

Child Care Advocacy in a Post-Pandemic Nation

CONNECT23 | October 26, 2023



***How should advocating
for child care in 2024
and beyond look and
feel different from what
we did in 2019 or
before?***



Goals

- What policy changes can put states on a path to transformative change?
- What advocacy strategies can create more power to secure bold wins?
- What do we need to do differently in order to advance more transformative policies and build more power?

Agenda

- Reflections and Lessons from 4 States: FL, ID, MA, OR (~35 min)
- Individual Reflections and Small Group Discussions (~25 min)
- Whole-Group Sharing and Discussion (~20 min)





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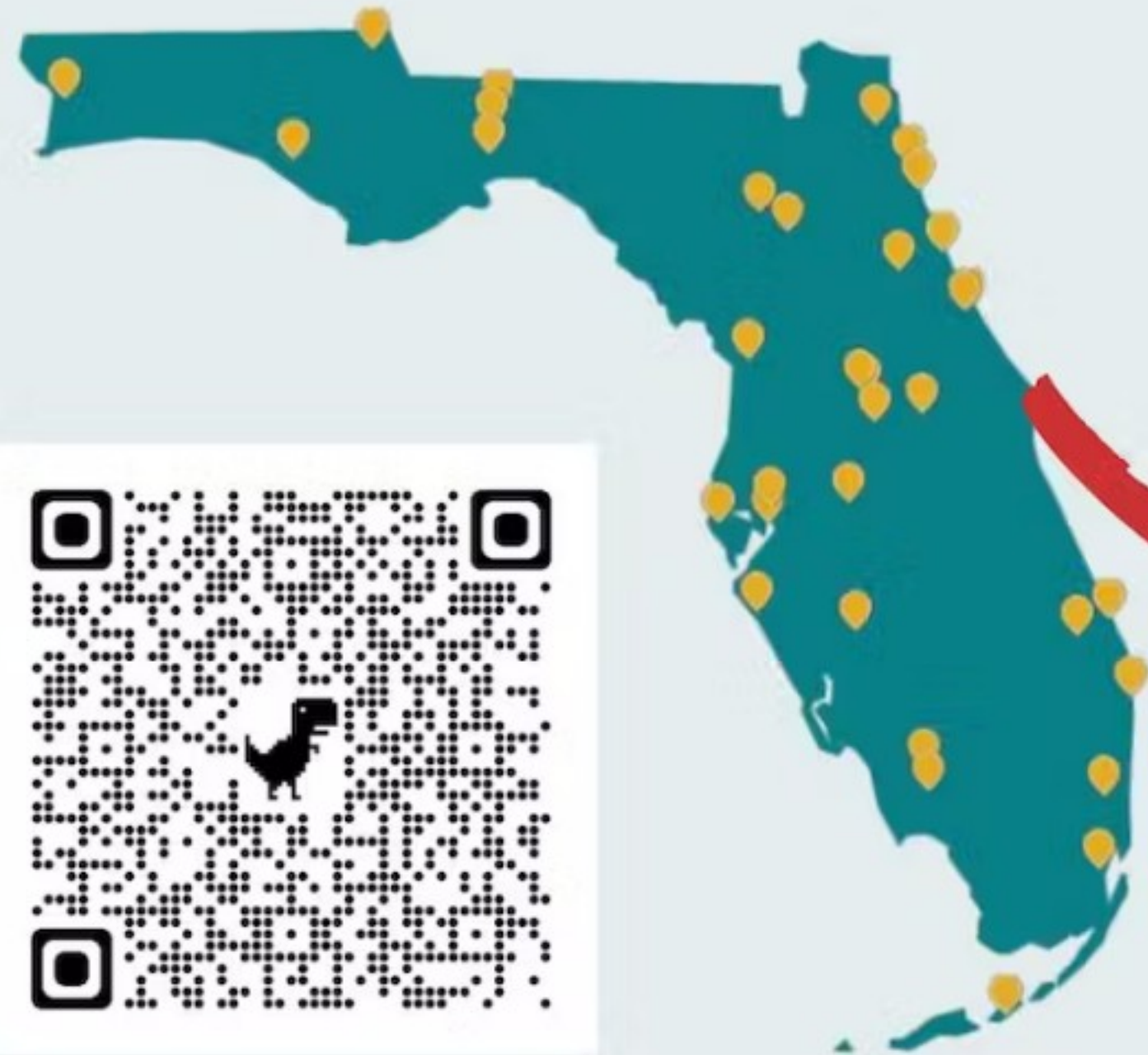
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A collaborative endeavor

