Reconceptualizing Leadership and Advocacy in ECE:

Placing Teacher Voices at the Center of Workforce Reforms

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Public Policy & Advocacy
“Placing”

- Who is doing the placing?
- Who is being placed?
- How else could this have been framed?
  - Ensuring Teachers Lead Workforce Reforms
  - Elevating Teacher Voice in the Context of Workforce Reforms
  - Power to the Profession
- How would different words change the way you (and others) view the work?
What We’re Up To Today

• State teams examine whose voices are engaged in and working toward early childhood workforce reforms and in this case particularly around workforce compensation.

• Thinking about a “toolkit of ideas” for helping the workforce find and use their voices and become leaders in this effort.
Questions

1. Under what circumstances and where have you used workforce voices to communicate compensation issues?
2. What successes and challenges have you experienced in engaging the workforce in using their voices to communicate compensation issues?
3. How has your work helped to encourage and promote leadership and advocacy with the early education workforce?
4. How has the workforce engaged in this compensation project?
Under what circumstances and where have you used workforce voices to communicate compensation issues?

• **Storytelling / Testimonies**
  • To whom?
  • From whom?
  • To achieve what?
  • Using what messages?
  • With what mechanisms?

• Did it work? What does “work” mean?
What Makes For a Good Storytelling Campaign?

- Timely
- Specific
Beyond Storytelling

• Other successes in using teacher voice to communicate compensation issues?
• Have you used teacher voices not to communicate about workforce issues, but to solve them?
What challenges have you experienced in engaging the workforce in using their voices to communicate compensation issues?
Leadership would be a safe undertaking if your organizations and communities only faced problems for which they already knew the solutions.

- Ron Heifetz
Technical Problems

• May be complex and critically important
• But they are easy to identify
• Often can be solved by an authority or expert
• Require change in just one or a few places
• People are generally receptive to technical solutions
• Solutions can often be implemented quickly—even by edict
Adaptive Problems

- Require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, & approaches to work
- People with the problem do the work of solving it
- Require change in numerous places; usually cross organizational boundaries
- “Solutions” require experiments and new discoveries; they can take a long time to implement and cannot be implemented by edict
We're going on a bear hunt
We're going to catch a big one,
What a beautiful day. We’re not scared.

Uh-oh! A forest!
A big dark forest.
We can't go over it.
We can't go under it.
Oh no!
We've got to go through it!

- Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury
# Challenges of Elevating Teacher Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical</th>
<th>Adaptive</th>
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| • Coalition meetings happen while teachers are in the classroom  
• Educators don’t know how to provide testimony | • Leaders don’t want to share their power  
• Educators don’t feel confident in themselves as advocates |
Solving Technical Problems

Who is primarily responsible for fixing it?
What barriers need to be removed?
Is there a workaround?
Addressing Adaptive Challenges

• Don’t try to use a technical solution to solve an adaptive challenge.

• Getting people to do adaptive work is the mark of leadership.

• Can you tease out the technical problems within the adaptive challenges?
When you’re accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression.

If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.

- Shirley Chisolm
When Addressing Adaptive Challenges

Give work back to the people.

Everyone has special access to information that comes from his or her particular vantage point. Everyone may see different needs and opportunities. People who sense early changes in the marketplace are often at the periphery, but the organization will thrive if it can bring that information to bear on tactical and strategic decisions.
When Addressing Adaptive Challenges

Protect voices of leadership.

- Giving a voice to all people is the foundation of an organization that is willing to experiment and learn.
- But whistle-blowers, creative deviants, and other such original voices routinely get smashed and silenced.
- People speaking beyond their authority usually feel self-conscious and sometimes have to generate "too much" passion to get themselves geared up for speaking out.
- That often makes it harder for them to communicate effectively. But buried inside a poorly packaged interjection may lie an important lesson. To toss it out is to lose valuable information and discourage a potential leader.
How has your work helped to encourage and promote leadership and advocacy with the early education workforce?
It is difficult to balance activism and investing in the greater good with the demands of an ordinary life.

There is a lot going on in the world. There is a lot going on in your world. This is the nature of life.

