Keeping the Momentum:
Advocacy and Communications Innovations

Helen Blank, National Women’s Law Center
Special Delivery!
Advocates from NWLC, CLASP, NAEYC, NBCDI, Child Care Aware of America, Early Care and Education Consortium, CDF, Head Start, ZERO TO THREE, and MomsRising delivered over 30,000 letters and artwork to Cecilia Munoz at the White House.
Offline Events to keep up momentum

- Event – Chutes and Ladders on the Capitol Lawn
- Event – Early Learning Builds Our Future!
Facebook Graphics make a difference!

- Story collection graphics allowed us to send all 100 Senators stories from their constituents
- We delivered valentines to Members’ district offices and posted matching graphics online
STRONG START IN ACTION

Online actions

- **Our #PreKForAll Twitter storm on 6/5/13:**
  - Tended nationally for over an hour
  - 40 million potential viewers

- **Our #StrongStart Twitter storm on 1/21/14:**
  - Had tons of people send in pictures
  - Tended in multiple cities

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- **Barack Obama @BarackObama**
  
  Retweet if you believe in #PreKForAll. The smartest investment we can make as a nation is in our children.

- **Kirsten Gillibrand @SenGillibrand**
  
  Proud to be a co-sponsor of Sen. @MazieHirono’s Pre-K Act to expand access to high quality Pre-K to all our children #PreKforall

- **Arne Duncan @arneduncan**
  
  Retweet if you agree. Early learning is the best investment we can make in our country. #PreKForAll

- **Paulette Aniskoff @Paniskoff44**
  
  Early learning advocates across the country are speaking out for #PreKforALL and @arneduncan is about to take q&a!

- **Senator Dick Durbin @SenatorDurbin**
  
  Investing in #earlyed gives children the solid foundation they need to succeed from elementary school to college&beyond #PreKforall

- **Senator Patty Murray @PattyMurray**
  
  #prekforall not only benefits children, but parents. Many can go back to work or school. The ROI in early ed is great for our #economy.
HOW DO WE DO IT?
KEY COMPONENTS OF KEEPING UP THE DRUMBEAT

- Awesome Visual
- Plenty of Notice
- Help from our Friends
- Integrate Social Media
- Make it Easy
- Replicate Success

TAKE RISKS
**Tweet Chat**

- Q&A format
- One host group
- Multiple featured guests
- You control the message

**Best uses:**
- Bill intro
- New data release
- Any time you want to set the agenda

**Twitter Storm**

- Virtual rally
- Anyone can participate
- No set agenda
  - Which means no controlled message

**Best uses:**
- Making your group’s voice/angle heard on a big current event
- Groups working together on general topic with varying positions / goals
- When it matters more that people are talking than what they’re saying
**CHAT VS. STORM**

**Tweet Chat**

- **White House Af-Am Ed**
  
  Q2 Please share an example of a successful strategy working to support achievement & access for Black girls.
  
  12:55 PM - 26 Jun 2014

- **LDF - Legal Defense Fund**
  
  A2 AA girls suspended more than all girls & most boys. Baltimore changed discipline code and is ending this disparity #AfAmIdChat
  
  12:53 PM - 26 Jun 2014

- **Nakisha M. Lewis**
  
  A2 I believe funding advocacy campaigns to elevate the voices of Black girls & provide access to decision tables #AfAmIdChat
  
  12:52 PM - 26 Jun 2014

- **TFA-Black Community**
  
  A2 WOC are vastly underrepresented in the growing STEM fields, and we hope to work together to increase those numbers. #AfAmIdChat
  
  12:51 PM - 26 Jun 2014

**Twitter Storm**

- **Yahoo!**
  
  Yahoo! 4 UF Children (Updated - Sep 13)
  
  I believe we should #InvestInKids because the achievement gap starts early.
  
  04/08/2014

- **Karin Muthes**
  
  Children are learning on day one. That’s when we need to #InvestInKids.
  
  04/08/2014
HOW DO I GET STARTED?

- Decide which format is best for you (chat or storm) based on previous slide
- Choose a hashtag
- Choose a date
- Organize your guests
- Prep your materials
GETTING STARTED: HASHTAGS

- Short, specific unifying factor of every tweet you’ll send
- Links to unique page →
- Communicate a message
  - I should know what you’re talking about just by looking at your hashtag
  - Only use acronyms that have meaning in your community
- Consider how your hashtag idea could be “hijacked” by people who disagree with you
- Hashtags take up characters!
  - You only get 140 per tweet, and both hashtags & links count against those 140.
  - #InvestInKids is a better hashtag than #InvestInEarlyLearning for this reason

KEEP IN MIND: you only get 140 characters at a time, but you can string together multiple tweets to form a complete idea.
GETTING STARTED: SCHEDULING

- Choose a date that makes sense relative to what you’ll be talking about →

- Be triple-sure you’ve pre-cleared the date with all participants

- Be time-zone friendly where applicable
  - If you’re in Ohio but have affiliates in San Diego, don’t schedule your Twitter action for 10 am ET!

