



Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day

A day for gifted children, their families and their
teachers to gather in

Springfield, Illinois
Wednesday,
April 18, 2007

Organizer's Guide

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Objective of this Packet

The objective of this packet is to provide all the information you will need to organize a group to come to Springfield and join in on Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day. We are anticipating participation by individuals, families, groups of families, school groups, IAGC parent affiliates, and other gifted support organizations. If you know of others who might be interested, please pass along a copy of this document.

Thank you for considering bringing a group to Springfield. We all look forward to meeting you there. Should you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please contact the organizing committee through email at Springfield@ArvaMont.com or by calling Newenka DuMont at 630-887-8219.

If you conclude that you will not be able to attend Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day, you can still help the cause by contacting your local legislators, and others in Illinois state government with whom you have contact, to tell them about Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day. Thank you again for your support!

Why Have Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day?

Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day is a day for gifted children, their families and their teachers to meet in our state capital, Springfield, Illinois. There are so many good reasons to join us in Springfield on **Wednesday, April 18th, 2007**. A few of them are articulated in this section!

This day was originally conceived of to focus the attention of the Illinois legislature on the issues of gifted children in this state. Our hope is to bring people with an interest in gifted children from across the state to Springfield to meet with their local legislators, as well as others in state government who have an impact on the lives of gifted children. It is vitally important for the future of gifted education in Illinois that those in Springfield appreciate that there are many constituents across the state who are interested in the needs of gifted children.

Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day is also an excellent opportunity for our children to see law making in action. Both houses are currently scheduled to be in session on Wednesday, April 18th, which will afford an excellent opportunity to observe both chambers from the observation balconies of the capitol. Children will have the opportunity to meet several individuals in state government personally.

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Coming to Springfield is a great way to expose children to the history of our state and our nation. The new Lincoln Library and Museum is now open and offers children and their families a wonderful insight into Abraham Lincoln and his time. There are also many other interesting museums and historical sights in and around Springfield that would make lovely educational destinations. Many of the sites are listed in *Appendix I – Springfield Attractions*. Or look online at: <http://www.visit-springfieldillinois.com/>.

Show the gifted children in your life that their needs are important. Bring them to Springfield on April 18, 2007!

Overall Plan For Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day

There will be three different types of participants in Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day. There will be school groups with teachers, family groups coordinated by gifted support organizations from around the state, and individual families participating on their own.

The plan for this day is to have a common set of activities coordinated for all participants, and then to have individual families or participating groups set up activities in line with their own interests for the remainder of the day. The common activities are scheduled from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Large Group Common Activities

Large group common activities have already been planned. When setting up your day, please schedule around these activities. (The Springfield Illinois Convention and Visitors Bureau has been advised of this schedule, but you will need to remind them when you file your tour reservation form.)

11:30 a.m. Picnic lunch in the Hall of Flags in the Howlett Building.

Tables and chairs will be provided; each group should make individual plans for lunch. In order to maximize time in Springfield, we recommend that groups bring a sack lunch.

This is an excellent opportunity to invite your local representatives to come join your group for lunch. This would give you a chance to get to know them.

12:15 a.m. Program

Lunch will be followed by a program specifically targeted at the children in attendance. Several legislators will provide a brief overview of what we will be observing when we are in the balconies of the two chambers.

12:45 a.m. Group photo on the steps of the capitol.

1:15 p.m. Time in the chamber balconies watching the proceedings.

Organizing the Trip

There are several tasks which need to be completed in order to successfully organize this trip. The objective of this document is to provide you with all the information you need to make this process easy.

1. Indicate intent to bring a group to Springfield

Please let the organizers of IAGC Springfield Day know that you are planning to bring a group to Springfield through email to Springfield@ArvaMont.com or by calling Newenka DuMont at 630-887-8219. Indicate the following:

- Type of group being organized (school group, parent group, family, etc.)
- Estimated number of adults
- Estimated number of children
- Contact information for organizer(s), email, telephone and address
- Cell phone contact information for the group on April 18th in Springfield.

Initial intent to organize information is intended to give us an idea how many groups and people to expect. We will use this information to make our tentative plans. We will ask you for more up to date information in early April.

2. Publicize event

Let members of your group know about Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day. Get a tentative feel for how many people might be interested in participating. Also, get an understanding of what sorts of activities your group might be interested in doing in addition to the Common Large Group activities outlined in **Overall Plan For Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day** above.

3. Contact legislators

Every resident in Illinois is represented by a State Senator and a State Representative. If you do not know who your legislators are, you could visit the Vote Smart website (www.votesmart.org) and enter your zip code. This web site will tell you who your legislators are and how to contact them. If you know the names of your legislators, but need help locating telephone numbers and addresses for them, you could go to the Illinois General Assembly website: <http://www.ilga.gov/> to look them up.

