

# Sharing Your Advocacy with Policy Makers – John Reid

25 by 25 Coalition – High Quality Early Learning - Birth to Age 5

A new statewide early childhood coalition is working to raise Oklahoma's national position in key early childhood development metrics from the bottom states to the top 25 states by 2025. Public and business support is needed to retain and grow:

- Evidence-based literacy/numeracy programs,
- Evidence-based family support programs
- Accessible and affordable high quality childcare
- Accessible preventive physical, mental, and dental health services.

Policy is part of the solution.

State/Local Advocacy

- Determine Messaging & Projected Outcomes (Awareness, Moving the Needle), Determine Target Audience, Tactics/Action Plan To Reach Audience

It is a statewide issue – but is “community” driven.

## **A. Key Rules for Policy Maker Engagement: Both Traditional and Online**

## **B. Some Initial Thoughts:**

- Work all angles – connections - you just never know the impact you can have
- Be respectfully persistent. Always make an “Ask”
- One visit won't do it
- Don't assume your email is getting through
- Don't underestimate the value of a well written letter – becoming more unique
- Work hard and focus on the supporters – build bridges with non-supporters

## **C. Traditional**

**Direct Contact**

**Root Engagement in Relationships**

- Know your policy maker -- Intersection between their interests and your activities.
- Website, Facebook posts, organizational, their influencers, ethics reports/giving.

## **Schedule Meetings and Get Prepared**

- Understand the policy environment – be up to date.
- Understand policy maker’s schedules.
- Be timely – and early.

### **-Know your message & Deliver with Confidence:**

Know the issue and know the SOLUTION. (Program support, funding...)

Brief and compelling – develop 1 sentence and 2 minute elevator pitch & details

“Our 25 by 25 coalition is focused on dramatically improving Oklahoma’s early childhood learning program High quality early learning is a workforce pipeline issue...

“Children are born ready to learn. They cultivate 85 percent of their intellect, personality and skills by age five.

- Know in advance – your expected meeting outcome.
- Tell a relevant and engaging story – involve children, caregiver’s stories.
- make the “ask” for what you want them to do. Ask for their advice.
- Leave behind information

### **Continue the Conversation – Immediate Follow-up**

Assume information gets misplaced ... resend another copy.

### **Engage Regularly**

- Be patient and Follow-up
- Communicate with staffers

## **Media and Events**

Sign on letter, Town Hall Meetings, Rally, Call-in Day, Use Your Newsletter, Op-Ed or Letter to Editor, Feature Story (Impact of high-quality early learning programs on young children)

Utilize Op-Ed’s - Unique, 750 words, Factual (local, state), Personal, Local news-hook, Call to Action: “High Quality Early Learning Key To Oklahoma’s Future Workforce”

## **D. Online Advocacy**

**Goal: Communicate and Get people talking**

More and more advocacy is taking place online.

\*Facebook: Posting Facts, Events, Sharing Resources

\*Twitter: #25by25 #PreKForAll, #earlyedOK #earlylearnactionOK

\*Blog

\*Grassroots messaging – email blasts. Call to Action.