
Early Childhood Advocacy: Moving Forward

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Goals

To share a sense that change is possible

To gain some additional insight into how to move the ECD agenda forward



What do you think of when you hear the word advocacy?

"advocacy always seemed like something distant, complicated...."



What is advocacy?



Taking a position to influence an action

- Advocating for an individual child or family
- Advocating for changes in program policies
- Advocating for changes in private policies
- **Advocating for changes in public policies**

Approaches

Rights based

Evidence based


Activist approach

Use or create an opportunity to move a policy
Organize

Analytic approach

Research
Policy Analysis
Use or create an opportunity to move policy

**Combination--Each provides useful perspectives for
the work of the other**



Challenges when talking about advocacy and policy process across borders

- ❑ Values (rights based, evidence based; family responsibility, collective responsibility, social justice)
- ❑ Structure and resources of the government
- ❑ Political environment
- ❑ Needs of children and families
- ❑ Current level of services

When ? You use your advocacy skills throughout the policy process

- When you want to encourage decision makers to develop a policy
- When the actual policies are being defined
- When you work to enact the policy
- After the policy is established and you monitor implementation

Our job is not over once a policy is established, we need to make sure the policy is put in place, put in place well, and adjusted along the way.

Advocacy attitudes “dispositions”

- ❑ **You must believe** that change is possible and you can make a difference
- ❑ **Confidence** is essential
- ❑ Advocacy has to be **intentional**, change does not just happen based on a set of recommendations or a report
- ❑ **Change takes time**, and does not go in a straight line
- ❑ You need to **meet people** where they are
- ❑ You must be **ready** to take advantage of opportunities



Essential conditions for policy development

- There must be **pivotal leverage points** in government or international institutions
- There should be a **broad based group or at least a core group able to influence policy**
- **Timing** must be right.
- The **public** must have a sense of the importance of an issue



9-Keys to making change

- Know what you want
- Be able to communicate your message
- Know the decisionmakers
- Join with others
- Reach out to new champions
- Continue to build public awareness
- Share leadership
- Be persistent
- And.....



1. Know what you want

*“What I have learned is that we all think advocacy is something big and special and that we need to learn a lot and have experts...and that we are not able to do it...and while we are thinking about what we are not capable of doing, we think more and more about advocacy skills and less about **what we want** to advocate for”*

A voice from Serbia



2. Be able to communicate your message

□ **The challenge**

- How do we get people to think about our issues ?
- How do we get them to think about our issues in such a way that they will want to solve them through public policies?



□ **Understanding communication**

- People are not blank slates
- Communication is interactive
- Communication resonates with peoples deeply held values and worldviews
- People have a certain “frame” that affects what they hear
- When communication is effective, people can see other perspectives



