

The Parent Coalition Starter Kit

Every durable parent coalition begins the same way: not a public launch, not a Facebook post — one-on-one conversations. Then the minimum viable form.

The relational meeting (15–30 min, phone or in person)

A listening conversation. Not a recruitment pitch. Produces a relationship and an honest read on whether the other person is ready to move from concern to action.

1.

What made this issue matter to you?

Listening for: an authentic story that connects them to the issue.

2.

What have you tried to do about it so far?

Listening for: their existing advocacy posture.

3.

What would meaningfully better look like to you?

Listening for: their definition of success.

4.

If five other parents were working on this, what part would you want?

Listening for: their willingness and capacity. Both are required.

5–10 relational meetings over 2–3 weeks tells you more than any amount of social-media organizing. The list itself is the first artifact of a coalition.

Minimum viable coalition

Name	Short, local, positive framing. "For literacy" not "Against the curriculum."
Mission	One sentence the whole core group can repeat verbatim.
Central email	Shared Gmail. No member's personal email becomes the inbox.
Sign-up form	Google Form + spreadsheet. Name, school, contact preference, one question.
Internal channel	Signal/Telegram/WhatsApp. Core group only at first; vet before adding.
Meeting cadence	45-minute video call every two weeks beats monthly 90-minute drifts.

Everything beyond this — website, 501(c)(3), logo, press kit — is optional and usually premature in the first six months.

Role-Split Worksheet + What Does Not Work

The most reliable predictor of coalition survival in year one is whether responsibilities get assigned to named people early. Four roles in order of how fast they fall apart when unassigned.

The four roles (assign to named people)

1. Lead

Owens: Runs meetings + maintains agenda. Rotate every 6 months. One person at a time, named.

Assigned to: _____

2. Communications

Owens: Central email + social channel + media voice. Coalitions with 3 voices to press get 3 stories.

Assigned to: _____

3. Research

Owens: Agenda-reading discipline (PA1), public-records/FOIA, data the coalition cites. Often introvert-friendly.

Assigned to: _____

4. Member outreach

Owens: Sign-up form + welcome process + 'who haven't we heard from?' check. Lose new members in a quarter without it.

Assigned to: _____

What does NOT work

- Launching with a public Facebook post before relational meetings (surfaces arguers, not workers).
- Letting one parent become the de facto everything (you're not a coalition yet — you're one parent with a mailing list).
- Optimizing for who is "right" instead of who will do work (coalitions are not editorial boards).
- Drifting toward a permanent grievance posture (coalitions that never claim a specific win are hard to recruit into).