

RAISE YOUR VOICE

As a provider; a teacher; an administrator; collaborator, or supporter, we face opportunities to grow as an **EARLY CHILDHOOD CHAMPION** every day! Take a moment to communicate the importance of early learning and development to the communities in which you live, work, and connect. **Use these tips to help you raise your voice to ensure opportunities for all children to grow, learn, and thrive!**



TALK, TALK, TALK!

Talk to people – at the office/grocery store/staff meetings/PTA events/in your neighborhood -- and tell them about the value early childhood programs, services, and supports. Tell them how these programs offer a foundation for strong communities...even a friendly conversation makes you an advocate!

STAY INFORMED

Keep up with state and national activity on early childhood issues. Contact and visit the websites/social media pages for the latest updates from these (and other) organizations:

- Early Learning PA (ELPA)
- Pre-K for PA
- PennAEYC
- PAEYC
- NAEYC
- Child Care Aware
- First Five Years Fund

GET TO KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS...AND THEIR STAFF MEMBERS.

They represent you...can you get them to champion your cause? Start by getting to know them and their teams. Visit legislator websites to read about their chosen issues and priorities. Invite them to your program/school/organization to see firsthand how it adds value to the community and the region. Tell them to support your cause and related policies that support high-quality learning experiences across settings and developmental stages. Schedule appointments by calling legislator offices. Invite your legislator to join your program/school organization for a special event. Allow policymakers to see the impact on your students/families/clients and you may gain an important ally.

ADD INFO TO YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL/SCHOOL/CHURCH NEWSLETTER.

Volunteer to write an advocacy piece or column for the newsletter. Highlight ways that supporters and advocates may help the cause (e.g. letter-/postcard-writing campaign; event volunteerism; calls to legislators; etc.).



DISTRIBUTE HANDOUTS.

Provide important information on early childhood issues in writing for people to read later or to pass on to others. Post information for all to see. Visit the websites/social media pages of the organizations listed above for a wealth of materials.

PLAN AN OUTREACH/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT.

Create or spotlight an event that showcases your issue and get the community involved...then invite elected officials to your events!

USE YOUR ARMY OF ADVOCATES!

Call upon coworkers who know and appreciate the value of early childhood initiatives like you do. Teach them some advocacy basics and keep them informed of current events.

VISIT LEGISLATORS. OFTEN.

Schedule appointments at district offices. Visit Harrisburg offices. Join us on Capital Caravans. Stay connected to early childhood issues at the state level and prepare to ask your legislator if he/she speaks up for -- and bases votes on -- the best interests of our kids.

OFFER INTERNET TOURS AND STORIES.

Create or share video content that walks legislators through early childhood issues. Share a clip of a family talking about their experience with a provider. Share a story on a successful transition from an early childhood environment to Kindergarten. Use the people and experiences around you to illustrate impact.

GET PRESS.

You secured an early childhood presentation opportunity? A legislator agreed to attend your community event? CONGRATULATIONS! Now it's time to get the word out...Distribute a press release. Call a local radio/TV station or newspaper. Just get coverage! Need a little help developing key messages or answers to tough questions? Call PAEYC at 412-421-3889 to speak with the Public Policy Team.

ACT AS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD AMBASSADOR.

Go wherever people gather to spread your message! Offer to speak on your specific area of knowledge. Enlist your allies and supporters to help prepare...or to present with you!

BUILD YOUR NETWORK.

Choosing to speak out for children makes you a powerful agent of change in your own right. Involving more people makes your message even stronger. Develop a network of willing advocates in your community to build the voice of early childhood. Start a phone tree, Facebook group, and or an email list to keep in touch. When we need to take action, you know exactly who – and how – to make that call!

ADD YOUR IDEA HERE. AND KEEP US IN THE LOOP!

Each advocate comes with a unique set of perspectives, interests, and skills – not to mention that they come *from* a variety of backgrounds and circumstances. As you move forward and adapt your advocacy efforts to suit your cause and your community, feel free to share stories of your success (and the new ideas that led to it), your photos, and your social media messaging with PAEYC. Your ideas, your energy, and your input keeps our advocacy campaigns fresh and relevant, while helping us to gauge impact.

Your work -- and your voice -- makes a difference in the lives of our children.