IF not us, THEN who?

54th Annual Conference of the Arkansas Early Childhood Association

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IF NOT US, THEN WHO?

To achieve accessible high-quality early education and care in our state and country we need to build a broad-based movement that is organized, guided and supported by diverse leadership that has as its core the voices and expertise of those who directly work with children and families.

WE are the Who's.

But what about the “HOWs”
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- **How** do we encourage individual leadership development and nurture educators as they develop and achieve personal leadership goals?

- **How** do we look at ourselves and our field using the three stages of empowerment: coming to awareness, engaging in inquiry and analysis, and taking action?

- **How** do we achieve continuous learning and growth that is based on research and results in best practice?

- **How** do we influence policy makers, community leaders, and elected officials and the decisions they make on behalf of children?
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INTRODUCTIONS

Our stories are important.

What is my story?

- I believe we need strong, smart, competent leaders who will work to help make things better for young children and families. Please be one of them.
- My personal mission is to work to empower early educators and help get them involved in advocacy, policy and research.

What is your story?
WHAT IS ON YOUR PLATE?
**Personal Mission Statement**

- Why do you get up everyday to do this work?
- Do you talk about the big picture with others?
- Have you ever been involved in writing a mission statement for an organization?
- Why is it important to have words to describe your commitment to the field? To young children?
- In one word...what does leadership mean to you? Write it down.
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THINK ABOUT...

- Opportunity
- Practice
- Intentionality
- Diversity
- Participation
- Support
- Mentors

- Stories
- Asking questions
- Out of comfort zone
- Non-traditional leader
- Feedback
- Reflection
- Changing practice
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Chapter I
I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost... I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

Chapter II
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in this same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

Chapter III
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it there.
I still fall in... it's a habit... but,
my eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

Chapter IV
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

Chapter V
I walk down another street.
"I saw this anchor chart from Fieldcrest Elementary School... This is EXACTLY how I want to empower my students.

We need to teach our students to respond to challenges with this mindset.

Every time we rescue a child and let or her off the hook, so to speak, they've missed an opportunity for growth." We can't rescue them - we have to teach them to change their mindset. It's not easy, but it's worth it. And that's what self-discipline is all about - it may not be what we want to do at the moment, but it's what we have to do.

When students are challenged to be self-disciplined, they become problem solvers, decision makers, and critical thinkers."

LANGUAGE MATTERS

- Accurate
- Brief
- Concise

Additional helpful hints:

- Policymakers need your expertise.
- Avoid inaccessible language (e.g. acronyms.)
- Connect to larger educational vision and benefits to children.
- Acknowledge other perspectives.
- Use data and research to help make the case.
“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”
- Wayne Gretzky

The most dangerous phrase in the language is, “We’ve always done it this way.”
- Grace Hopper

We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.
- Albert Einstein
“The only way that we can live, is if we grow. The only way that we can grow, is if we change. The only way that we can change, is if we learn. The only way we can learn, is if we are exposed. And the only way that we can become exposed, is if we throw ourselves out into the open.

Do it.
Throw yourself.”

-C. JoyBell C.
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CAN YOU IMAGINE YOURSELF DOING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
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Going down to City Hall to complain about a tax bill you think is too high?  

Helping when your neighbor gets a confusing letter from Social Security, by making phone calls and dealing with the bureaucracy?  

Making a presentation at a local community group about a project or a topic you care about and know well?  

Responding when you child’s school says they may change the rules about whether pregnant teens can stay in school And they want to hear from parents?  

Testifying before a state legislative committee as part of a panel on a subject you know well and care about?
Who are the key decision-makers that impact a child’s early education and development?

What do they need to know?

HOW will you share that information?
I like this speech because it is about children... and I am a child! But the problem is... I didn't really pay attention. So the truth is I know it is about children but what about children...
WHY ADVOCACY MATTERS

- You can make a difference!
- People working together can change policies and laws.
- Advocacy is easy.
- Policymakers need your expertise.

(Derived in part from Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest, www.clpi.org)
CHALLENGE!

At this conference I challenge you to:

- Introduce yourself to 10 people you don’t know and share your story.
- Be aware of your language.
- Be aware of other people’s language. Do you hear a new way of talking about something? Like the words or frame that someone uses?
- ASK QUESTIONS. Admit you don’t know something.
- Commit to ACTION. What will you do on Monday?
- Share your “one word”...what does leadership mean to you?
"...Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be?

...

Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do.

...

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Shine.