We try to find ways to balance taking care of ourselves and our families, with caring about the world we live in and the greater good. Sometimes, we will fall short in one of these areas. Sometimes we will fall short in all of these areas. Most of the time, we do the best we can.

- Roxane Gay
Do I have to be an advocate?
You’ve Got This.

› No one is born knowing how to do this!
  • We all have to learn and practice.
› It pays to prepare – don’t wing it!
› You are smart, powerful leaders for children.

(And we have help to offer you!)
QUALITY EDUCATION
Access to high-quality early learning is about realizing the American Dream.

www.americaforearlyed.org  @supportearlyed
JOIN US IN OUR KITCHEN TABLE TALKS
Our weekly newsletter, Kitchen Table Talk, shares early childhood education news from across the country, ways for you to get involved, resources you don't want to miss, and important updates on government policy that will keep you up to date. Check out past issues and sign up today!

EXPAND YOUR PUBLIC POLICY KNOWLEDGE
Learn about federal programs and strategies to advance child care, early learning, and our current and future workforce.

BUILD YOUR ADVOCACY SKILLS
You have the passion. Now, gain the knowledge and skills to take your voice and advocacy efforts to new heights.

BECOME A PROACTIVE ADVOCATE
Download our advocacy postcard and commit to supporting greater investments in early childhood education. Print it out, write down the efforts you promise to participate in, and share your postcard via social media with the hashtag #ECEWins!

TAKE ACTION WITH AMERICA FOR EARLY ED!
Help us mobilize support from voters and policymakers to create better opportunities for children, families, and educators. Help us ensure #ECEWins for all!

ELEVATE OUR CAUSE!
People of all walks of life agree: Investing in high-quality early childhood education and early childhood educators will make America brighter, stronger, and more competitive. You have a role in spreading this message with others.
At America for Early Ed, we want you to have the information, tools, and resources you need to spark a conversation about high-quality early childhood education no matter who or where you are.

Keep reading, talking, and engaging – together we can make sure #ECEwins.
What’s your part?

Advocate for High-Quality Early Learning!

Here are some ideas you can use for your postcard—or dream up your own! Be a champion of early childhood education (ECE) by pledging to:

- Talk at a school board or town council meeting
- Post monthly on social media about ECE
- Call your elected officials to talk about ECE
- Register to vote or help register someone else
- Vote in your local and statewide elections
- Invite an elected official to see ECE in action
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper about ECE
- Sign up for an ECE newsletter to stay informed
- Join the public policy committee of your local affiliate

The sky is the limit when we work together to make sure #ECEwins!

NAEYC appreciates the support of Kaplan Early Learning Company for their contribution to this project.

My actions matter. This year, I will do my part to support early childhood education and educators by:

1. 
2. 
3. 

None of us can do this alone. Inspire others by taking a picture with your postcard actions & share it on social media using #ECEwins!

By submitting this postcard to NAEYC, I agree that America for Early Ed may contact me about future advocacy efforts via email or mail. By checking the box to the right, I am opting out of future email and mail notifications from America for Early Ed.
Opportunities for advocacy and engagement

Go to a meeting.
• Stand up and raise your voice on behalf of children, families and educators.
• City council meeting, a school board meeting, a briefing, a hearing, a rally, or a town hall - in person or on Facebook!
• Get to know your leaders and partners - and let them get to know you.

Tweet.
It’s only 140 characters. You can do it. Follow your elected officials & let them know how you feel about their votes & positions. #ecewins

Join your Affiliate.
• Community sustains us.
• Come together with fellow educators and advocates in your state today.
• Visit www.naeyc.org/membership for more.
Be Ready

There is always a time when intention needs to become action. Stay informed and connected so you can engage, advocate and mobilize at the moment your voice is needed.
How has the workforce engaged in this compensation project?

- Who is “the workforce” in this conversation?
- How would you like them to engage?
- Is there a role for parents?
- What about previous educators?
- Or K-12 educators?
Helping People Act.
Some people say that the only way to expand access to high-quality early childhood programs is for parents to be involved in the political process and advocate for it. Please indicate how interested you might be in getting more personally involved in advocating for increased access to high-quality early childhood education. Please use a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means you have no interest at all and 100 means you are extremely interested, with 50 being neutral.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-50</th>
<th>51-74</th>
<th>75-90</th>
<th>91-100</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>67.3</td>
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</table>
Educators are almost universally willing to cast a pro-ECE vote or talk to friends about early learning.

