looking for a specific number of people to show up consider charging a small fee for the event. People who pay for an event are more likely to attend after RVSPing.
- **Security:** Determine if you will need security. If so, make arrangements.
- **Get The Word Out:** Promote your screening on social media--Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc. Find local media who are willing to post your screening on local calendar listings, blogs and websites. Contact print media in your area. Some local public radio stations will announce public events free and list screenings in their online calendars. Some local newspapers will print a notice at no charge when space permits. A variety of templates for different types of outreach are available in





## THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE SCREENING

- **Determine Your Calls To Action:** What do you want people to do after viewing the documentary? Two simple calls to action are to host a screening with a new group and/or write a letter to elected officials regarding information learned in the documentary. (Appendices 21-23 provide information for writing a letter to elected officials.)
- **Find Volunteers:** find some reliable friends or volunteers to help with your screening. Here is a suggestion of how many volunteers to have:
  - Two (2) people in charge of food and beverages before, during and after the screening.
  - One (1) person to help you at the check-in table, give out nametags and be a greeter.
- **Continue To Promote Your Event**
  - Appendix 9 has templates you can use to create flyers with your event's specific information. Raisingofamerica.org also has the logos for the screening and wording you can use if you prefer to make your own flyers.
  - Post your flyers around your community. Consider putting flyers at clinics, grocery stores, convenience stores, schools, community centers, child care centers, libraries and churches.





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# Step by Step Guide to Hosting a Screening

## TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE SCREENING

- **Food & Beverages:** Plan and coordinate all food and drink items you will serve at the screening
- **Agenda:** finalize your agenda (appendix 13 is a sample agenda)
- **Prepare All Materials:** Appendices 14-23 are a variety of materials you could give to your attendees to support the screening. Choose which ones you'd like to use.
- **Delegate Responsibilities:** Confirm guest speaker(s); determine who will introduce the documentary and/or lead the discussion and make the calls for action.
- **Continue to Promote Your Event**

## ONE WEEK BEFORE THE SCREENING

- **Double Check The Venue:** Walk through the venue again and check that you have enough chairs and tables and that the microphone, audio/visual equipment, and lighting are all functional
- **Send a reminder to all volunteers and invitees.**
- **Prepare information packets:** print out and assemble any information you plan to hand out. Some potential hand outs are included in appendices 14-23.
- **Print Sign-in Sheets:** see appendix 14
- **Continue to Promote Your Event**





## ONE DAY BEFORE THE SCREENING

**Make sure everything is in order**

- **Venue is ready**
- **You have the DVD**
- **All printed materials for attendees**
- **Television & DVD Player or Computer & Projector work**
- **Microphones work**
- **Food will be ready**
- **Speaker will be there**
- **Send one final reminder to invitees**

## AFTER THE SCREENING

**Follow up!**

It is critical for your audience to know that this was not just a one-time event. Follow up with your guests to ask for their feedback, thank them for attending, and also to follow up on the calls to actions that were given. Evaluate and share the success of the event. Appendix 24 is a helpful post-event evaluation form you can return to Healthy Start New Orleans as a way to share your event's success.



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# Step by Step Guide to Hosting a Screening

## General Tips

### Promoting Your Event

Don't stop promoting until just hours before your screening. Most people decide to attend a movie at the last minute, so don't get discouraged if your reservation numbers don't spike until just a day before the event

### Discussion after the Film

The discussion after the screening is the most important piece of your screening event. Be sure to allow a lot of time for discussion. Be intentional about the discussion you want to result from your event. Appendix 16 highlights some great discussion points The Raising of America posted in their discussion guide. For a more comprehensive guide on leading a discussion about Raising of America episodes, visit <http://raisingofamerica.org/>.

### Calls to Action

Discussion is powerful, but it is even more powerful when it leads to action. Below are a few ideas of how you could lead your attendees to action after viewing the documentary. Be creative. There are many ways to nudge people into action.

1. Invite guests with smart phones to access their social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, or a website) to comment about the film right after watching the documentary.
2. Encourage guests to write letters to their elected officials. Ideally, you can prepare a form letter before-hand and prepare as many pre-addressed stamped envelopes as you have number of guests. Appendices 17-19 have the contact information for elected officials and letters you could use as a template.
3. Invite attendees to screen the documentary in their own communities (using this toolkit, if they like).