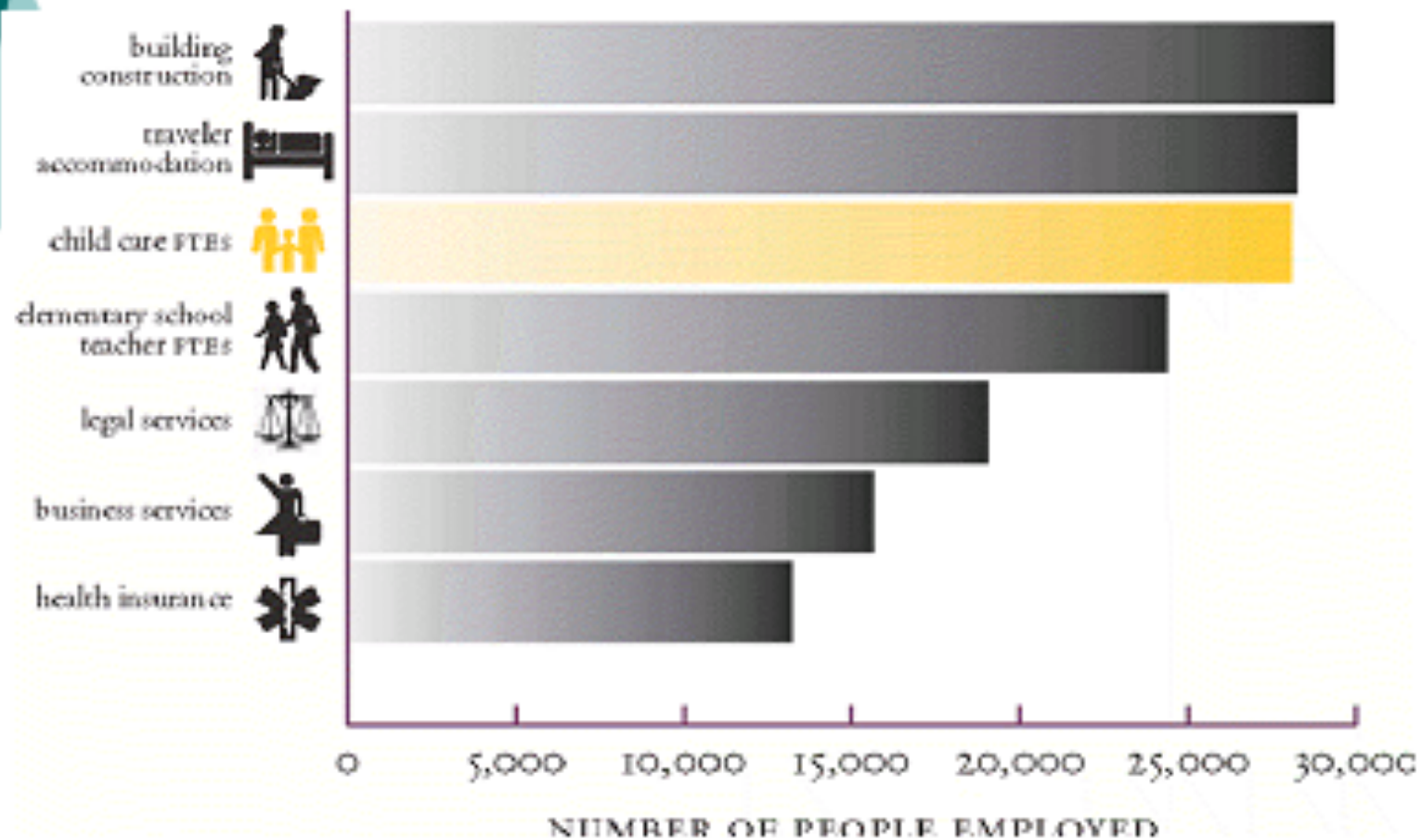
□ Framing

Level one- Big ideas like community, responsibility, family, freedom, justice, success, prevention

Level two- issues like preschool, primary

Level three- specific policy proposals

Minnesota child care has created 28,000 jobs



3. Know the decisionmakers

- **Who are the decision makers?**

 - International level

 - National

 - Division

 - District

 - Village

- **What are their interests ?**

 - Who are they as people and what are they interested in ?
What motivates them?

 - Who influences them ?

- **How can you be a resource?**

 - Do not assume that decision makers know all the issues

 - Position yourself as a resource and provide timely information

4. Join with others

- **Networks-** a group of individuals or organizations come together to share ideas and strategies (electronic listserves, websites, professional associations, meetings, conferences)
- **Coalitions-** a group of individuals or organizations come together to move a specific agenda or accomplish a goal
- **You can join with others at multiple levels**
 - Community, district or national level
 - Regional level
 - International level- The Consultative Group on Early Care and Development

5. Reach out to new champions/ new messengers

- Sometimes the best messengers are not us
- Who influences policy and how do we encourage them to be champions for children?
 - health community
 - religious leaders
 - elders
 - law enforcement
 - business/ economists
 - Others?



- In the US Docs For Tots is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, advocacy organization, specifically focused on very young children and their families. Docs For Tots was formed to encourage more doctors to fulfill their important role as active advocates for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers on the national, state and local levels.
- In Turkey, medical students work on behalf of young children.
- In Brazil, a state health minister is a national champion for early childhood development.

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6. Build public awareness

- Purposes
- Types of media
- Tips
- Timing



Purposes of public awareness

- To reach parents to change specific behavior
- To bring an issue to the public's attention
- To influence a specific decision

....Public awareness, public opinion, public will



Types of media

- Print
 - New articles
 - Feature articles
 - Editorials
 - Letters to the editor

- Radio
- Television
- Video
- Movies
- Other ?



Tips to remember

- Keep it simple, frame it
- Tell a story
- Use numbers strategically
- Know your audience
- Repeat your message



Timing

- When there seems to be interest in a related topic
- When there is an event that will draw attention to the issue
- When a related report or study is about to be published

....ride the wave....



7. Share leadership

- Support emerging leaders, diverse leaders, parent and community leaders
- Encourage leaders who can talk about practice, policy and research
- Leaders who set a round table
- Leaders who know how to follow
- Leaders who know how to let go



8. Be persistent

Advocacy is for long distance runners.....

.....Change takes time



9. And..... Take care of yourself

- Assuring your own health
- Balancing work and family
- Being with friends
- Finding time for you....
 - Reflection
 - Relaxation
 - Renewing your spirit.....

*“Humanity owes the child the best
it has
to give”*

Eglantyne Jebb,
Founder of Save the Children, 1919