(Q23. Please indicate how willing you would be to take each of the following actions to help to advocate for increased access to high-quality early childhood education in your community. *Not Part of Split Sample*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Educators</th>
<th>Parents</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>^Voting for a candidate or ballot measure who supported early childhood education</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^Talking to friends and family about supporting early childhood education</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying something where some of the money goes to supporting early childhood education</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearing a t-shirt or bracelet with a slogan supporting early childhood education</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signing an online petition</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^Sending an email or other communication to a public figure or organization</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing, re-sharing, or clicking “like” on an article or image on Facebook, or another online platform</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Educator Subgroup Distinctions on Willingness to Advocate for Early Learning

• Among educators, the groups most willing to advocate include:
  › African-Americans and Latinos
  › Strong liberals/Democrats
  › Under age 40
  › Income below $60,000

• There are large differences by ideology (mean score for “very liberal” is 79 compared to 55 for “very conservative”).

• Small differences by tenure in ECE, job type, ages served, and program type
The strongest messages to encourage educator advocacy focus on the importance of the profession.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Messages</th>
<th>Very Convincing</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><em>(GROWING IMPORTANCE)</em> The awareness of the importance of early childhood education is growing every day. More people are recognizing that we must do more to support babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. Early educators must take that message to policy makers and make sure that early learning programs have the funding and support they need.</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(POWERFUL VOICE)</em> If early educators speak up, people will listen. 88% of U.S. voters say that early childhood educators are important contributors to their community. As the experts on early learning, educators should use their powerful voice to fight for policy changes to make quality early learning available for all children.</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
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Q24. Here are a series of statements from people who are urging early educators to get more personally involved in advocating for increased access to high-quality early learning programs. Please indicate whether you find it very convincing as a reason to get more involved in advocating for early learning, somewhat convincing, or not convincing.
A message around increased compensation in isolation is less compelling.

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<td><strong>(DON’T WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE)</strong> For decades, early childhood educators have known that they should be compensated more fairly and that more should be done to improve the availability of quality early learning programs. But far too often, educators look for someone else to carry that message to policy makers. Early educators cannot wait any longer. It is time for them to speak up and fight for what they know is right.</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(QUALITY)</strong> Despite the work of educators and others, the quality of early learning programs in America is simply not what it needs to be. Educators need to push policy makers to provide more funding to improve the quality and help programs reach their potential.</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(COMPENSATION)</strong> The only way early educators will ever receive fair compensation is by advocating to local, state and federal elected officials who control how much funding goes to early learning programs. If educators do more to demand funding for early learning, it will move the system towards getting them the salaries and benefits they deserve.</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
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Q24. Here are a series of statements from people who are urging early educators to get more personally involved in advocating for increased access to high-quality early learning programs. Please indicate whether you find it very convincing as a reason to get more involved in advocating for early learning, somewhat convincing, or not convincing.
Voters are more likely to call early childhood educators “extremely important” after messaging. This is more than semantics. Your engaged voters are your folks who think their issue is “extremely important.”
Get On the Train That’s Moving

- Child Care Deserts
- Job Guarantees
- PreK Expansion
- Caregiving Economy
- Increased Educational Requirements

- Minimum Wage Increases
- Economic Justice
- Teacher Walkouts
- Apprenticeships
- Others?
Elevating Educator Voice

How could you elevate educator voice in each context?

› How does the context dictate the solution?
› What does it tell you about the relationships you need to develop?

Do you need a lot of educator voices, or just a few?

› What does that tell you about recruitment and support?
› Where do those voices need to come from to be effective?
› Who do they need to be talking to?
Elevating Educator Voice

How will you get the educators what they need?

› Could you use a cohort model?

› Internal to one center, community, etc., or across communities?

Do they need initial training and/or ongoing support?

› How will they get it? Who will provide it?

› What kind of time will it take?

› Who will not be able to participate?
Thank You!

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