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Legislative Advocacy

Interagency Coordinating Council

For Infants and Toddlers with Special Needs and Their Families



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

Baby Watch Early Intervention
Birth to Three Development

What is Public Policy?

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Public policy can be generally defined as a system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action, and funding priorities concerning a given topic promulgated by a governmental entity or its representatives.

Advocacy & Lobbying

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- Advocacy is arguing or speaking in favor of a cause, idea or funding priority. There is no limit on advocacy an individual or organization (such as a nonprofit) can do.
- Lobbying can generally be defined as any attempt to influence a politician or public official on an issue (Direct or Grassroots)
 - Government/State employees can advocate outside of state responsibilities on personal time

Advocacy & Lobbying

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Advocacy

- Telling a legislator how a policy affects constituents
- Using social media to inform the public
- Meeting w/ government official to explain how a problem/issue affects a particular group

Lobbying

- Asking legislator to vote, amend, sponsor legislation
- Generating a petition asking members or public to contact legislators in support/opposition of particular legislation

Basic Steps for BWEIP Advocacy

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- 1) What is our goal?
- 2) Who is our audience/decision-makers?
- 3) What is our plan of action?

1. What is our Goal?

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- Build a relationship with our legislators
 - Increase awareness of Baby Watch Early Intervention Program
 - Maintain funding
 - Increase funding to support growth and quality services
 - Need a clear & simple statement to describe program, context and background and the current need (past fact sheets)
 - Need a unified voice

2. Audience/Decision-Makers

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- Know who represents **you**
 - Find **all your** elected officials
<http://vote.utah.gov/>

2. Audience/Decision Makers (cont)

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- Know who is running for office
 - All of House and half of Senate up for reelection in 2018
 - After election, know who to contact, committee assignments early December
 - <http://utahpolicy.com/index.php/features/today-at-utah-policy/16065-number-of-retirements-in-the-utah-legislature-growing>

2. Audience/Decision-Makers (cont)

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Legislative Committees

- **Rules**
Decides if and where a bill is heard
- **Standing**
Hears testimony, votes on bills
- **Appropriations Subcommittees**
Hears testimony, prioritizes funding requests
- **Executive Appropriations**
Leadership, determines state budget
- **Interim**
Meets between sessions to study issues

3. Take Action

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- Contact **your** legislators
 - ✓ “I am a voter in your district”
- Contact members of appropriation committees
 - ✓ before and during the session: emails, calls, schedule appointments, interns
- Find legislators on social media platforms, connect in real time
- Speak from your own personal experience, share data, be prepared to answer questions or find answers

3. Take Action (cont)

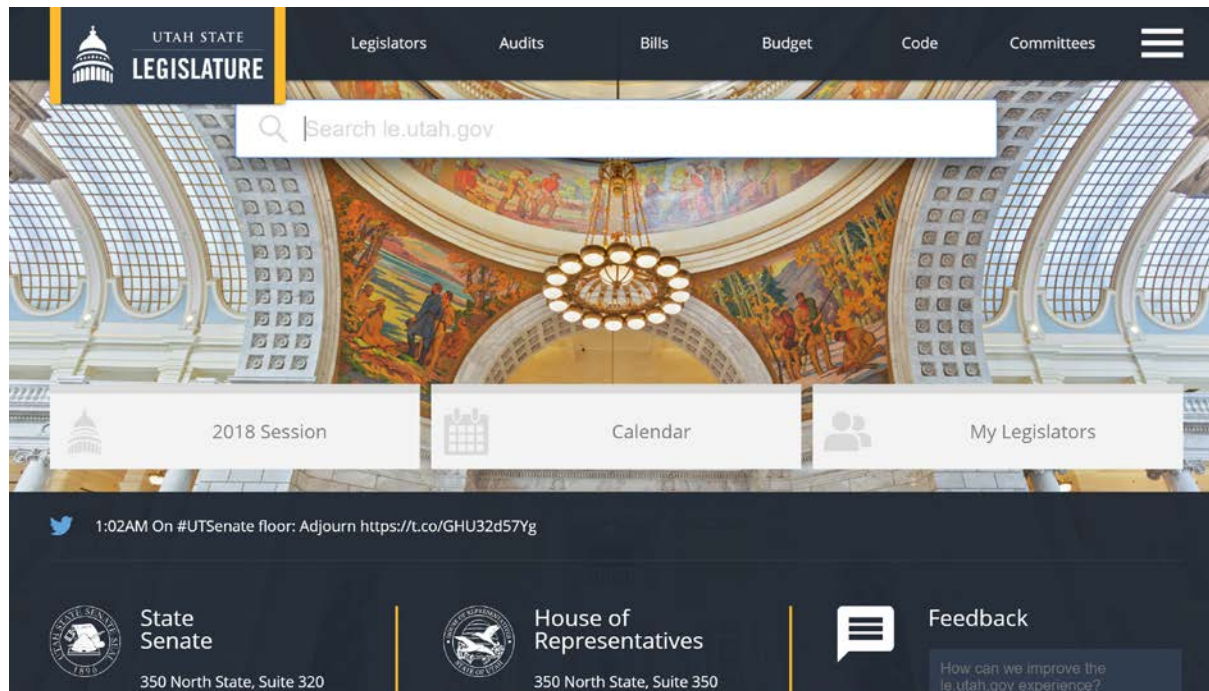
- Testify at Legislative Appropriations hearings during public comment
 - address committee chairs
 - be brief
 - respect allocated time
 - rehearse
 - thank them for their time
 - leave a hard copy of testimony for members of committee

3. Take Action (cont)

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Know how to navigate Utah State Legislature Website <https://le.utah.gov/>

- Bills, Scheduled hearings, Rosters



3. Take Action (cont)

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- Stay informed/stay connected

Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities (LCPD)

<http://www.lcpdut.org/>

- bill tracking, meetings, reception with legislators, FB page
- Other sources for legislative info:

<http://disabilitylawcenter.org>

<http://utahpolicy.com/>

<https://utahchildren.org/>

Golden Rules of Advocacy

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1. Be fair and respectful
2. Avoid cynicism
3. Be understanding
4. Be friendly
5. Be reasonable
6. Be thoughtful



Golden Rules Continued...

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7. Be constructive
8. Be realistic and persistent
9. Be practical
10. Be a good opponent
11. Be informed
12. Be discreet
13. Be visionary



~adapted from *A Guide for the Powerless — and Those Who Don't Know Their Own Power*; Samuel Halpern
Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, D.C., 1981.

Advocacy



“I always wondered why somebody doesn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody.”

– Lily Tomlin