1. Please take a moment to call the offices of both of your legislators. If your group resides in multiple legislative districts, have someone contact each legislator. (If you are organizing a school group, consider asking your students' parents to contact their legislators.)
2. Tell the legislative assistants that you are bringing a group to Springfield on April 18th to participate in Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day organized by the Illinois Association for Gifted Children.
3. If you would like to engage in a conversation about the importance of funding for gifted education and need more information, please see *Appendix II – The History of Funding for Gifted Education in Illinois* and *Appendix III – Meeting the Needs of Gifted/Talents Learners*. If you are uncomfortable engaging in this conversation, it is not necessary!
4. Ask if the legislator might like to join your group for lunch, or perhaps acknowledge your group in the balcony from the chamber after lunch. Please be aware, that the current legislative calendar (which changes frequently, without notice!) calls for the House to be in session Tuesday through Friday that week. However, the Senate is not in session on Tuesday, the 17th, and thus will likely not be in session until noon on the day of our visit.
5. Determine if they are aware of any activities taking place on April 18th that your group might be interested in participating in, such as press conferences or photo opportunities.

6. You might also ask for their guidance in setting up your tour, scheduling your travel plans or planning your picnic lunch. Most of the assistants have lots of great suggestions!

4. Select and schedule tours

Should your group be interested in participating in additional tours and activities in addition to the large group common activities listed above, then these should be booked directly with the Springfield Illinois Conventions and Visitors Bureau. Or look at their online site: <http://www.visit-springfieldillinois.com/>.

All groups of 15 or more must book their tours through the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau. Use the reservation form in *Appendix IV – Springfield, Illinois 2006-2007 School Year Student/Youth Group Reservation Form*. Reservations should be made 30 days in advance of our visit. The Bureau will take tentative numbers to hold you reservations.

IMPORTANT NOTE IMPORTANT NOTE IMPORTANT NOTE IMPORTANT NOTE IMPORTANT NOTE IMPORTANT NOTE IMPORTANT NOTE IMPORTANT NOTE

The Springfield Illinois Conventions and Visitors Bureau is aware of our event, but to ensure that they do not book you on a tour during our common activity period, **please indicate that you are participating in the IAGC Luncheon in the Hall of Flags in the Howlett Building from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Groups of fewer than 15 can arrive at any of the attractions in Springfield and will be accommodated on a first come, first served basis. Given we are visiting on a Wednesday, there should be no issue getting into any of the attractions.

5. Make lunch plans

The plan calls for a “picnic” lunch. It is up to each group to determine how to handle lunch. The simplest approach may be to advise participants to bring a sack lunch. Alternatively, you could pick up a carry out lunch, or have a lunch delivered to the Hall of Flags in the Howlett Building. We will have someone in the Hall of Flags beginning at 11 a.m., should you want to have a lunch dropped off. Please advise the Springfield Organizing Committee if you are planning to have anything delivered.

6. Figure out travel arrangements

There are many ways to get to Springfield. Springfield is well served by trains, buses and planes, should you be looking for a convenient way of getting there. Alternatively, your group could hire a bus, could carpool, or you could leave it up to each family to find their own way to Springfield.

There are plenty of great things to see all within walking distance of the capitol, so it is not necessary for a group to have a vehicle in order to have a good experience.

7. Figure out hotel arrangements

In order to participate in the large group common activities, it should not be necessary for most people to spend the night in Springfield. Some groups or individuals may elect to do so anyway, in order to extend their touring time while in Springfield. If this is the case for your group, you may want to reserve a block of rooms early. When the legislature is in session, it can be difficult to get a hotel room in Springfield. Pages 2 and 3 of *Appendix IV – Springfield, Illinois 2006-2007 School Year Student/Youth Group Reservation Form* list hotels in Springfield.

8. Register participants

Let members of your group know the details of Please Don't Leave Our Children Behind Day and the specifics you have organized for your group, including tours, lunch, travel and hotel options.

Register interested participants.

9. Establish a group identity

All of our groups together will be more visible in Springfield if we have a group identity. We are recommending that each group select and wear the same colored shirt. If your group already had a shirt with a group logo, that would work well.

One group that attended last year selected yellow t-shirts and stenciled a large gecko on the front – parents and children alike. Then participants were encouraged to use puff paints or fabric markers to individually decorate their geckos. The effect was good, and many people in Springfield wanted to know

what the group was that was visiting Springfield. The total cost per shirt was less than \$4.

IAGC has green "I Believe in Gifted" buttons, which you could purchase for your group. Please contact the Springfield Organizing Committee if you would like to purchase some of these buttons. They will cost approximately \$2.

10. Report final participation numbers

In the beginning of April, please notify the Springfield Organizing Committee of your final arrangements through email to Springfield@ArvaMont.com or by calling Newenka DuMont at 630-887-8219. The following information would be helpful:

- Type of group (school group, parent group, family, etc.)
- Number of adults
- Number of children
- Mode of transportation
- Activity immediately preceding lunch
- Legislators contacted, and their level of participation
- Updated contact information for organizer(s), email, telephone and address
- Cell phone contact information for the group on April 18th in Springfield.

Thank you for organizing a group to join us in Springfield.

