



Advocacy for Early Childhood Policy and Services

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What is Advocacy?

- Individual or collection action in support of:
 - Educating elected officials on the needs of individuals with delays/disabilities, as well as policy and services—federal/state/local focus
 - Increasing the likelihood that policies and services are implemented through evidence-based practices—state/local focus
- Professional development to multiple audiences
- Rationale: Improve the quality of decision-making leading to positive outcomes for the short- & long-term



Advocacy Opportunities



Four Opportunities for Advocacy

1. Biden's Appropriations Bill: Passage
2. Build Back Better (American Family Plan): Passage
3. American Rescue Plan: Resource allocation
4. Biden's Appropriations Bill: Implementation of
new Part C Policy



Biden's IDEA Budget for FY 2022

- \$502.6 million for **Preschool 619 Grants**, an increase of \$105 million from FY 2021
- \$731.9 million for **Part C**, an increase of \$250 million from FY 2021 appropriation; **includes policy changes to Part C**
- \$397.7 million request for **Part D National Activities** programs:
 - \$250 million for the **Personnel Preparation** program which is a \$160 million increase over FFY 2021
 - \$49.3 million for **Technical Assistance and Dissemination**, an increase of \$5 million from FFY 2021 which would support additional technical assistance efforts designed to improve equity in the services delivered under the IDEA



First Opportunity: Passage of Appropriations Bill for FY 2022 (10/1/21-9/30/22)

- House has passed its appropriations bill and Senate Appropriations Committee is now developing specific funding levels.
- All funding bills must be passed by the full House and Senate and signed into law by President by midnight 9/30/21 unless a Continuing Resolution (CR) is passed by House and Senate. House has passed CR on party-line vote to keep funding levels through 12/3/21 and to raise the debt limit. Senate has not acted. It will require 10 Republicans to vote affirmatively for CR and debt-limit increase that has deadline of mid-to-late October.
- If passed, these funds will be made available to states through IDEA formula



Biden's Part C Agenda

- Equity Plans

- Report service rates for subgroups with limited enrollment
- Identify evidence-based practices to engage subgroups
 - ✓ Outreach to remote areas & home daycare providers
 - ✓ Partnerships with local health departments & public health nurses
 - ✓ Training on implicit bias
 - ✓ Streamlining evaluation
- Use not less than 10% of annual award to develop & implement equity plan
- Document data on closing gaps



Biden's Part C Agenda (cont'd.)

- Family Fees
 - Prohibit states from charging family fees or out-of-pocket expenses
 - Department will issue guidance on best practices
- Eligibility Criteria (more restrictive guidelines lead to greater racial disparities)
 - 24-month advance notice to families of any changes in criteria
 - Department will lead collaborative effort to identify model eligibility guidelines



Biden's Part C Agenda (cont'd.)

- Part C Summer Transition Services
 - Enable states to provide summer services from Part C to Part B without current onerous regulatory requirements
 - Will seek additional future flexibility in seamless birth to five system
- Personnel and Workforce
 - Increase number of early childhood training grants
 - Make new grants to states to support state recruitment, preparation, induction, professional development, support, and retention with emphasis on increasing diversity of providers



Second Opportunity: Passage of Build Back Better Act (American Families Plan)

- \$450 billion in new early childhood funding
 - \$225 billion for Child Care for American Families Program
 - \$200 billion for universal preschool
 - \$25 billion for child care infrastructure
- Immediate advocacy is needed with Congressional delegation
- <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/07/22/fact-sheet-how-the-build-back-better-plan->



CHILD CARE FOR AMERICAN FAMILIES

- Children eligible in households earning 1.5 times the median income in their state
- Families pay no more than 7 percent of their income for child care
- Lowest income families receive free child care
- Inclusive for children with disabilities
- Provider payments based on cost of quality, including low ratios, developmentally appropriate curriculum





Universal Pre-K

State-Federal Partnership

Free for Families

Inclusive Programs

Increased Wages

High-Quality

Families Save \$13K p/year



All 3-4 Year-olds





Investing in Families

- Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Nutrition Program Expansion
- Health Insurance Tax Credits





Third Opportunity: Resource Allocation of American Rescue Plan (COVID-based)

- ❖ Includes \$1.9 trillion with targeted one-time only IDEA funds allocated in July to lead agencies:
 - ❖ \$2.5 billion for Part B
 - ❖ \$200 million for Section 619
 - ❖ \$250 million for Part C
- ❖ **Advocacy is for use of funds**



**Fourth Opportunity:
Implementation of Appropriation Bill's
Expansion of Part C Policy**



**Advocacy Strategies for
Appropriations Bill and Build
Back Better**



Immediate Advocacy Actions

- Contact Senators with request to support (House has passed already):
 - Biden/House Appropriations Bill
 - Continuing Resolution
 - Raising debt limit
- Contact Senators and Representatives with request to support:
 - Build Back Better Bill



Resources for Your Immediate Advocacy

- Get information on your Senators
 - <https://www.senate.gov/senators/senators-contact.htm>
- Get information on your Representatives
 - <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>
- Learn the content and status of bills
 - www.congress.gov



Resources for Your Immediate Advocacy (Cont'd.)

