

BUILDING THE POLITICAL CAPITAL OF EARLY CARE PROVIDERS AND PARENTS

Opportunities for providers and parents

- Earn political credibility by active and visible involvement – want folks to say “If it weren’t for the providers and parents, this would never have happened.”
- Learn political skills and strategies, and build organizational capacity, useful beyond the campaign.
- Utilize strengths, connections, skills, and talents.
- Participate in an inspiring and exciting part of a children’s movement.

Challenges for providers and clients

- Competing priorities for time
- Lack of experience and sophistication about the political process
- Misinformed about what is legal to do politically
- Pace of a campaign
- Campaign consultants and managers may not value what providers bring

Assets of early care providers and the parents in their centers

- Very deep understanding of needs and solutions
- Closely connected to parents and children
- Diverse and large group from every part of the county/city
- High level of motivation and commitment to issue

Roles providers and clients can play in a campaign

Voter contact

- Canvassing and tabling
- Phone banking
- Social media
- Agency newsletters
- Post support on neighborhood list-serves like NextDoor
- Personal conversations – gain supporters, neutralize opponents with your personal experience
- Post a lawn sign at your house

Endorsements

- Visibly endorsing the measure
- Recommending potential endorsing organizations
- Presenting case to organizations
- Meeting with key people who are potential endorsers

Media, public speaking

- Speaking at media and other events

- Attending editorial board meetings
- Hosting media and other events at their facility
- Acting as resource for media reporters
- Writing and submitting Op-eds to local and neighborhood papers, social media sites

Building crowds – numbers count

- Mobilizing people to attend key events – e.g. campaign launch
- Bringing children to events – let kids be “used” in campaign

Parent engagement

- Using campaign as a parent empowerment strategy
- Recruiting and training parent leaders

Fundraising

- Outreach to members, Boards, parents
- Meeting with potential donors

Steps to organize provider involvement

1. Train and inspire – conduct meetings for providers/parents to cover the following issues:
 - a. Legal rights re: supporting ballot measures
 - b. Content of measure
 - c. Effective public speaking on the measure – the arguments and the details
 - d. Overview of campaign
2. Create a structure with the campaign leadership that facilitates provider involvement
 - a. Provider representatives and liaisons on Steering Committee
 - b. Meeting with campaign consultant to negotiate role for providers and parents
3. Create a “landscape” of skills, connections, and volunteer commitments of providers/parents to incorporate into the campaign
 - a. Survey providers and parents about skills and interests in campaign
 - b. Follow-up calls
4. Presentations to key Boards of Directors and/or staffs
 - a. Get endorsements, contributions, lists, volunteers, other engagement
5. Support and monitor provider contributions to campaign
 - a. Calls and regular meetings

TIPS:

- Involving providers and parents requires time and ongoing effort.
- Parents and providers are often the best spokespeople.
- Learning to be political builds power for next advocacy goal.