The Future Project: Imagining a New Early Learning Future in Florida

Made possible by Helios Education Foundation



850+
participants

70%
parents & educators

65
listening and
feedback sessions

Florida's Early Learning Roadmap

Fall 2023



The
Children's
Movement
of Florida

Strategies for Children

Strategies for Children
SPEAKERS' BUREAU



WE PRIORITIZE RELATIONSHIP

PAIRED INTRODUCTIONS

Constructivist Listening Dyad

1. Each person is given equal time to talk and should use their entire time to talk.
1. The listener does not interpret, paraphrase, analyze, give advice, or break in with a personal story.
1. The listener does not take notes and does not repeat what is said
1. The listener gives undivided attention

Reflect and share:

- Introductions if needed
- Who is one person who has deeply influenced you?
- In what ways have they shaped who you are today? How does their influence show up?
- After 3 minutes, switch roles

WE PRIORITIZE IMPACTED PARTNERS

WEIGHTED VOTING ACTIVITY

Why weighted voting, as opposed to traditional consensus decision making?

Systemic and institutional decision-making power has been intentionally structured and concentrated amongst a White minority, which intersects with additional forms of privilege (personal identities, lack of restricted/ minimal funding for systems level work, etc.).



- Partners who represent culturally specific organizations and communities furthest from justice will get 3 votes using red stars




- Non-culturally specific, direct service providers will get 2 votes using blue stars



- Those with greater proximity to power (White dominant advocacy orgs, government entities, funders, etc.) will get 1 vote using the green stars

LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS

EDUCATE NEW LEGISLATORS, ENGAGE W/ GOV & GROW LIST OF SUPPORTERS



REPLICABLE SITE
VISIT MODEL



LEGISLATOR
BRIEFING



REPLICABLE TOWN
HALL MODEL

WE CO-CREATE

What early childhood issues continue to impact families and young children in the communities you work or live in?

What emerging issues might we need to prioritize working on together in upcoming session(s)?

**Advocacy
Process
and
Access**

housing and legal services money for migrants and asylum seekers arriving from the border, many of whom are young children

Liability insurance for child care providers is becoming a HUGE problem. 300% increase!!

health care: hard to get in anywhere for services. no one can get access to behavioral health, neuropsych eval, language & cultural barriers

**Employment
Related Day
Care (ERDC)
funding
shortfall**

tracking the child welfare reform happening in DHS with the goal of fewer children being removed from parental care

**Investment in
Early
Childhood
Mental Health**

**Suspension
Expulsion
Prevention
Program
funding**

Ensuring there is access to child care and preschool for children with disabilities

higher quality interpretation services for a variety of languages beyond the few that the state recognizes across all service areas: health care, disability services, etc. not sure

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education is underfunded and, unfortunately, more children will not have what they need to enter kindergarten.

**Increased
equitable
access to
home visiting**

Transparency in the Raise Up Oregon 2.0 Implementation Strategies

**Stronger data
collection &
data
transparency
@ DELC**

**Investments
in Infant
Mental Health**

insurance market for child care providers - expensive & impossible to find!

Accountability for how programs are using expansion funding (i.e. Seeding Justice)

**migrant a
refugee family
engagement
in early
childhood
continuum**

**Child Care
Subsidy
waiting
list :(**

**Affordability
for families
who do not
qualify for
child care
subsidy**

Affordability of child care in 0-3 being most acute - especially for families who don't qualify for support

**Workforce
dev, not just in
child care, i.e.
mental health,
home visiting,
etc**

**Concerned
about
advocacy in
support of
school
vouchers**

Housing instability and homelessness for both families who meet income guidelines for subsidized housing and families who exceed those income limits.

