



Think Babies™ NC: How COVID-19 is Impacting Babies and Their Families

May 12, 2020



**NORTH CAROLINA
EARLY EDUCATION COALITION**

The NC Early Education Coalition is a proud partner in the national ZERO TO THREE Think Babies™ campaign and in the Pritzker Children's Initiative's National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers.

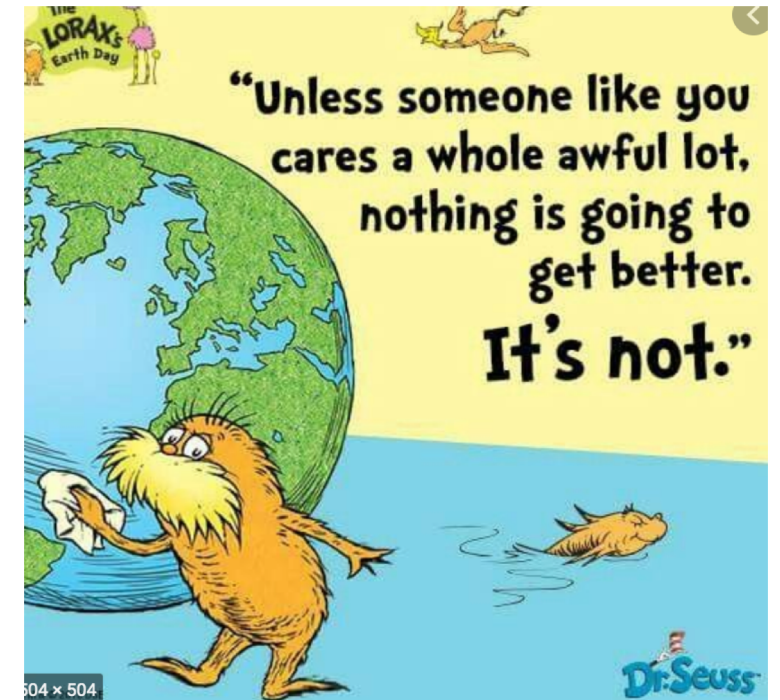
Message of Hope from Elliott



“There’s a light
at the end of
the tunnel!”

Goals for Today

- Let's #ThinkBabiesNC!
- Federal update from ZERO TO THREE
- NC updates: healthy beginnings, early education, supported families
- Advocacy tips and strategies



Today's Speakers

- **Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer**, Senior Campaign Manager, ZERO TO THREE
- **Sharon Loza**, President, NC Infant and Young Child Mental Health Association and Early Intervention Branch Head/Part C Coordinator, NC DHHS Div. of Public Health
- **Theresa Roedersheimer**, Infant Toddler Policy Consultant, NC DHHS Div. of Child Development and Early Education
- **Sharon Hirsch**, President and CEO, Prevent Child Abuse NC

**Make your biggest
priority the
little ones.**



**Why it's important
– especially now –
to Think Babies.**

Think Babies™ NC Alliance



PRITZKER Children's Initiative



NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES



MomsRising.org | MamásConPoder.org



NC Child
The Voice for North Carolina's Children



Why Focus on Infants and Toddlers?



- **Early brain science is clear:** Our brains grow faster between the ages of 0 and 3 than at any later point in our lives, building the foundation for all future learning behavior and health.
 - *This crisis is happening at a critical time in babies' development.*
- **Quality of Relationships:** Babies develop and learn through their relationships with adults in their lives—parents, family members, early educators, and other professionals.
 - *COVID-19 has caused a loss of strong early learning opportunities and undermined social-emotional development.*
- **Family Conditions:** Being a new parent is stressful and a stretch for all families. Risk factors like poverty, food insecurity, lack of health care, homelessness and others can cause toxic stress that adversely affects brain development and child outcomes.
 - *Parenting infants and toddlers is a challenge even in the best conditions, and this crisis has created unprecedented emotional and economic stress for millions of families with young children.*

Think Babies™ NC Policy Priorities



What do North Carolina's babies need to thrive – now and after the COVID-19 crisis?