Appendix I – Springfield Attractions

The following list of Springfield attractions is from the Springfield Illinois Convention and Visitors Bureau web site.

- **Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site** (2hrs.) Reconstructed log cabin village. Lincoln lived here as a young man. Self-guided tour. For educational materials, see web site www.petersburgil.com/p_newsalem.html
- **Old State Capitol State Historic Site** (30 min.) Lincoln delivered his famous "House Divided" speech here.
- **Lincoln-Herndon Law Office State Historic Site** (40 min.) Constructed in 1840, this is the only surviving structure in which Lincoln maintained working law offices.
- **Lincoln Home National Historic Site** (1 hr.) The only home Lincoln ever owned. Guided tour of home; includes self guided tour of Neighborhood and Visitors Center.
- **Lincoln Depot** (30 min.) Lincoln's Farewell Address was delivered at this site, visit includes a/v program.
- **Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum** (2.5 hrs.) Holographic and special effects theaters, interactive displays & multi-media programs. 1861 Reproduction of the White House.
- **Illinois State Capitol** (30 min.) Watch House and Senate proceedings when Legislature is in session.
- **Illinois State Capitol Complex Visitors Center** (30 Min.) Provides information and exhibits about the Capitol Complex and Illinois.
- **Illinois State Museum** (approx. 1 hr.) Permanent and changing exhibits tell the story of Illinois land, life, people and art. Exciting new and interactive natural history exhibits. Changes: Dynamic Illinois Environments, and exciting new interactive natural history exhibit, explores 500 million years of Illinois environments. Self-guided.
- **Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site** (30 min.) The final resting place of Abraham Lincoln and his family. Guided tour.
- **Illinois WWII, Vietnam Veterans and Korean War Veterans Memorial** (20 min.) The names of Illinois Vietnam War KIA, POW and MIA veterans and Korean War KIA veterans are listed on these two walls. WWII Globe symbolizing conflict of more than 200 nations. Self-guided tour.

This list is not all inclusive; these are just the most popular sites. See the [Official 2007 Springfield Visitors Guide](#) for more options. You can obtain this guide by calling 1-800-545-7300.

Appendix II – The History of Funding for Gifted Education in Illinois

There is no funding provided by the State of Illinois for gifted education today. This was not always the case; however, all funding was eliminated in the fiscal '03 budget, as were all references to gifted education in the Illinois School Code. See the *Figure 1 – Recent history of funding for gifted programming in the State of Illinois* below for a history of funding for gifted education.

School Year	Funding Guaranteed	Reimbursement Per Pupil
91-92	10,059,600	\$122
92-93	10,059,600	112
93-94	17,445,800	224
94-95	19,695,800	245
95-96	19,695,800	245
96-97	19,695,800	245
97-98	19,695,800	245
98-99	19,695,800	245
99-00	19,695,800	245
00-01	19,695,800	245
01-02	19,695,800	245
02-03	19,000,000	200
03-04	0	0
04-05	0	0
05-06	0	0

Figure 1 - Recent history of funding for gifted programming in the State of Illinois

Through hard work and advocacy, gifted legislation passed both chambers of the Illinois legislature in 2005, however, no funding has as yet been approved, and without funding the legislation is not a mandate. Please visit the IAGC Advocacy website for more details on the history of gifted education in Illinois:

<http://www.iagcgifted.org/advocacy/index.shtml>

Appendix III - Meeting the Needs of Gifted/Talented Learners

The table below is taken from the IAGC Advocacy website at:

<http://www.iagcgifted.org/advocacy/ChartonFundingAndNoFunding.htm>.

<i>With Statutory and Financial Provisions</i>	<i>Without Statutory and Financial Provisions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School districts identify students with gifts and talents whose needs require different programs and services. ▪ Professional development opportunities are provided to prepare teachers to address the needs of gifted/talented learners. This creates better teachers for ALL learners. ▪ School districts look for and address the needs of gifted/talented students from low-income and minority families. ▪ Schools provide specific programs and services to meet the needs of students with gifts and talents. ▪ Students whose advanced learning needs are met tend to score well on standardized tests, often exceeding expectations. ▪ Corporations and businesses consider the educational programs available to their employees who often require services to gifted/talented learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School districts no longer are required to identify and provide services to students whose needs are different. ▪ Educators must seek, on their own, appropriate curriculum and methods to meet the needs of gifted/talented learners – or decide not to address these needs. ▪ Low-income and minority gifted/talented students may go unrecognized in their classrooms. ▪ When schools do not meet the needs of gifted/talented students, families may seek private schools or decide to home school. ▪ Unchallenged students may develop poor attitudes toward school and may fail to perform well academically. ▪ Failure to support and acknowledge gifted education may cause corporations/individuals not to locate in Illinois.

All students need and deserve an equal opportunity

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Appendix IV – Springfield, Illinois 2006-2007 School Year Student/Youth Group Reservation Form

If you have received this packet electronically, please print off this attachment from the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau web site at: <http://www.visit-springfieldillinois.com/Tours/Youth/documents/06-07StudentReg.Form.pdf>