



March for Babies® Team Youth® Toolkit

Why March for Babies? It's America's favorite walking event! When you walk, you give hope to the families of babies born too soon or sick. The money you raise supports programs in your community that help moms have healthy, full-term pregnancies. And it funds research to find answers to the serious problems that threaten our babies. We've been walking since 1970 and have raised an incredible \$1.8 billion to benefit all babies.

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Want to start raising money right away? At marchforbabies.org, you'll find everything you need for a successful fundraiser. You'll be able to create a personal Web page and use e-mail to invite your friends and family to support your personal efforts to help advance the March of Dimes mission. Collecting money by credit card or PayPal™ is easy and secure. Or you can have your sponsors send a check. marchforbabies.org also features a blog where you can find fundraising tips and strategies for increasing your March for Babies efforts.

The March of Dimes helps moms have full-term pregnancies and healthy babies. And if something goes wrong, we offer information and comfort to families. We research the problems that threaten our babies, like premature birth and birth defects, and work on preventing them. With your help, we will move closer to the day when all babies are born healthy!

Recruitment

School Teams – Ask your friends, teachers, school administrators, service organizations, social groups and athletic teams to walk with you in March for Babies. Form a school team – it’s a great way to boost school spirit while helping America’s babies.

Family Teams – Friends and family walk together to share the hope that one day every baby will be born full term and healthy. You can name your team in honor of a baby in your family and invite family members and close friends to raise money and walk with you.

Club Teams – Team Youth has a strong partnership with national and international organizations, including:

America's Promise	Builders Club	Circle K International	Delta Sigma Phi Fraternity
Family, Career and Community Leaders of America	Future Business Leaders of America -Phi Beta Lambda	Gamma Sigma Sigma National Service Sorority	Key Club International
National Organizations for Youth Safety	Pi Lambda Phi Fraternity	Top Ladies of Distinction – Top Teens of America	

If you belong to one of these clubs, ask your teacher or advisor if you can form a March for Babies team. Start a service project or organize an event to raise funds or awareness for March of Dimes. Invite these members to March for Babies or to volunteer at the event.

Individual walker – Every year, individual youth walkers raise hundreds of thousands of dollars on their own. If you choose not to join or start a team, sign up as an individual walker.

Youth March for Babies Kickoff

A kickoff is a great way to gather youth teams and walkers in your local area and gear up together for March for Babies!

Initial Steps:

- Meet with a March of Dimes staff person before, during and after the kickoff. Go to marchofdimes.com and enter your zip code to find the March of Dimes chapter nearest you
- Secure location such as a school gym, park, church or recreation center
- Find an emcee/host—perhaps a local celebrity
- Invite past youth March for Babies teams, March of Dimes staff members, local youth club advisors and members, local schools, legislators and government officials, and local press to attend

To Inspire Walkers:

- Feature a mission moment. Consider someone in the youth population who has a connection to the March of Dimes mission—someone who was born prematurely, for example
- Include entertainment. Showcase youth talent. Ask a radio station to broadcast from your event
- Secure food donations from local restaurants or other sources
- Secure goody bags with donations from local stores. Provide information about March for Babies events such as time and location as well as your local office's number for general information

To Support Walkers:

- Provide time for youth teams, old and new, to meet, network, and share ideas
- Make sure all team captains are provided with captain kits. Ask your local office for March for Babies “Youth” toolkits for youth participants
- Ensure all participants understand the Online Fundraising Tool
- Promote fundraising with events like “kiss a pig” and “pie in the face” with local celebrities, featuring a silent auction, or selling March of Dimes materials such as cut-outs, wristbands, and plush items
- Provide a table of March of Dimes youth information like the Teen-2-Teen material

March for Babies Fundraising

There are many different ways to raise funds, and your March of Dimes chapter will be happy to help you. To find your local chapter, go to marchofdimes.com/youth and enter your ZIP code in the box at the top of the page. Sponsors could be anyone from family and friends to people at your school, your parents' work, local businesses or civic leaders in the community. Don't be afraid to ask – you're helping a great cause!

Baby steps

March of Dimes cut-outs: Contact your local chapter for paper cut-outs and sell them for \$1-2 at your school, your parents' workplace or even around the neighborhood.

