



## Chapter 1:

# ADVOCACY ROADMAP

Every day you see the issues – the way things should be for children and the way they are. You stop and puzzle: “There ought to be a law ...” or “Someone should do something about that.” That’s how advocacy starts – you see a need that sparks the desire to change things, and that desire sets you on a journey to make a difference. But before you start, you’ll need an Advocacy Roadmap to make sure you successfully reach your destination:

**Step 1:** Choose an issue

You may be able to think of a number of things that ought to change, but you will do well to start with something that especially interests you, affects you or your program, or that you know about already.

Examples may include additional child care subsidies for low-income families; education requirements for early childhood teachers; or regulations affecting location of child care facilities.

**Step 2:** Inform yourself

Research your topic and get the facts on both sides of the issue. Talk to experts and other early childhood education professionals. Chances are others have worked on this issue before you, so find out what has been done to date, what obstacles remain, and what solutions are on the table.

**Step 3:** Organize.

Join with others who care about your issue. Some coalitions to consider include the League of Women Voters (LWV), Child Development Policy Institute (CDPI), the California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) and its local affiliates, the California Child Development Administrators Association (CCDAA), the Advancement Project, or your county Child Care Planning Council. Or, you can form your own coalition (*See Chapter 2*).

Print some fact sheets or informational flyers about your issue and invite stakeholders to attend your coalition meetings. Be sure to include contact information and ways for people to get involved.

Step 4: Get cracking.

Host the initial meeting of your coalition to work on your issue. Provide refreshments and a comfortable place to meet. Provide the group with background information from your research and invite everyone to add to the group's knowledge.

As a coalition, your first task will be to Frame the Issue (*See Chapter 3*). Framing an issue defines the problem, focuses your efforts, and helps others to understand why they should care.

With this focus, your coalition can move forward to set goals and strategies. Among your goals may be voter registration and voter education.

Be prepared with a list of roles for volunteers and coalitions members. Some initial tasks may be:

- Canvassers to inform the public, get out the vote, or other public engagement tasks. Be sure to assign in pairs.
- Voter registration (*See Chapter 4*). Review municipal Web sites for local events where registration booths may be set up. Be sure to obtain necessary permits.
- Media director (*See Chapter 6*) or public relations director to prepare press releases and other informational materials and engage the media with your issue and events.
- Data coordinators to keep up-to-date statistics on your issue.
- Volunteer coordinators to ensure everyone is actively engaged and having fun.

Step 5: Implement your plan and change the world!

Make sure all your goals and strategies are covered and everyone has his or her marching orders. Breaking down tasks into small steps will avoid burnout. Provide direction and support to your coalition members and volunteers. Regroup as needed to check progress and revise your plan with changing circumstances.