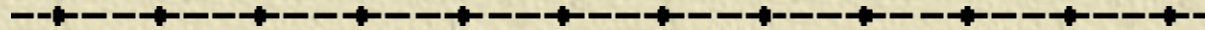
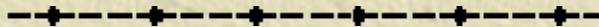


Raising Your Voice for Children: An Advocacy Training



David McDonald
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NAEYC



Why is it important for *you* to be an advocate for children?

- ✦ You are the experts
- ✦ Your work will be impacted by policymakers' decisions
- ✦ You are voters and can hold policymakers accountable
- ✦ If you don't speak up, someone else will speak for you

Advocacy = Persuasion

- ✦ Policymakers are looking for solutions and innovations
- ✦ Advocates can persuade policymakers to make the best decisions and choices

Frederick Douglass - "Power concedes nothing without demand"

Types of Advocacy

Direct Advocacy

- Persuading decision-makers on public policy

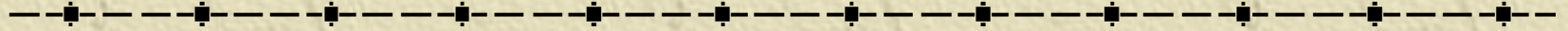
Public Engagement

- Building awareness and support

Media Engagement

- Getting your message out to decision-makers and the public

Effective Advocacy



- ✓ Intentional
- ✓ Strategic
- ✓ Flexible
- ✓ Organized

Effective Advocacy is Intentional

✦ *Intentional* means knowing what you are seeking to accomplish; identifying long and short term goals

✦ *An Intentional Advocacy Task*

- ✦ Develop a legislative agenda that has no more than 3 areas, is related to what policymakers are doing, and is decided with others in the community

Effective Advocacy is Strategic

✦ *Strategic* means taking into account social, economic and political climate; being aware of capacity opportunities and challenges

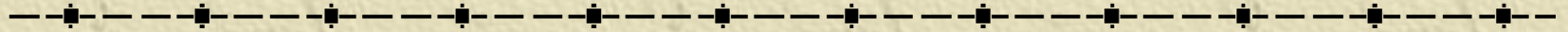
✦ Some *Strategic* Advocacy Tasks

- ✦ Using data on needs to drive your priorities
- ✦ Understanding the political, economic and social climate
- ✦ Choosing partners based on political realities, not personal feelings

Effective Advocacy is Strategic: Context is Key

-
- ✦ **Political Climate** – Do you have political will? Can you build political will? Or are you building awareness for a day in which the climate is more favorable?
 - ✦ **Economic Climate** – What are the competing strains on the budget? If tough times, what are your priorities? In good times, do you want expansion, new initiatives, or both? Have you planned a vision/agenda for better times?
 - ✦ **Social Climate** – Do you have public will? Have you made your issue known with support from an array of potential stakeholders?

Effective Advocacy is Flexible



Being *Flexible* means that you can adjust plans, tools, partners, and tactics as needed

Effective Advocacy is Organized

✦ Being *Organized* means having a plan of action

✦ Three parts of your plan of action:

- ◆ Getting Connected
- ◆ Getting Informed
- ◆ Getting Involved

First Step – Get Connected

✦ No advocate is an island

✦ If you are not already involved with your state or local AEYC affiliate, get connected

First Step – Get Connected

- Find out who your state and local AEYC public policy chairs are
- Be sure to sign up to receive newsletters and email action alerts from your AEYC chapter

First Step – Get Connected

Different Coalition Roles

- ✦ *Leader* – provide vision and keep advocacy effort on track
- ✦ *Advisor* – share expertise with other advocates and policy makers
- ✦ *Researcher* – collect data and synthesize reports
- ✦ *Contributor* – participate in activities, make calls, stuff letters, join a rally
- ✦ *Friend* – not able to participate often, but can be counted on to reply to alerts

First Step – Get Connected

Checklist for Joining Coalitions

- ☑ Ensure participation reflects your priorities, needs and concerns
- ☑ Know what your role in the coalition will be: lead, partner in message and strategy decisions, information dissemination
- ☑ Consider the resource allocation: is every coalition equal in the amount of time, staffing, and materials development?
- ☑ Designate a representative at the coalitions so that your issue has a visible, recognizable presence and voice

Second Step – Get Information

- ✦ Learn About the ECE Issues Your State and Local AEYC are Working on
- ✦ Learn About the Legislative Process

Second Step – Get Information

Learn About Your Policymakers

- 👉 Congressional Delegation
- 👉 State Legislature and Governor
- 👉 State Agencies Dealing with ECE
- 👉 Local School Boards

Second Step – Get Information

Ask Questions:

- ✦ What are the top three ECE issues in your state?
- ✦ How does a bill become a law?
- ✦ How does the budget get made?
- ✦ Who are the chairs of the critical committees?
- ✦ Who are your issue's champions? Who are the opponents? Who are the legislators who are "persuadables"?

Third Step – Get Involved

✦ Use advocacy and action alerts to tell you:

- ✦ When to act
- ✦ Type of action
- ✦ What message to use

✦ Remember – you are the expert

✦ Have information to personalize your message

Third Step – Get Involved

Different Levels of Involvement

- ✦ Public Hearing Testimony
- ✦ Lobby Visits to your policymakers in DC, at the State House and in home districts
- ✦ Rallies

Things to Remember

- ✦ Policy change is incremental
- ✦ Achieving a short term goal is just as important as reaching the ultimate goal
- ✦ Celebrate your successes – no matter how small