Consistent access to nutritious foods for families who do not qualify for programs.

child care wait list - even worse for kids with disabilities, since there are already fewer programs

Supporting ADA requirements for kids with disabilities - where does this happen? how?

lack of access to child care can also lead families with children with disabilities to stop working => poverty, homelessness, etc.

**Funding
for
EI/ECSE**

Fear of providing information for EI/ECSE in case the system will view them as bad parents... Implicit bias, concern that child welfare could get involved, relevant assessments

Time to Reflect!



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Use code: 2577 2117



What lessons has my organization learned about what it takes to advocate for a transformative North Star?

59 responses

Trust and transparency between inside and outside game.
Or rather outside and outside game.

Building relationships

Broaden the tent to include as many constituencies as possible

Listening to grassroots voices!

Centering voices of people most impacted

It is important to start with internal equity work.

Lived experiences are important

Baby steps. It takes (a lot) of time.

Know your starting point.

What lessons has my organization learned about what it takes to advocate for a transformative North Star?

59 responses

It takes everyone

Actually having a clearly defined transformative North Star.

Change takes time, we're in a marathon- not a sprint.

Open conversations with legislators

Access for affordable and quantity childcare for familiea

Must invest in staff capacity to conduct robust grassroots work

Elevating voices from the field as the experts.

building and maintaining relationships as well as being honest and keeping your word

Cannot hide from being honest about big problems requiring big solutions. Need to normalize the fact that child care cannot be meaningfully addressed without new funding.

What lessons has my organization learned about what it takes to advocate for a transformative North Star?

59 responses

You have to include as many voices as possible.

Ability for all to articulate the issue

It is time to go big and bold

We cannot tell people what they need. Families need to be driving our policy agenda and not the other way around.

WHOSE North Star is it? Compelling advocacy comes from communities most impacted who have shaped the ask.

To think more boldly, rather than incrementally or piecemeal.
To enlist different kinds of partners, not just the usual suspects.

Learning to be politically bilingual. Working deliberately to expand the circle of support, rather than simply "preaching to the choir."

Communication amongst our Grassroots Committees

Let the people who are most impacted take the lead. They are the experts.

What lessons has my organization learned about what it takes to advocate for a transformative North Star?

59 responses

Build families as advocates

It takes a positive vision that's fueled by abundance as well as the determination to stay in the work for years.

We don't have to play by the legislators' rules anymore. If we're loud enough, they can't ignore us.

Must involve voices from every target audience impacted by the issue

Help broaden thinking beyond scarcity mindset of those who have not received fair investments in the field

More collective professional development sessions, timely reviews and discussions with employees.

It is imperative to connect the voices of LIVED EXPERIENCE of providers, teachers and parents. And SHARE/SHOUT those stories so that everyone can hear and learn and move to action.

Small wins can be done under the radar, but the big wins we need require a public campaign.

Building an argument that can appeal broadly through a number of different avenues - equity, ROI, building the workforce/economy, etc.

What lessons has my organization learned about what it takes to advocate for a transformative North Star?

59 responses

An agreed upon north star in the first place that is not fighting for crumbs. Clear, aligned talking points for everyone across all sectors uses. Joint oppy's to advocate with one voice,

Building relationships and genuinely listen!

Feels like we have a few key stars, not just one North Star ask, and that is ok. More stars have helped us engage more people in the field.

It takes time.

Policy makers need to hear from the frontline, need to feel the emotion of the battle

Elevating voices and telling stories of parents, providers, business and industry and even the larger community around early care and education

Not being afraid of multiple tries.

Early childhood investments are a recipe — not a menu from which to choose

Use the voice of providers and parents. Have a United message from all advocacy groups, child care providers and parents. Sponsored a public awareness campaign around early childhood.

What lessons has my organization learned about what it takes to advocate for a transformative North Star?