- Keep up with education-related bills on CEC's policy website
 - <https://exceptionalchildren.org/policy-and-advocacy>
- Get CEC's policy update
 - <https://exceptionalchildren.org/policy-insider>
- Send emails to all Senators and Representatives
 - <https://exceptionalchildren.org/takeaction>
- Learn advocacy basics & sign up for policy newsletter



1. Identify Yourself

- Your name, Congressional district, city/county/town
- Your contact information (USPS, email, telephone)
- Beneficiaries of your advocacy



Crafting Your Message

- Brief
 - Provide short statements to members of Congress & staff to gain their attention
- Identify yourself
 - Congressional district & contact information
 - State why your voice matters
- Local
 - Share local connection
- Compelling



Crafting Your Message

- State the action you are requesting
 - Enact Appropriations Bill and Build Back Better
 - Support Continuing Resolution
 - Raise debt limit
- Include short- and long-term impact
 - Capsule what difference the legislation will make in quality of life for children, families, and professionals
- Seek personal connection & reciprocate
 - Issue invitations to visit programs



Advocacy Strategies for Allocation of American Rescue Funds



Resource Allocation of IDEA Opportunities in American Rescue Funds

- Clarifications on specific allocations to states and use of funds are available at--
- <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/arp/index.html>
- DEC has released a revised – “Recommendations for Stakeholders Offering Advice on the Use of IDEA ARP Funds” July 2021
- <https://www.dec-spced.org/single-post/recommendations-for-stakeholders-offering-advice-on-the-use-of-idea-arp-funds-may-2021>



Foundational DEC Policy Agenda

- Achieving high-quality inclusion
- Acknowledging and addressing bias
- Responding appropriately to child behavior
- Creating and maintaining strong family partnerships
- Adequately equipping a highly effective workforce
- Providing high-quality environments, interactions, instruction, and support



Advocacy Strategies for Implementiaon of New Part C Policy in Appropriations Bill



Implementation of New Part C Policy in Appropriations Bill

- Partner with lead agency to engage stakeholder input with assurance of equitable representation
- Equity Plan
 - Expand equitable representation in all leadership groups
 - Assess current status of equity in child and family outcomes

https://whova.com/xems/whova_backend/get_event_s3_file_api/?eventkey=8845af58fb6e64c2a728763b2da4f1d8195004a54ce1ec86afd0f7add10124d8&event_id=decvi_202109&file_url=https://whova.com/xems/whova_backend/get_event_s3_file_api/?event_id=decvi_202109&eventkey=8845af58fb6e64c2a728763b2da4f1d8195004a54ce1ec86afd0f7add10124d8&file_url=https://d1keuthy5s86c8.cloudfront.net/static/ems/upload/files/tmiba_Equity_in_Family_Outcomes_PEG_Slides_Sent_2021.pdf



- Capitalize upon the expertise of Community Parent Resource Centers and Parent Training & Information Centers

- <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

- Partner with diverse family leaders in building capacity to be funded with





- Partners in Policy Making

- Developed by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

https://mn.gov/mnddc/pipm/pdf/Partners_Coord_Handbook2016.pdf

- Leadership program teaching people with disabilities and parents of young children with disabilities to be long-term change policy agents.
- Groups of approximately 35 adults and parents meet for 128 hours over 8 weekends.
- Explores 11 critical topics (e.g., service coordination, inclusive education, assistive technology, parliamentary procedure & serving on boards, media skills, meeting a public official). Approximately 32,000 graduates who have, in turn, served on boards at local, state, and federal agencies



- 5 online courses—e.g., Partners in Making Your Case, <https://partnersonlinecourses.com/partners-in-making-your-case/>
- App available to guide parents and adults in telling their story to policy leaders--6 easy steps, conversion to email, adds photo <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/telling-your-story/id1520709289>



- Fostering Advocacy, Communication, Empowerment and Supports (FACES)
 - Developed by Dr. Jamie Pearson at N.C. State University
 - Pearson, J.N. & Meadan, H. (2021). FACES: An advocacy intervention for African American parents of children with autism. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 59(2), 155-177.
 - Advocacy program teaching African-American parents of children (ages 3-14) with autism about community resources, legal rights, parent-professional communication skills, and empowerment strategies
 - 18-hour program over 6 weeks
 - Research resulted in significant increase in participants' advocacy, sense of empowerment, and community support



- Legislative Advocacy

- Developed by Dr. Meghan Burke, University of Illinois and Dr. Zach Rossetti, Boston University
- Extensive research over last 6 years on advocacy training with emphasis on racially diverse families
- Current study involves a legislative advocacy program teaching parents associated with six PTIs legislative advocacy skills involving generating ideas for the next IDEA reauthorization, developing expertise for legislative visits, and creating a video-taped testimonial

<http://videotestimonial.web.illinois.edu/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YH3FbG4GDYA>

- 6-hour training program



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On Activism: “When you move in the direction of good, more will come to the cause. It may not happen overnight, or in a few days, weeks, or years. But have faith that your good work will be a drop in the river that will eventually break the dam, ushering in a more peaceful world” (p. 30).