Tweet about the importance of expanding access to high-quality early learning!

Back to school action scheduled for September, when many schools start

When we wanted to discuss the State of the Union, we tweeted on the day of the speech

Strong Start SOTU Action

On Tuesday, January 21st, 2014, childcare coalition partners sent pictures and messages to President Obama, encouraging him to discuss early learning in his upcoming State of the Union address. Check out the great pictures below!


GETTING STARTED:
ORGANIZING YOUR GUESTS

- Send a Save the Date → to anyone you’re counting on to participate, about two weeks before the event is slated

- RECRUIT, RECRUIT, RECRUIT!
  - If this is a tweet chat, you will have already reached out to your featured guests before this save the date
    - Legislators, executive branch members, bill authors, advocates, teachers, big names in the field
    - You can also crowdsource questions for a tweet chat from your social media followers
  - For a Twitter storm, this Save the Date should go far and wide to relevant networks via email
    - Also post to your social media accounts! Twitter, Facebook, etc.

Sample Save the Date

#InvestInKids Tweetchat
Tuesday, December 10 at 2:00 EST

On this Tweetchat we will be discussing the Strong Start for America’s Children Act. We have a variety of great guests confirmed – Congressman George Miller, Mark Shriver, Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives at Save the Children, and Marian Wright Edelman, Founder and President of Children’s Defense Fund. Stay tuned for even more special guests!

Please join us and invite your governors, local leaders, and elected officials to join as well.

Here are some sample tweets to promote the chat – feel free to adapt them to fit your audience.

Join [YOUR ORGANIZATION’S TWITTER HANDLE] & @nwic for a tweetchat on early learning! 12/10 from 2-3pm ET on #InvestInKids

Ask [YOUR ORGANIZATION’S TWITTER HANDLE] & @nwic YOUR questions about early learning! Join our 12/10 tweetchat from 2-3pm ET on #InvestInKids

Join our early learning tweet chat w/ @nwic on 12/10 from 2-3pm ET and tell us why YOU think we should #InvestInKids!

Want to learn more about the early learning legislation? Join [YOUR ORGANIZATION’S TWITTER HANDLE] & @nwic from 2-3pm ET on 12/10 on #InvestInKids!

Resources
Attached and below is a graphic that you can share on social media to promote the tweet chat on the 10th.

Sample Save the Date email

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Always have your materials ready ahead of time!
- Twitter is a real-time service, but that doesn’t mean you have to come up with everything on the fly!

For a Twitter storm:
- Prepare sample tweets to send your members/partners.
  - These should be different from the tweets you’ll send from your own account, to vary the messaging of the event.

For a tweet chat:
- The host account should finalize the official set of questions about a week in advance, and send them to the guests to prep answers.
- Everyone should send final answers back to the host group so a final script of the entire Q&A can be made & sent around.
- Use the script as a way to measure time between questions are sent out, so you’re sure everyone has said their piece.
| Have your Twitter account open so you can keep track of what your feed will look like to people who follow you. |
| Search your hashtag in another tab, so you can watch all the tweets that get sent on that tag, in real-time, in one place. |
| Use more tabs to keep an eye on your key partners or members, or your featured guests during a chat. |
| If you pre-schedule tweets for a Twitter storm, you should keep a tab open with your scheduling program (like Hootsuite or Tweetdeck) |

Note: these are not necessary, so don’t worry if you don’t use them!
DURING THE EVENT: TRENDING

The goal of a Twitter storm is to trend - locally or nationally.

Trending is when a large number of people in one area are all tweeting about the same thing. You’re going for critical mass.

All engagement helps trending:
- Tweets
- Retweets
- Replies that include the hashtag
DURING THE EVENT: RETWEETS

During a tweet chat

- Start the chat with an introduction tweet, the way you’d kick off a conference call, and end with a thank you to signal that the chat is over.

- If you’re the host account, retweet all the answers from your guests so your feed shows the full script & your followers can follow along
  - They can see the whole conversation if they search the hashtag, but if they only follow one participant, or are checking a few hours later, they may not be able to see what’s going on

- Retweet any grasstops or key partners who happen to participate even if they aren’t featured guests

During a Twitter storm

- Retweet your grasstops and key partners/members to be friendly and encourage them to do more Twitter events with you in the future
  - And to bump engagement so you have a better chance of trending!

- Keep a balance of retweets and original tweets
  - You don’t want to look self-centered but don’t want to drown your own voice out either

NOTE: you can reply to unsolicited / random tweets that come in if you want, but it’s best to be selective and keep your attention on what you’ve prepped.
QUESTIONS?

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