59 responses

Unified vision and messaging

To be inclusive of the voices of parents and educators

Use the timing to be bold

Collaboratively identify the North Star. Work in partnership to navigate challenges. Help elevate the voices of the community.

MA - we are not community organizers, we are organizers of community

Persistence

Finding a way to communicate child care issues in non political terms and through lenses that allow for discussion. Talking workforce and economic development. Etc.

Celebrating small wins

Relationship building - elevating voices of those impacted

What lessons has my organization learned about what it takes to advocate for a transformative North Star?

59 responses

Drawing on strategies like improvement science to make sure we actually understand the current system and can identify real (and measurable!) aims and drivers to get there.

That factors other than number of kids served should help drive allocations of \$. That states can think more strategically about how to use money to incentivize focused, priority work.

Be consistent and present. Representation matters

You need to fund TA efforts that are led by trusted groups in communities

It requires good data and a transparent methodology.

What lessons has my organization learned about ensuring child care funding is allocated equitably?

52 responses

Making funding permanent is critical

Keep the family at the center of your inquiry and equitable allocations follow.

If you don't already have a long term vision or plan the urgency of the moment can force short sided decisions.

Not being afraid to learn new approaches/strategies

It's better to accomplish this through behind the scenes implementation rather than stark policy statements

Need to invest time and resource to build capacity of providers who have not yet accessed state funded PreK or higher state standards

Doing the groundwork to know how to reach "hard to reach" populations through cultural brokers etc

Use data, get it if you don't have it, meet the needs of all

Areas of greatest need and lowest resources need more funding and need to be a priority for receiving funding first.

What lessons has my organization learned about ensuring child care funding is allocated equitably?

52 responses

Not to think we necessarily have all the answers about how to do that, and working with and through trusted on-the-ground groups who do.

you need to be very knowledge about in order to make sure the legislators understand what equitability means and its role in early care and education

Showing the big impact of what could be perceived as small changes in policy

Gathering, analyzing and reporting data on the workforce we support

It requires good data and a transparent methodology.

Mine data to find inequities

Informed by stakeholders

A sustainable and accountable governance infrastructure to work with is necessary

Nothing is one-size-fits-all. There must be room for equitable accessibility.

What lessons has my organization learned about ensuring child care funding is allocated equitably?

52 responses

We made sure to use several measures to ensure equity. Working within the field and giving providers and parents voice to share what is needed helped to ensure equity.

Taking the time to listen to all families in and out of school settings and see how the funding could be put to the best use

Simply grant processes and provide technical assistance. Large corporate chains have an array of resources here, while home based providers have few, if any. The rich get richer.

Bring data. Make sure it is accurate.

We need to set guardrails to limit corporate takeover of the field, especially during a moment when small providers are burnt out and struggling

We learned that FCC programs are often treated as an afterthought when it comes to state funding and this disproportionately impacts providers of color.

You have to sustain the field beyond survival mode first to advance quality improvement efforts, even just the conversations. Focus on comprehensive support for families and meeting whole child needs

It is recognizing that the funding inequity is not an issue created by the pandemic, but rather exacerbated by it, and thinking about it in a broader context.

The need to have more families informing policy

What lessons has my organization learned about ensuring child care funding is allocated equitably?

52 responses

Put a face on the working families that are left out of current policies

We learned that we must give a larger voice to staffed family child care homes, which are more aligned with equity and non traditional care. So much talk was focused on large center providers.

You need to both engage the field and design funding processes differently if you want to have different results

Bringing community voices into the conversation and really thinking about how to reach those who may be hardest to reach - or may have the least reason to believe their knowledge will matter.

we had to spend time educating policy makers on the current system and be thoughtful about our language

Ensure that the process for distributing funds does not create unintended barriers. Dismantle policies that have historically distributed resources to those that already have greater resources.

we had to spend time educating policy makers on the current system and be thoughtful about our language

Broad appreciation for equity. And, the definition of 'equitably' is evolving as we learn more about which types of programs need support and who is still left out.

Family child care programs must be brought in early and often

What lessons has my organization learned about ensuring child care funding is allocated equitably?