Healthy Beginnings

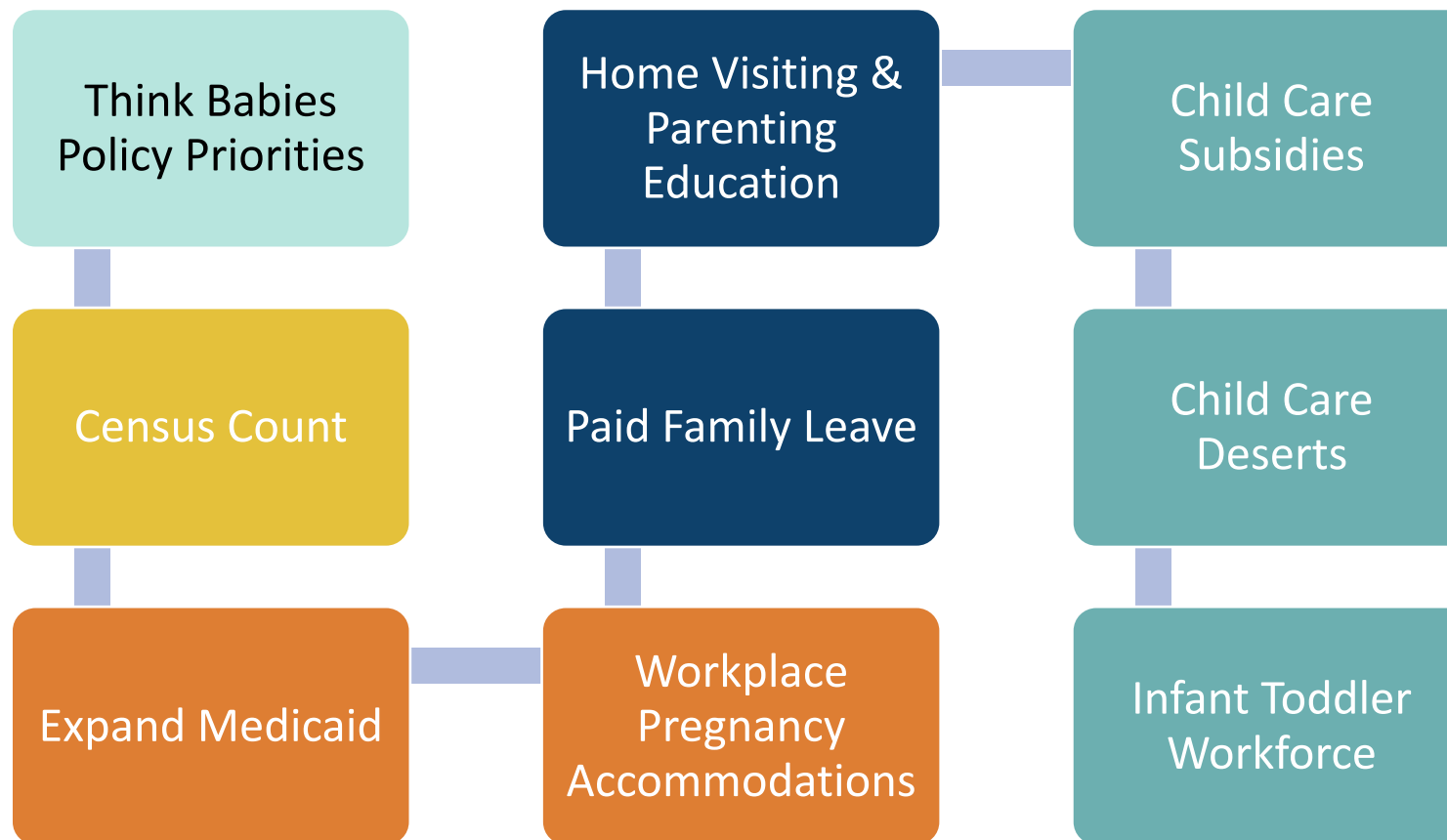


Supported Families



Early Learning

8 Policy Priorities At a Glance





Federal Update

May 12, 2020

Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer

Senior Campaign Manager, ZERO TO THREE

jjenningsshaffer@zerotothree.org

Federal Response to COVID 19: So Far



There have been four major federal response packages:

1. **“Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act”**
 - Signed March 6th
 - \$8.3 billion in emergency funding
2. **“Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)”**
 - Signed March 18th
 - ~\$95 billion
 - Includes paid sick/family leave provisions
3. **“Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act”**
 - Signed March 27th
 - ~\$2.2 trillion
 - Includes \$3.4 billion for CCDBG & \$750 million for Head Start
4. **“Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act” (aka CARES 1.5)**
 - Signed April 24th
 - \$484 billion

Federal Response to COVID 19: What's Next



1. CV4 Package

- Timeline TBD –Will likely be focused on economic recovery “Get America Back to Work,” which includes child care. Sens Warren (D-MA) and Smith (D-MN) asking for \$50 billion for CCDBG.

2. Regular Appropriations Process

- Kicks off in winter

ZERO TO THREE

Policy Recommendations to Congress



1. Sustain Child Care and Other Early Learning Supports

- Provide robust, flexible funding for the child care system.
- Provide additional funding for comprehensive support Head Start programs provide and expand Early Head Start.
- Increase funds for early intervention through Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

2. Ensure Economic Security

- Improve paid family and sick days provisions of FFCRA.

3. Support Strong Families

- Provide expanded prevention funding to provide greater outreach and virtual support to parents and other caregivers isolated in this crisis.
- Provide emergency funds to support home visitors.
- Provide increased funding for Title IV-B and Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) state grants and increase Title IV-E FMAP to enhance the child welfare system's ability to respond to the needs of children and families under its supervision.

4. Support Strong Social-Emotional Health

- Expand funding for infant and early childhood mental health services.

5. Meet Basic Needs for Health and Well-Being

- Provide funding to meet families' diaper needs.
- Funding to address family nutrition needs.

Congress Needs to Hear from YOU



1. Stories about the real life on the ground impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are incredibly impactful right now.
2. Personal conversations (i.e phone/video calls) are especially impactful. Email and Twitter are also good.
3. Think in terms of building relationships with Congressional offices, we are in this for the long haul.

Resources to Support You: Policy and Advocacy



1. [COVID-19: How is Congress Addressing the Needs of Babies and Families?](#) (analysis of FFCRA and CARES)
2. [Updated Legislative Recommendations for Infants and Toddlers During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) (letter to Congress)
3. [COVID-19 Resources from Think Babies State and National Partners](#)
4. Think Babies [email](#) to Congress
5. Think Babies click to [tweet](#) at Congress
6. Sign up at Thinkbabies.org to receive updates

Coming June 2nd: State of Babies Yearbook 2020

Resources to Support You: For Families and Professionals



1. [Coronavirus Resources for Early Childhood Professionals](#)
2. [Coronavirus Tips for Families](#)

All resources mentioned on this and previous slide as well as many more are available at:

- <https://www.thinkbabies.org/>
- <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3278-policy-response-to-covid-19>

Questions?

COVID-19 and the Impact on Healthy Beginnings

Sharon E. Loza

Chair, Healthy Beginnings Workgroup

President, North Carolina Infant and Young Child Mental Health Association

Think Babies Healthy Beginnings Workgroup



**Health, development, and
wellbeing of infants and
toddlers and their caregivers**



**Short and long-term social,
developmental, and academic
outcomes are affected by the
health and wellbeing of
caregivers and infants/toddlers**



Issues:
Health insurance
Workplace accommodations
for pregnant women
Paid family leave

Closing the Coverage Gap to Support Families and Children

Close the Coverage Gap to support Parents and Children

Think Babies™ NC Leadership Team



High-quality, affordable health care helps parents work and support their children. Closing the health insurance coverage gap would provide more than 100,000 parents improved health and access to the care they need to thrive, which in turn improves children's health and development.

