

ADVOCACY 101

Nurturing Developing Minds

February 26, 2021



INSTITUTE *for* CHILD SUCCESS

Goals for the Session

- Demystifying advocacy
- A few ground-rules for advocacy when you work at a not-for-profit
- Balancing Pragmatism with Idealism
- Adopting a network mindset and spirit
- Discuss upcoming statehouse legislation



Demystifying Advocacy – a Framework



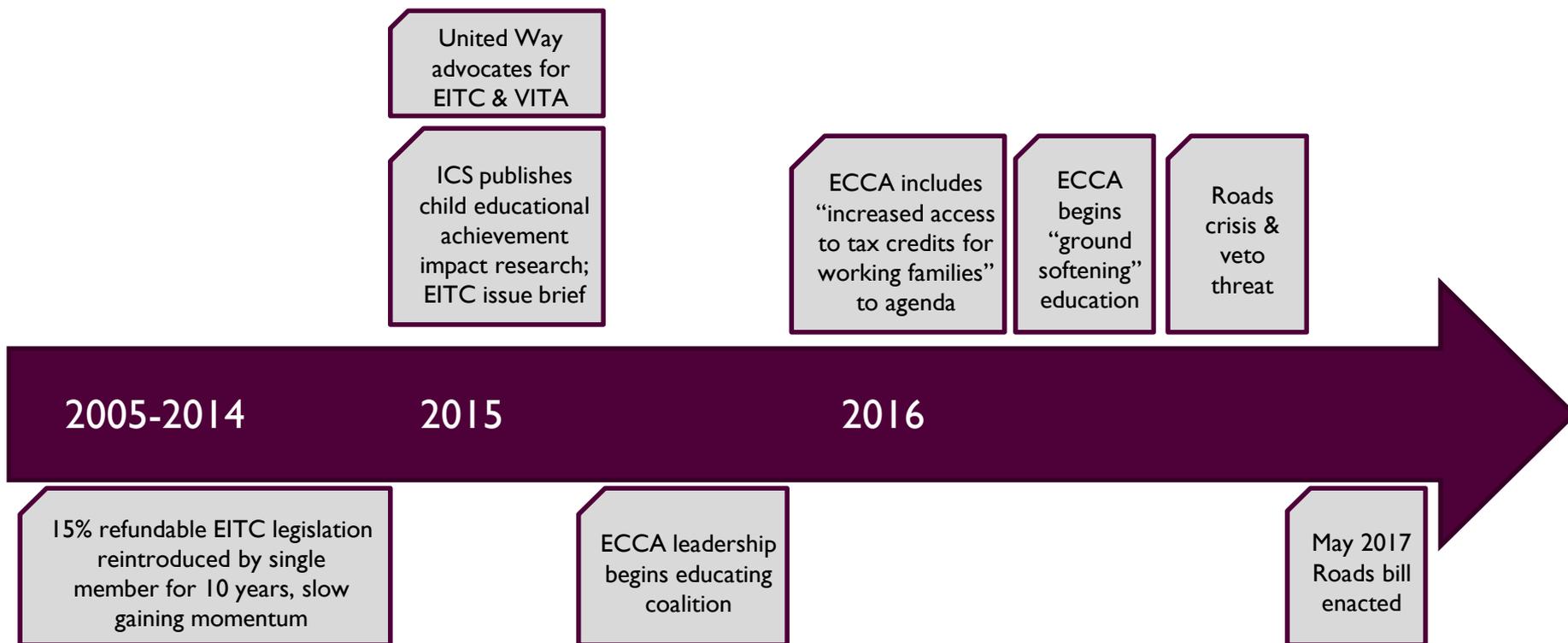
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Three examples

- Low hanging, but impactful, fruit:
Buprenorphine's prescription limit
- More sophisticated tactics required:
South Carolina's EITC Story
- Building a 7-nation army:
Tobacco and the Truth campaign



Example: South Carolina's EITC Story



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Advocacy when you work for a non-profit

- First – A disclaimer.
- Second – especially for things relating to your day job – be aware of what is “on the reservation.”
 - There are some legal employment protections for political activity and advocacy, which are beyond the scope of this conversation. If you’re thinking of advocating for something that your employer opposes, it may be wise to consult an attorney about parameters.
- Last – there are certain hard legal barriers for non-profits to be aware of.



