



# Advocacy – Spreading the word

## Why advocate?

As early care and education becomes more of a key focus for state and national government, and more states adopt Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), advocacy is becoming increasingly important. Promoting the goals of quality early care and education – help children develop to their full potential, support families in providing a good start for their children, increase professional recognition of early childhood educators, and provide quality programs for all children – is seen as a fundamental activity for early childhood professionals today.

In the *NAEYC Position Statement – NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs (2009)*, one of the key elements for professionalism is “engage in informed advocacy for children and families and the profession” which is defined as “(Early childhood professionals) are aware of and engaged in examining ethical issues and societal concerns about program quality and provision of early childhood services and the implications of those issues for advocacy and policy change.” – Standard 6. Becoming a Professional: Key element 6e



professionalism, promoting child and family issues, and informing public policy. Topics for advocacy include the need for quality early care and education; the benefits of early education for children, families, and the community; professionalism in the field; resources needed; best practices; and regulations. Explore these topics and become familiar with current information.

Some advocacy is done informally. The very basic form of advocacy is through your teaching and interactions with children, families, and co-workers. Other informal ways are writing letters or sending emails, making donations, and learning about current trends, practices, and research. Other advocacy is done formally. You can join a professional organization, participate in advocacy events and campaigns, and visit legislators and community leaders.

When you are advocating, it is essential that you have a clear message to share. Identify the specific need or point that you want to share. Gather information, such as needs assessments, research, and trends, to support your message. Have an idea for how to address the specific need or to make a change in policy. Consider political aims, public support, funding, resources, and capacity for change. Identify your audience and determine who to contact first. Decide the best time and method for sharing your message.

Not everyone will respond to your message and some may argue against it. It will take time to convince some people of a need or to make a change. The main thing is that you continue to model best practices, promote quality early care and education, support children and families, and keep growing as a professional.

## How can you advocate?

You can advocate any place and in many ways. Choose where you will be comfortable and have a strong impact. You can be an advocate for quality early childhood within your program, your community, your region, your state, the nation, and even the world.

As an advocate for quality early care and education, you can focus on creating awareness, building support, working for change, developing

## GETTING INVLOVED &amp; STAYING INFORMED

## EVENTS

## NETWORKS

## Organizations

- AAP – American Academy of Pediatrics – [www.paaap.org/adv\\_landing.php](http://www.paaap.org/adv_landing.php)
- PACCA – PA Child Care Association – [www.pacca.org](http://www.pacca.org)
- NAA – National Afterschool Alliance – [www.naaweb.org](http://www.naaweb.org)
- NAFCCP – National Association of Family Child Care Providers – [www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org)
- PA Partnerships for Children – [www.papartnerships.org](http://www.papartnerships.org)
- BUILD – [www.buildinitiative.org](http://www.buildinitiative.org)
- LEARN teams – [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org) (under Community Outreach)
- Pennsylvania's Promise for Children – <http://paprom.convio.net/>
- NACCRRRA – [www.naccrra.org/policy](http://www.naccrra.org/policy)
- The National Women's Law Center – [www.nwlc.org](http://www.nwlc.org)
- World Forum – [www.worldforumfoundation.org/wf/wp/](http://www.worldforumfoundation.org/wf/wp/)

## Campaigns

- Week of the Young Child – [www.naeyc.org/woyc](http://www.naeyc.org/woyc)
- Provider Appreciation Day – [www.providerappreciationday.org/index.php](http://www.providerappreciationday.org/index.php)
- Lights on Afterschool – [www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm)

## RESOURCES

## Toolkits

- NAEYC – [www.naeyc.org/policy/advocacy](http://www.naeyc.org/policy/advocacy)
- Pre-K Now – [www.preknow.org/advocate/index.cfm](http://www.preknow.org/advocate/index.cfm)
- Spark Action – <http://sparkaction.org/action>
- NACCRRRA – [www.naccrra.org/policy/](http://www.naccrra.org/policy/)
- PSAYDN – <http://www.psaydn.org/policy.php>
- PA Quest – [www.paquest.org](http://www.paquest.org)
- Zero to Three – [www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/policy-toolkit/](http://www.zerotothree.org/public-policy/policy-toolkit/)

## RESEARCH

## References:

NAEYC Position Statement – NAEYC Standard for Early Childhood Professional Preparation Programs (2009) [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org).  
 NAEYC Advocacy Toolkit (2004) [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org). (Public Policy)