CURRENT HEALTH COVERAGE IN NORTH CAROLINA

15%

of parents of infants and toddlers are uninsured



NC is one of 14 states that has not taken advantage of federal funding to expand access to health insurance



IMPROVING WOMEN'S PRENATAL HEALTH LEADS TO HEALTHIER BABIES

Medicaid expansion is linked to an increase in access to prenatal care and a decline in infant mortality



9.2% of babies in NC are born at a low birth weight



The infant mortality rate in NC is 7.2 per every 1,000 births. NC has the

12th

worst infant mortality rate in the country.

PARENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO ENROLL MEDICAID-ELIGIBLE CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE COVERED THEMSELVES

Children whose parents are covered by Medicaid are more likely to receive regular check-ups and preventive care



Consistent health coverage is critical for young children's healthy physical, social, and emotional development



For more information:
www.NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org/think-babies.html

#ThinkBabiesNC

COVID-19 Impacts on Families

- Well child check and vaccination rates are dropping
 - introduces potential risk to other illnesses
 - reduced rates of screening for things like developmental delays at a time when early intervention can be critical to long term outcomes (in NC, referral rates have dropped by over 50% to the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program)
- Access and equity, since not every family can participate in new virtual world
 - Data to show the disproportionate affect on African American communities

COVID-19 Impacts on Social Determinants of Health



Food insecurity



Housing/Utilities



Transportation



Interpersonal Safety




COVID-19 Impacts on Agencies

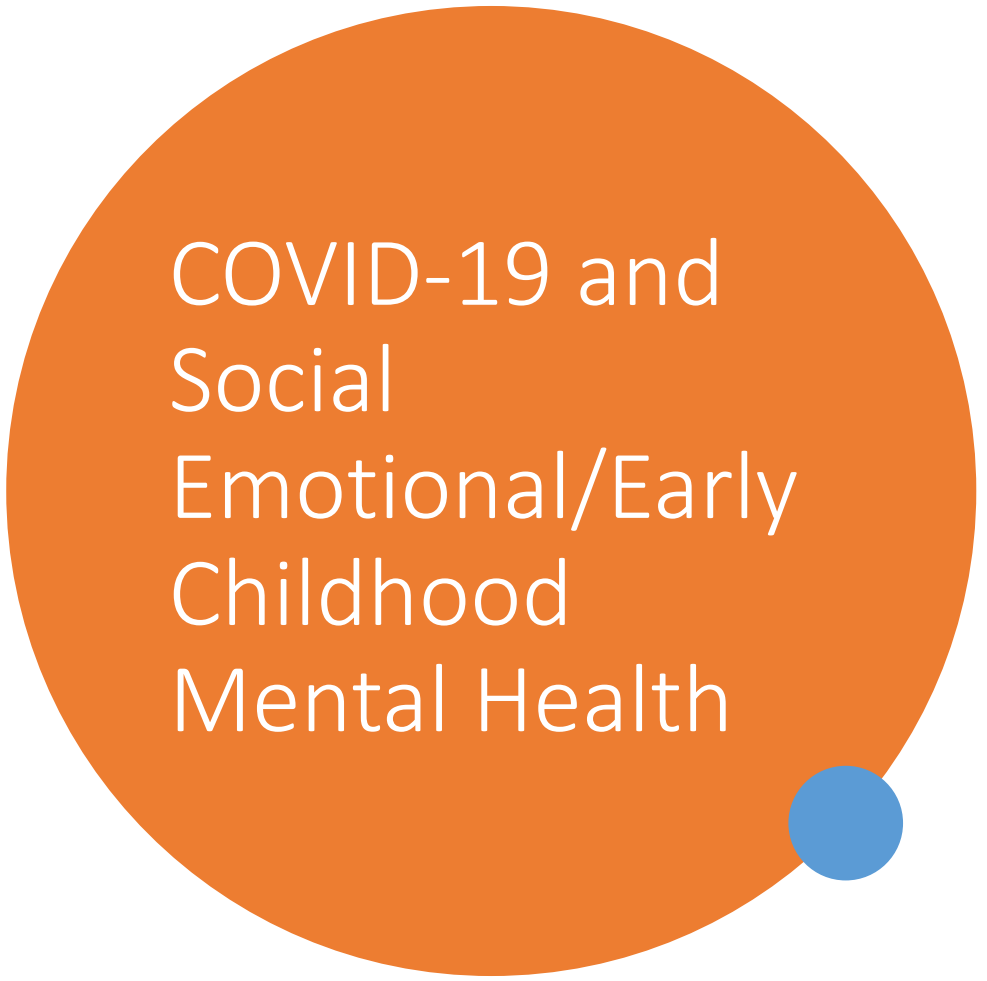
- Greater focus on mental health programs and policies
 - Learning how to work effectively in a new environment
 - Supporting staff remotely to continue to provide needed supports to families with young children
 - Keeping up with federal and state policies to address COVID-19 related issues
 - Ensuring access to timely data to make informed programmatic decisions to best support families
-

