



TIPS FOR ENGAGING BUSINESS LEADERS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION MOVEMENT

Business leaders have a vested interest in early childhood education. High quality programs ensure their current employees come to work and are productive, and build the skill foundation of their future workforce. Businesses that have invested in family-friendly policies ranging from on-site child care to flexible work hours and job-sharing are powerful allies in making the business case. Employers cannot only attest to the powerful impact of such benefits on their bottom line, but can also share the negative affects that the lack of sufficient funding for state child care subsidies and other key family supports have on their workforce and overall business profitability.

Many corporations and Chambers of Commerce have paid lobbyists who work on behalf of their business interests. Engaging these lobbyists to work on the broader early childhood agenda maximizes both their business and political expertise. Contact the staff person assigned to work on Governmental Affairs or Community Relations at your local Chamber of Commerce.

Cultivating individual business champions to be spokespeople for early childhood investments has been an effective strategy in many communities. It is critical for legislators to hear from stakeholders outside of the early childhood education field and business leaders often have established relationships at the Capitol. Identifying potential business allies can occur through a variety of ways including engagement with Boards of Directors of local non-profit organizations including your local United Way <http://www.uwtexas.org/locate.php>, or through connections made through working with your local Chamber of Commerce or other business groups such as Kiwanis or Rotary clubs. Having a clear message and a specific request is essential to effectively engaging business leaders.

To find your local Chamber of Commerce in Texas, visit the following website:
<http://www.lone-star.net/mall/main-areas/chamber/chambers.htm>

REMEMBER:

Keep the following tips in mind when conducting outreach efforts with the business community to ensure a successful partnership!

1. **ASK.** The best way to get someone involved is to ask him or her personally.
2. **BE ORGANIZED.** Know exactly what you need done and when. Business leaders are extremely busy and need specific, reasonable projects that can be accomplished in a set amount of time.
3. **WORK WITHIN THEIR SCHEDULE.** Business leaders are busy! Actively encourage and support involvement at a level they feel comfortable.
4. **COMMUNICATE REGULARLY.** Be sure to explain the larger context of their efforts and keep business leaders informed of progress on a regular basis.
5. **SAY THANK YOU.**
6. **ASK AGAIN.** Business leaders have a vested interest in quality early childhood education and are in a position to make positive change.