52 responses

Don't assume. Ask those that are actually doing the work

Centering those most impacted and listening to their voices and perspectives on how funding should be distributed will help ensure funding is allocated equitably

We need to ask for what we need, not just what we think we can get.

Allocation of funding- in our state is shaped in part by the department. Finding ways to share implications. It's ok to make a mistake as long as you are committed to improving.

We need to ask for what we need, not just what we think we can get.

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We tried to be universal in opportunity but used SVI and other factors to distribute the amount of funding.

We need to ask for what we need, not just what we think we can get.

Giving FCC priority

What lessons has my organization learned about ensuring child care funding is allocated equitably?

52 responses

Inform those in need

Passing the bill is just the first step. Making the process simpler for recipients to access.

Childcare needs to be considered first when making money decisions

FCC voices can not be heard Monday through Friday from 9am - 5pm. Their attention is on your children.

Gotta get a 9:30am call going!

Facilitate bringing the voice of those impacted directly to those who have the power to make change.

Lived experiences will make greater impact and can be paired with selected data/research that sets the stage.

Based on these lessons and what I heard today, how should my organization advocate differently in 2024 (and beyond)?

34 responses

Be more imaginative and allocate bigger budgets

Really appreciate the comment about the budget needed to do this work!

More time to build relationships and listen to providers across the state

More direct parent to legislator conversations

Ask for our long term vision with the short term ask, not just survival money. So many families and kids are left behind.

Advocate for what we need—not what we think we'll get

build more solid relationships with the legislators, that way they can already be informed and there wont be so much confusion during session.

Investing in building bigger and broader coalitions

Bigger budget for outreach and parent engagement

Based on these lessons and what I heard today, how should my organization advocate differently in 2024 (and beyond)?

34 responses

Use technology to bring parent and provider voices to legislative meetings

Have more parent and providers at the table.

Continue to invest in parents/families as advocates — with adequate support for them

Add nuance to our vision of inclusiveness, and increase the presence of community voice from the planning stages onward

Do more of consistent and accessible culturally responsive community outreach and have a budget that reflects this as a priority

Greater focus on equity in message and message development

amplify the voices of families and all types of providers as the driving force

As a child care provider - helping families and teachers to find and share their voices.

Be vulnerable. Do the hard work.

Based on these lessons and what I heard today, how should my organization advocate differently in 2024 (and beyond)?

34 responses

Go big! Center parents and provides. Focus on relationships. Ask for more than we think we can get - it might take time but don't make it seem like small changes will fix the industry. Paint a picture

Not just Spanish translation. Real concerted outreach to communities of color by members of that community - and compensating appropriately

One of our goals is the expansion of parent voices in our work in a way that is relational rather than transactional. We want them to feel ownership over the campaign.

Stop following the rules of advocacy. Use the field's and parents' voice to speak to legislators. Change the processes....we elect them.

Continue to build information paths for policy makers. Use comprehensive inclusion, shorten time frames

Ensure parents are informing and helping to lead the advocacy

We have made steps towards engaging and centering parents in our work but we can do more .

Continue educating parents how to advocate on behalf of children in our parent groups and bring that awareness back to our educators, partners and families

Let the parents / providers lead the conversation and priorities. Not tell them what to prioritize as the policy shop and expect our understanding of the issues to be the same as their experience

Based on these lessons and what I heard today, how should my organization advocate differently in 2024 (and beyond)?

34 responses

Laser-like focus on cultivating support of new/conservative policymakers. Need to rally the votes we don't have, vs the ones we already do

Big, bold, *coordinated* requests in funding

We need to do more to set the agenda in our state based on the voices of those directly impacted rather than reacting to what the state is setting out to do.

Continue to elevate the voices of early childhood educators and families - nothing about us without us.

We need to stop complaining and do something.

Thinking about what Chris shared this morning. Don't try to change minds, build bridges. Relationships matter.

Be flexible. Educators especially FCC voices can not be heard Monday through Friday from 7 - 6. They're providing care to your children.