COVID-19 and Social Emotional Health




- Trauma
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Toxic Stress





- 
- Professional development and training in early childhood mental health
 - Sensitive and available tools to assess social emotional development and health
 - Insurance policies that support mental health (for young children, families, and the early childhood workforce)
 - Seamless system of mental health from birth to adulthood in NC



COVID-19 and
Social
Emotional/Early
Childhood
Mental Health



Supporting Social and Emotional Well-being in the Time of COVID-19

- Ensure the presence of a sensitive and responsive caregiver
 - Social distancing should not mean social isolation
 - Create a safe physical and emotional environment by practicing the 3 R's: Reassurance, Routines, and Regulation
 - Create opportunities and take time for self-care
 - Seek professional help if children show signs of trauma that do not resolve relatively quickly
 - Emphasize strengths, hope, and positivity
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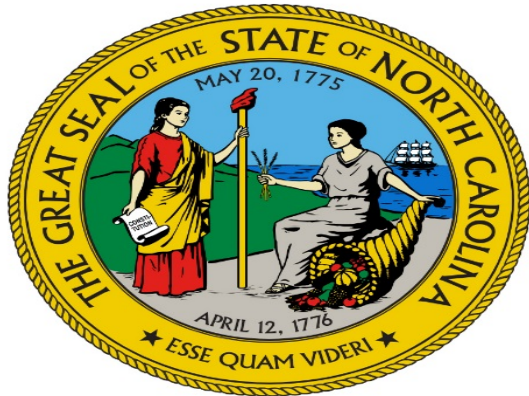
Rays of Light

- Early childhood community's capacity to come together virtually across agencies to keep each other informed, aware, and building off each other's strengths;
- Continued collaboration
- Teaching us all to be more graceful and patient with each other professionally and with families.
- Spotlight on where the system is broken, so we need to fill the holes that we have and make the system stronger and more resilient



COVID-19 Opportunities and Next Steps

- Data and information sharing
- Innovative thinking
- Medicaid Expansion and Flexibilities
- Expand opportunities related to professional development in social emotional/mental health of the early childhood workforce



NC Department of Health and Human Services

Responding to COVID-19: The Impact on the Child Care Workforce, Families and DCDEE's Infant-Toddler Projects

Theresa Roedersheimer
Infant Toddler Policy Consultant

May 12, 2020

How are families with infants and toddlers managing?