Tie-Dye or glitter purple wristbands: These are a great seller! You can find the bands at http://www.wristbands4awareness.com/?page=mod_corporate.php.

E-mail campaign: Sign up online at marchforbabies.org and start sending e-mails!

A running start

March of Dimes Bean Bags for Babies®: Order bean bag plush online at calplush.com or plushland.com or with a special form at your local March of Dimes chapter. Sell them for \$10 and watch your funds grow! Sports bears are a fun seller at football games; you can even set up a competition with the other team. Or sell Valentine's Day plush items at school and deliver them with special messages.

Mile of Dimes®: Challenge a homeroom or other school to a Mile of Dimes competition and see who can collect the most dimes. This is a great idea for the month leading up to the homecoming football game. You can display the collected dimes on the field or around the track during or before the game.

Taters for Tots: Sell baked potatoes for \$5 each to students and teachers for lunch. Take orders Monday through Thursday and deliver the potatoes on Friday. Ask your consumer/family studies teacher if you can prepare them in the classroom during an off hour.

Bake sales: Have a group of friends bake sweet treats and sell your goodies at school, a football game or outside a local shopping plaza (ask for permission first). Post signs to advertise your bake sale.

Car wash: Get a group of friends together to wash cars in your school parking lot. Not only is this a great way to raise money, but also it gets the word out about the March of Dimes in your community.

Big time projects

A Chocolate Affair: The perfect venue for this event is a community center or hotel ballroom. Ask restaurants in your area to prepare and donate their finest chocolate dessert, with enough for a large group of people. Advertise throughout the community and sell tickets at schools and local businesses.

Club March of Dimes: Ask your local skating rink or bowling alley to donate their facility for one night to your March of Dimes team. Plan activities like dancing, games and contests. Ask local businesses to donate fun items for a raffle at the event. You can advertise at local schools, sports clubs, dance studios, karate classes, etc. Club March of Dimes will become *the* social event of the year.

March for Babies at school: Your local March of Dimes chapter can help you set up and execute your walk. Plan a date to hold the walk at your school or your local park. Arrange for entertainment and music and get food donated. Ask local businesses to sponsor your walk and place their logos on the back of a March for Babies T-shirt. Advertise your walk in your local community and charge a specific amount for registration. Invite walkers to come out with family and friends for a great day of exercise and fun.

Silent auction: Find a fun restaurant or other location that will host your event. Ask local businesses to donate one of their products, services or a coupon to be auctioned off for March of Dimes. Promote the event with flyers, posters and online, on Facebook or your campus Web site for instance. You can charge \$5 for tickets to go towards your March of Dimes fundraising, together with the proceeds from the auction. Arrange for a band to play and make your event even more exciting.

March for Babies Day: Ask the owner of your local grocery store to help you spread awareness for March for Babies. Invite your school band, cheerleaders, athletic teams and other school clubs and organizations to come and help get the shoppers excited. Have information available about the March of Dimes and bring coin buckets to collect change and dollar bills. Sell March of Dimes cut-outs for \$1-2. With the store's permission, display these in a place at the grocery store where everyone can see them. Arrange for music and snacks and create March of Dimes posters and banners to get the attention of shoppers.

March of Dimes Awareness

March of Dimes youth volunteers help raise awareness by talking about our organization and important mission. Below are some ways to help you spread the word about how the March of Dimes helps more babies begin healthy lives and what everyone can do to help.

Tabling

Tabling is a great way to raise awareness about March of Dimes. Tabling means setting up a table with a couple March of Dimes volunteers and discussing the organization with people who stop by. Whether you're promoting the March of Dimes or a specific event or topic, tabling is a good way to start.

