

Parent Organizing Collaboratives

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Project Objectives

- To give low parents a voice at key policy making tables
- To teach low income parents how to effectively advocate and lobby lawmakers and agency leaders
- To develop the necessary skills of parent leaders so that they can educate, train, and mobilize parents in their local communities
- To secure real and measurable victories for low income parents and their families
- To give parents the skills/confidence to get out of poverty

What Parent Ambassadors Do

- Testify in Olympia
- Update and train other parents back in their own programs
- Organize other parents to contact their legislators in DC and Olympia
- Raise local awareness of early learning and other issues important to low-income families
- Parent Newsletter with advocacy info & other fun things, translated into Spanish

What Parent Ambassadors Do

- Serve on local, regional, and state advisory committees, including both parent slots on WA's Early Learning Advisory Council
- Develop relationships with legislators, attend town meetings and forums and get them to their programs
- Get early learning into the media - write letters to the editor, serve as spokesmen with media, & more.
- Participate in calls with state and federal leaders to share the parent perspective

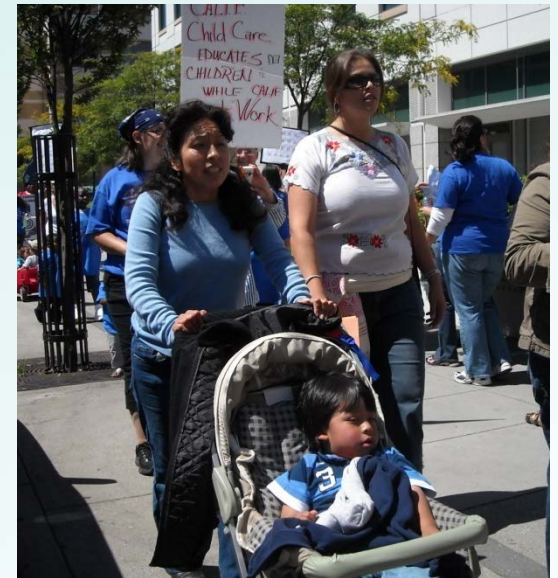
Parent Voices Structure



- Statewide Organizer, located in the Network office, coordinates 15 local chapters. Also provides policy dissemination and secures funding.
- Local chapters are connected to the R&Rs. Organizers and parent leaders decide main issues and actions.
- Statewide Steering Committee is made up of elected parent leaders from each chapter. They act as the Board and determine campaign strategy, consider requests for coalition participation, plan upcoming actions, and to exchange information between local chapters.
- Connection is through local and Statewide activities and trainings.

Other Activities

- Local Chapter Meetings – especially during February, March, and April.
- Local Actions – press conferences, budget actions, local visits with legislators, letter writing campaigns.
- Organizer Trainings and meetings.
- Regional Meetings – all organizers and steering committee leaders.



Parent Voices Successes!

Our model has preserved over \$1billion in cuts to child care

- **Restored the Stage 3 Child Care Program (\$256 million)** after Gov Schwarzenegger vetoed it.
- **Reduced overall cuts to child care** from \$700 mill. to \$300 mill.---saved services for 11-12yr olds
- **Defrosted the SMI** by unfreezing 5 year old income eligibility guidelines.
- **Increased media coverage** – many parents' stories featured in the press.
- **Pursuing Higher Education** - Leaders have completed Bachelors and Masters Degrees