- **Just trying to cope!**
- **Mixed feelings about moving childcare to Phase 1**
 - **Family Perspective**
 - **Teacher Perspective**



What are the specific needs of infants/toddlers and their families?

- **Feeling CONNECTED!**
- **Ensuring there is a place for their child**



How has COVID-19 impacted DCDEE's infant/toddler initiatives?

- **Some Delays**
- **Connecting in New Ways**
- **Increased Collaborations with other Projects**
- **Adjusted typical protocols**



**For more information on DCDEE's Infant
Toddler Projects contact:**

**Theresa Roedersheimer
Infant Toddler Policy Consultant
Theresa.Roedersheimer@dhhs.nc.gov**

Supported Families

Sharon Hirsch

President & CEO
Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina



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Paid Family and Medical Leave

- 1 in 4 mothers returns to work within 2 weeks of giving birth.
- 10 weeks of paid leave is associated with a 10% reduction in infant mortality.
- Only 11% of private sector employees have access to paid leave.



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COVID Response: More Attention at Federal Level

- COVID 19 Relief includes
 - Paid Family Leave
 - Paid Sick Leave

State level advocacy has focused on paid sick days, kin-care and action at the city and county levels.



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Home Visiting

- Home visiting programs serve less than 1% of infants and toddlers across the state.
- 11 counties have no home visiting programs at all.
- 72% of existing home visiting programs have a waitlist for services.
- \$1.80-\$5.70 is saved for each dollar invested in evidence-based home visiting.
- More than 120,000 births, and there are 358,000 children ages zero to three who could benefit from home visiting programs. Due to limited federal funding, home visiting programs reached fewer than 6,000 families in 2016, and many communities have no services at all



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Parent Education

- Access to programs is inconsistent across NC
- Dependent on where a family lives
- Common programs: Triple P, Incredible Years, Circle of Parents, Nurturing Parentings, MotherRead/FatherRead, Facilitated Parent/Child Playgroup

- Improves child outcomes
- Strengthens parent-child relationships & increases parenting skills
- Increases parents' social networks and parental mental health

ROI: Child Abuse and Neglect costs the US over \$220M per DAY. Every \$1 invested in IY shows a return of \$5.60 and for Triple P the return is \$10.05



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COVID Response on the Ground

- Virtual service delivery: Zoom groups, Facetime, One-on-One
- Home Visitors and Parent Educators are a lifeline for many families – concrete supports
- Participation has been strong
- Challenges: broadband connectivity, recruitment of new families, evaluation of impact



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COVID 19 Response: Connecting and Rebuilding

- Now is the time to get this right. Every policy and funding decision should lead us to the future we want for our babies: an opportunity for all babies and their families to thrive with support.
- Rebuild our systems so that they work for all families
- We can set and enforce smart policies and better mechanisms to make sure we invest to save lives and protect the well being of our youngest citizens.



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COVID 19 Response: We can get it right!

- We know connections matter – and our agenda for Think Babies reflects this.
- While we are physically distant, investing in building those connections – particularly parent-child attachment through our paid leave policies, home visiting and parenting education
- This crisis has put a spotlight on how much we are in this together – and these investments can lead us to the future we want for NC's littlest ones.



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North Carolina Early Education Coalition

DEDICATED TO ADVANCING HIGH QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION



Advocacy Tips and Strategies



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What's Next for NC policymakers?

- **May 18th: session begins**
- **Focus could be:**
 - 2nd Round COVID-19 still \$1.5 billion left to allocate
 - Regular Short Session budget
 - Potential bills filed for early education and paid sick leave
- **Late Summer:**
 - Could be Short Session Budget, after revenues are known
 - Now predicting \$2B plus shortfall



Be a Big Voice for Babies!