“What is allowable?:” core guidance

- 501(c)3 Non-profits cannot intervene in any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.
- As long as we carefully follow that principle:

We can educate the public, officials, candidates, and campaigns about our issues, and recommended policies to address those issues; and

We can encourage the public to engage in the electoral process (by helping individuals register to vote, and reminding them to vote).

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Pragmatism and Idealism: Talking to policy makers

- Tell a story – most humans remember narratives better than abstract facts.
- Be prepared for the other side of an issue – know your opposition well, and agree with them as much as possible.
- Don't invest yourself in being right – this work is seldom about right and wrong, and almost always about value trade-offs.
- Policy is a series of small gains, not windfalls.
- Forging a path for a new issue is most difficult work.

Build a network mindset & common agendas

- Story of the Early Childhood Common Agenda
- 4 leading organizations, 30+ signatories
- Helps when you need a clear voice, or for when you need an army (preschool expansion, EITC, etc.)

2019-2020 Legislative Session

S.C. EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMON AGENDA

United in support of young children (ages 0 through 5) and their families, advocates of the Early Childhood Common Agenda propose the following pathways for improving outcomes for young children.



Dozens of organizations compose the Early Childhood Common Agenda coalition.
A full list of signatories is available online at: instituteforchildsuccess.org/CommonAgenda

STRONG FAMILIES

Children's prospects of success are largely rooted in the social and economic well-being of their families and communities. In South Carolina, however, 22.8% of our children aged 5 and under live in poverty, limiting their access to environments and opportunities that support optimal development.¹ Effective, data-driven and equity-based policy can counter adverse circumstances through a two-generation approach, equipping both parents and children with the tools they need to thrive.

Recommendations:

- Expand and improve prevention services for families at risk of entering the child welfare system.
- Focus social service efforts on child protection and family capacity.
- Consolidate and prioritize state level early childhood education, care, and development.
- Expand existing successful voluntary home visiting programs that support families with children from prenatal to age five.
- Promote fiscal policies that empower working families.

ACCESS TO QUALITY OPPORTUNITIES, PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL

Children who experience high-quality preschool are more likely to enter school prepared for success in a cademic and throughout their lives. Unfortunately in South Carolina, 87% of 3-year-olds and 49% of 4-year-olds are not enrolled in any preschool program.² Many families struggle to afford early care and education, with an average monthly child care cost, regardless of quality, of \$540 for infants and \$388 for 4-year-olds.³ This problem is exacerbated for low-income families, who are often forced by limited resources to choose care based on affordability and/or convenience rather than quality.⁴ Data-driven policies can address these economic challenges in a way that improves access to quality learning opportunities, prepares children for kindergarten, and improve employment prospects for working families.

Recommendations:

- Promote policies that increase access to affordable and high quality early care, learning, and preschool opportunities.
- Strengthen capacity and incentives for child care providers to participate in the state's child care Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
- Align early childhood services to increase data-driven accountability, quality, and impact statewide.
- Support and incentivize the inclusion of children with disabilities in high quality early childhood programs.

1. U.S. Census Bureau. 2012-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. https://factfinder.census.gov/tables/tables/enr/0011/pages/productview.html?_lang=en&_lang=en. Retrieved on August 20, 2018.

2. National Institute for Early Education Research. The State of Preschool 2017. South Carolina. http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/South-Carolina_YB2017.pdf. Retrieved on August 20, 2018.

3. Economic Policy Institute. The Cost of Childcare in South Carolina. <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/SC>. Retrieved on August 20, 2018.

4. Washington Kids Count. (2009). The State of Washington's Children: Poverty and the Future of Children and Families in Washington State. Seattle, WA. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/downloads/SWC08_FINALCOPY.pdf

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Questions?

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