- ◆ Teen-2-Teen tabling: With your local March of Dimes chapter, decide on a location to target high school and middle school students. Set up a laptop and show the *Teen-2-Teen* series (available on DVD, youtube.com/marchofdimes or marchofdimes.com/youth) and hand out copies of the *Teen-2-Teen* booklet (your chapter can help you get these). Make sure you have a copy of our curriculum available (you can find it at marchofdimes.com/youth) in case teachers or students are interested in using the program.
- ◆ Folic acid awareness tabling: Set up your table outside your school's lunchroom or a local grocery store (ask for permission first). Contact your local March of Dimes chapter for brochures and other information about folic acid. Hand out cups of orange juice. This is a great conversation starter and will give you a chance to explain to people that orange juice and other foods contain high levels of folic acid, a B vitamin that belongs in every healthy diet, but is especially important for young women who might have a baby some day. Folic acid helps reduce the incidence of serious birth defects of the brain and spine. Tell people that stores now sell grain products with the *Folic Acid for a Healthy Pregnancy* seal that makes it easy for women to choose foods that are healthy for them and their babies.
- ◆ Event tabling: When you've decided to join March for Babies, tabling is a great way to get others excited about the event and March of Dimes. Your local chapter can help you with materials about March for Babies.

Change for America's Babies

Coin collecting goes back to the early days of the March of Dimes. Stand up in front of your class at school, ask your friends and collect at your parents' place of work. Tell others how our organization began with dimes being sent to the White House at the request of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the founder of the March of Dimes, to help fight polio. Ask everyone to empty their pockets and purses and donate their spare change, and ask them to bring the change they have at home. Visit marchofdimes.com/change for downloadable materials.

Public speaking

Public speaking about the March of Dimes is a very effective way to spread awareness of the mission. You can arrange to speak at your school's student government meeting, a club's weekly meeting or even to a small group of friends. Speak about what the March of Dimes does to help moms have healthy pregnancies and healthy babies and to support families if something goes wrong. No matter how many or few people in your audience, spreading the word about the March of Dimes mission is one of the most important things you can do as a volunteer.

March of Dimes Speaking Points

- I. When talking about the March of Dimes, start with the mission.
What does the March of Dimes do?
 - The mission of the March of Dimes is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality.
 - Nearly three million dedicated volunteers donate their time and talent to help give all babies a healthy start.
 - It is one of the largest voluntary health agencies in the nation and the premier advocate for the health of mothers and babies.
 - It was founded by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1938 to defeat polio, which was accomplished with the development of the Salk and Sabin vaccines.

- II. Point out that the March of Dimes has a 71-year track record of success. The Foundation's extensive history of accomplishments has made a difference in the lives of millions. Ten scientists have received the Nobel Prize for work funded in part by the March of Dimes. You have been touched by the March of Dimes if:

- You received a polio vaccine.
- Your baby or a baby you know was cared for in a newborn intensive care unit.
- Your baby or a baby you know received lung surfactant therapy to treat respiratory distress syndrome.
- You're aware that using alcohol, drugs and tobacco during pregnancy may cause serious birth defects.
- You're aware that taking 400 micrograms of folic acid—before and during early pregnancy—can help prevent up to 70 percent of birth defects of the brain and spine, known as neural tube defects.

III. Emphasize that the March of Dimes; fight to protect babies' health goes on. The March of Dimes:

- Laid the groundwork for the first successful fetal surgery to correct a birth defect while the baby was still in the womb.
- Is funding significant new research on genetic birth defects, lung and heart disease.
- Has saved millions of babies from death or disability over the past seven decades.

IV. Emphasize that the March of Dimes has made the problem of premature birth an important

priority. Here is some information about the importance of the national

Prematurity Campaign:

- More than half a million babies are born prematurely each year – that's 1 in 8 babies.
- More newborns die from premature birth than any other cause.
- Premature babies who survive may face serious lifelong health problems.
- An alarming 20% increase in the rate of premature birth since 1990 prompted the March of Dimes to launch a campaign in 2003 to raise public awareness of the problem of premature birth and ultimately to find ways to reduce the incidence of premature birth.
- In nearly half of all premature births the cause is unknown.
- On average direct healthcare costs to employers for one infant with a principal diagnosis of prematurity is \$49,033—compared to \$4,551—for a newborn without complications.
- Through a variety of community programs, the March of Dimes helps women learn the warning signs of preterm labor and get the care they need to have a healthy pregnancy.



V. Focus on volunteers as the backbone of the March of Dimes. Note that by working together, we

can be successful in helping more babies be born full term and healthy. Each year, three million Americans volunteer their time and talent to help:

- Lead the Foundation on national and local boards.
- Advocate for mothers and babies on national, state, and local levels.
- Develop and implement programs, and provide vital services and education to help families have healthy babies.
- Raise funds to support extensive March of Dimes research and programs.