- Participate in all federal and state action alerts
 - Take action now for early education!
<https://www.ncearlyeducationcoalition.org/take-action/>
- Petition and story collection
- Media outreach
 - Letters to the Editor
 - Op-Eds
 - Blogs, newsletters, websites
- Social media
 - #ThinkBabiesNC and #ThinkBabiesAndAct
 - #FundChildCare

Tuesdays for Tots

Coming up:

Tuesday, May 19:

- Legislators will be back in session - take action for early education!
 - Action alert
 - Call and email your legislators



Questions?



Thank you!

www.NCEarlyEducationCoalition.org

For more information:

Michele Rivest

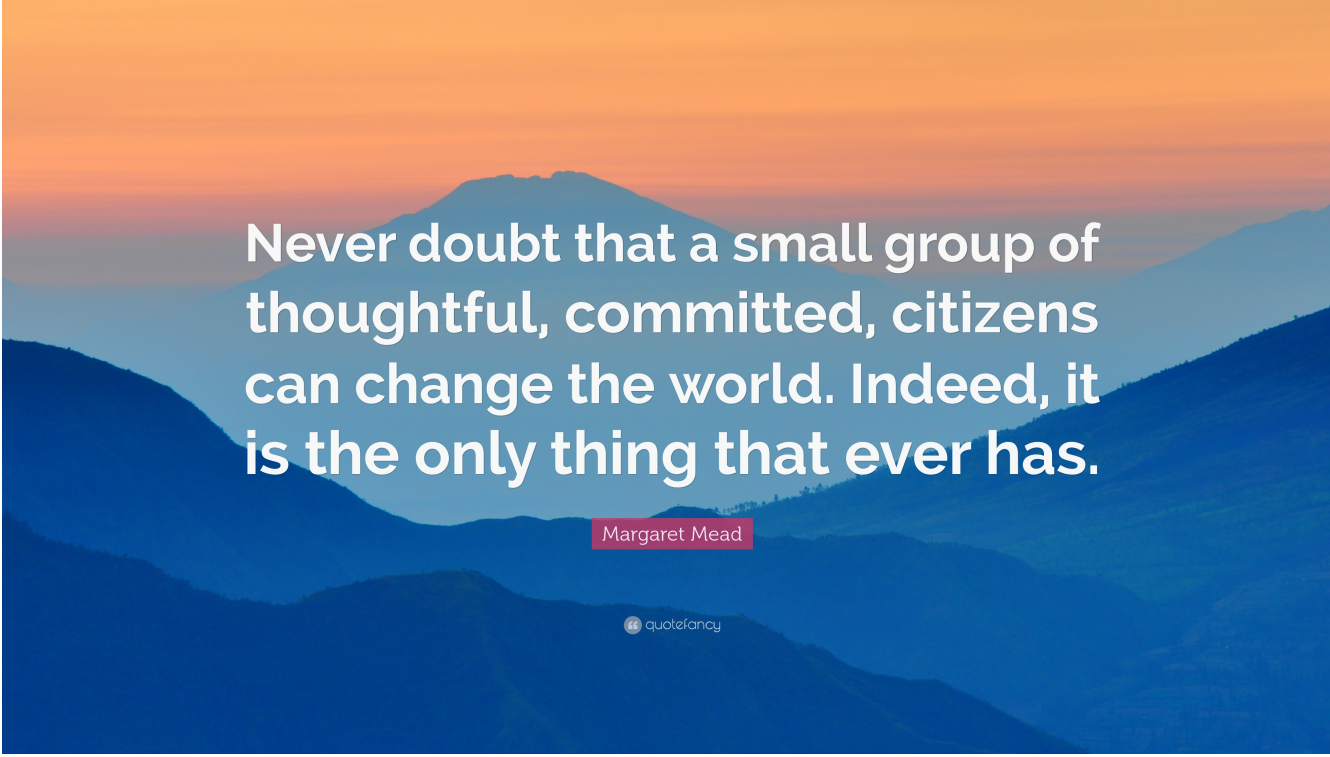
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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

 quote fancy