**Wait Until 8th Champion Starter Guide**

You're here, you're excited, you're ready to jump in and spread the word! Here is a quick start guide for championing the Wait Until 8th pledge in your school community!

**Step 1: Start Small**

If taking this issue to your entire school community feels overwhelming, that’s okay!  We recommend you start small.  Grab a friend or two and ask if they have heard of the Wait Until 8th pledge.  Share with them why you have signed it and ask if they might be interested in helping bring the pledge to your school community.

**Step 2: Spread the Word**

Once you have a wingman, it’s time to spread the word. Here are a few possible communication channels:

* If you have access to a school directory, use the email template from the WU8 Resource page online to share information about the pledge.  The quickest and most effective way to get an active pledge is to email all the parents from your child’s entire grade. We recommend when sending the group email to blind copy all of the parents. This avoids lots of back and forth over group email.
* If you don’t have access to a directory, ask your PTO/PTA to help you share information about Wait Until 8th.  Let them know that you are willing to champion this effort; all you need is their help being a communication channel for information and events.  If your PTO/PTA is interested in a higher level of support, they also could rally your community by sending pledge updates to the school community periodically.
* Check with your school’s principal as well to see if he or she would be willing to distribute an email about the pledge.
* If you are hitting walls with the school and the PTO and don’t have access to the school directory, start with the people you know! Gather the email addresses you have and start from there. Rally your friends to reach out to their circles as well about the pledge.
* Social media is a powerful way to spread the word. Download a Wait Until 8th image from the WU8 Resource page online and share it on your Facebook or Instagram page letting your community know that you have signed the pledge and would love others to join!
* Some parents need to learn more before they gain the confidence to take the pledge. We are finding that closed Facebook groups are a good way to meet this need. To create a closed Facebook group for your community, simply go to your homepage, click “Groups” and “Create New Group”, and follow the guided prompts, making sure you select the “Closed Group” option. Once you have completed the process, you can let your friends know about the group and they can request to join. This way, they can ask hard questions and share honest information without worrying about pushback from parents who disagree.

Of course, not everyone you contact will be moved to make this decision. You will be amazed though by the number of people who will respond with a “Thank you—I am so glad I am not alone!”

**Step 3: Gather Your Community**

Parents in your community might have questions, concerns, or barriers they need to voice before they can commit to taking the pledge.  Or they might just prefer face-to-face conversations!  Either way, Wait Until 8th gatherings can be a great place for parents to lock eyes with this issue and link arms with each other.  Here are some ideas to help you organize a gathering:

* Invitations: There are many routes you can take to make sure your community is aware of the event you plan.  If your PTO/PTA will send out a flyer, that is great!  If not, consider sending out an evite or posting a digital invitation on social media.
* Venue:  If you think you might only have a small group of parents, a kitchen table is a lovely place to get started.  But, if your numbers will be big, consider using your school’s library or cafeteria.  Public libraries oftentimes also have rooms you can use to meet, and most librarians will be thrilled to support your cause!
* Setup:  Truly, all you need to provide for your group is nametags and access to a water fountain.  If you like, you could also set out a sign-in for attendance for you to refer to later. Set up does not need to be fancy!
* Agenda: You have freedom to call your meeting to order however you wish.  We are developing a short video over the next few months that will be available as a resource to help you get started.   In the meantime, some groups are showing the Screenager documentary or the Social Dilemma and then introducing the pledge as a resource.  Others are showing the Today Show segment on the pledge followed by a parent discussion on the smartphone problem.   Perhaps the most simple and effective way to get the conversation started is to introduce yourself and share why you took the pledge.   Invite others to do the same.  Share what hesitations they have with pledging, and brainstorm ways you can support each other.  Wrap up the meeting by encouraging your community.   Even though the mountain of research, theory, culture, and parenting perspectives on this topic can be overwhelming, there is power in taking this journey together.  Thank them for coming!

**Step 4- Follow Up**

After you sign the pledge, you might not hear anything from Wait Until 8th immediately, but usually as the signatures approach the "active" number of 10, you will get an "Almost There" email.  In the meantime, you might wonder if anyone is responding and signing the pledge because it can feel quiet.  Feel free to contact us for an update on numbers in your area.  We can't release names of signatures, but it still might be comforting to know what your momentum is like.

Thanks again for being willing to champion the pledge in your community.  We are honored to link arms with you, and excited to watch your community rally together to give your kids a longer childhood.