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- VI. Identify the March of Dimes as an important organization that is fiscally responsible and committed to the highest standards of excellence in management. The March of Dimes:
- Has a solid reputation and a 71-year record of success.
 - Spends 77 percent of every dollar raised on programs that help babies begin healthy lives.
 - Raised \$252 million in 2007.
- VII. Acknowledge that you have outlined a lot of information in a short period of time. The March of Dimes has many sources of additional information. Leave the *Teen-2-Teen* booklet and invite them to visit marchofdimes.com/youth.
- VIII. Ask for involvement. Ask people to join us in helping to give all babies a healthy start. Provide them with specific information regarding volunteer opportunities, such as your chapter's standing committees, March for Babies and special event committees. Be prepared to answer questions about how to get involved with your chapter or division, including local contact information.

How to start a Youth March for Babies Team

January

- ◆ Join March for Babies at marchforbabies.org – you can even create your own team there.
- ◆ Plan a March for Babies kickoff.
 - You can do something small, like distributing envelopes and wristbands during lunch, or you can plan something big, like a pep rally during school to get the word out.
- ◆ Talk to your local March of Dimes chapter to see what materials they have available for your March for Babies campaign. Ask them about their kickoff.
- ◆ Start thinking about fundraisers you want to hold leading up to March for Babies. With three months to go, now is a good time to plan when to do what.

February

- ◆ Go to marchofdimes.com/peristats and find statistics that would be interesting to people at your school.
 - Copy these stats on little notes, wrap them around pieces of candy or lollipops and distribute them in your classes and at lunch. Remind everyone to visit marchofdimes.com/youth.
- ◆ Host a chocolate or flower sale around Valentine’s Day. You can also sell Valentine’s Day bean bag plush.
- ◆ Contact a local neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and ask them if you and your March for Babies team can get a tour.
 - Babies in the NICU were born prematurely or critically ill. Visiting them will inspire everyone to raise funds for all the babies who need our help and to make sure that one day all babies will be born healthy.
- ◆ You’ve probably gotten in touch with your local March of Dimes chapter. But if you haven’t yet, there’s still time to get all that done before March.

March

- ◆ Continue raising money in school through coin collections.
 - Your school can hold “March Madness” where classes compete to raise the most money (a penny war): the class that raises the most money wins a prize, such as a pizza party.
- ◆ Sell plush items with a spring theme.
- ◆ Post or announce “Spring Stats” that relate to the March of Dimes mission.
- ◆ Sell March of Dimes paper cut-outs at your school. Ask for permission from your principal and post them in the halls. Students will ask you what they’re for – it’s a great way to get last-minute walkers.

April

- ◆ As team captain, make sure you have all money accounted for before March for Babies (i.e. cut-out money, coin collections, etc.). Ask your local chapter about “bank days,” when you can turn money in. Or bring your funds on the morning of March for Babies.
- ◆ Get out there on March for Babies day and have a great time. Give yourself a pat on the back for an amazing March for Babies season!

May

- ◆ Don't forget to send thank-you e-mails or cards to everyone who helped or donated to your March for Babies campaign.

Your March for Babies resources

- ◆ March for Babies
 - Sign up online at marchforbabies.org and create your own fundraising page.
- ◆ Team Youth Web site: marchofdimes.com/youth
- ◆ Your local March of Dimes chapter
 - Go to marchofdimes.com/youth and enter your ZIP code
- ◆ Other Web sites:
 - March of Dimes marchofdimes.com
 - Peristats marchofdimes.com/peristats
 - Share Your Story shareyourstory.org
- ◆ National Youth Council
 - Visit the Team Youth Web site and click on National Youth Council
- ◆ National Youth Program staff: teamyouth@marchofdimes.com

Did you know that the March of Dimes has funded Nobel Prize®-winning scientists in their research to find the causes of premature birth and birth defects? We don't have all the answers yet, but we are confident that with your help, those answers will come. Money raised in March for Babies allows us to continue this important research.

The walk starts at marchforbabies.org