

KIDBIZ NEWSLETTER
May 2012

A Newsletter for Early Childhood & Child Care Professionals

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Whew! Alaska, Wisconsin, Illinois, South Dakota and Wyoming all in one month – I'm pooped! Great time though, met a lot of wonderful providers and great organizations supporting them. Thank you all for your hospitality, I've had a great month.

But now it's back to work on my Tea Party Celebrations book, the cover photo shoot is this week at a local 4K classroom and I can't wait! I've been baking like crazy, washed the china, and got out my pink boa and cowboy hat – I'm ready! The book will be at the printers within a week so don't forget to preorder yours now before the price goes up – www.patriciadischler.com.

Next, it's planning for the NAFCC Conference, hope to see you there!

*Hug a kid for me!
Patricia*

One Voice

Advocacy in early care and education can seem daunting to providers. We often don't connect ourselves to this part of our field. We see it as something that the state or national organizations will be doing, we assume they are fighting the fight, we assume there are legislators who "get" what we do and will protect it, we feel caring for children, protecting quality care and supporting families who need this care is such a obvious thing, something that any policy maker would understand and therefore support. But then we get hit with a new policy. Or the organization that supports us through training, technical assistance, or grants lose their funding and shut down. Or the family we love

and care for tells us their subsidy is being lowered, or cut, and they can no longer afford to stay. And it's too late. Or is it?

I often talk with providers about advocacy in this field, and I hear a lot of frustrations. I also get the impression that many of them feel there is nothing they can do about it. I'm here to tell you that's not true. But there's a secret to being heard. It's numbers.

Years ago, when I first began working on advocacy in my state, Wisconsin, I was very surprised by some of the conversations I had with legislators and government agency workers. When I shared that I was there to represent our state family child care association, each time I was asked: How many members do you have? I was proud of our 150 membership, until the next question: How many providers are there in the state? Answer: 2,000. And that was it. I would see on their face that the door of opportunity closed. It wouldn't matter what else I shared, the specific stories of providers who have been hurt by a particular policy, the specific stories of families struggling because of the policy. It wouldn't matter that even the providers who were not our members had the same struggles and opinion on the policy. No matter what else I said I could see that I had lost them. They would smile politely, maybe jot down a couple of notes (but usually not), and then politely show me the door and I'd never hear from them again.

What I realized over time was that all policy boils down to numbers. They cut budgets by a percentage, not by a number that is realistic. They decide rates based on averages of numbers, not by what parents really need. They add programs when federal dollars come in and instead of using it for what is really needed, they find out what percentage they have to use a certain way to qualify to get the money, and the rest goes to whatever line item in their budget has the biggest number deficit. They make changes only when the numbers are there to support it.

I wonder if this isn't just a continuation of the idea that they were put in office by a "majority vote" so this mentality sinks in and drives all their decisions. They listen to the groups that have the biggest numbers. And even this gets confusing. You may very well represent the "majority" of a group statewide, but if the legislator is getting bombarded by phone calls from his/her VOTERS in their district saying something else, then forget it.

So, what I've learned is, there are two ways to contribute to influencing policy decisions:

1. Be a part of the majority number of individuals in the group the policy affects and advocate for the change together.
2. Be a vocal voter – call YOUR legislators and tell them what you want.

And to really be sure you're making a difference – YOU NEED TO DO BOTH. One can override the other, so make sure your voice is a part of each!

How do we do this? We're busy people, we care more about what we do with the children in our care than what's going on at the capital, right?

We do this by recognizing that our ONE VOICE can be very powerful, WHEN ADDED TO OTHERS. You add your voice to others every time you join a state or national organization. You become one of their numbers. And it DOES make a difference. The bigger numbers of members these groups have, the better the policy makers listen. And these organizations can also make it easy to advocate as a voter to your own politician, they will send "Action Alerts" to members with easy to follow instructions for an email or phone call that can make a difference. You DON'T have to follow politics or policy making, they do that for you.

I've had people say to me that they don't see a value in joining a state or national organization. I'm more than happy to point out the many benefits. Discounts on conferences, books, and trainings, discounts on many other products or services, newsletters with information, networking with others, access to information from the field, opportunity for leadership growth, these are just a few. But even if you didn't actively take advantage of a single benefit, you would benefit. Because your one voice, your number, is added to the others, and becomes something significant. Your one voice, when added to others, gets louder and louder. It gives the people from the organization (like me) the weight they need to make a difference on your behalf. The simplest, yet most effective advocacy act you can do is to join a state and national organization.

Below are the lyrics from Barry Manilow's song, One Voice. Every time I have ever heard this song it's made me think of advocacy. It's what it's all about. We have a voice, and it's important and strong. But when we take the opportunity to add it to another, and another, and another, it gets stronger, louder. And then, with that new louder voice, we are able to make a difference, get legislators and policy makers to hear the song we 're singing, and soon they are singing with us too!

I hope today you'll see the value in your voice, and the value in adding it to others. Join your state associations today. Join NAFCC or NAEYC too. I promise you these organizations know how to make your voice heard. Be a part of the numbers that get things done.

JOIN TODAY! www.nafcc.org www.naeyc.org

ONE VOICE Sung by Barry Manilow

Hear it at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKPWzLgvgW4>

Just One Voice,
Singing in the darkness,
All it takes is One Voice,
Singing so they hear what's on your mind,
And when you look around you'll find
There's more than
One Voice

Singing in the darkness,
Joining with your One Voice,
Each and every note another octave,
Hands are joined and fears unlocked,
If only
One Voice
Would start it on its own
We need just One Voice
Facing the unknown,
And that One Voice
Would never be alone
It takes that One Voice.

Ba ba ba da da da da,
Ba ba ba ba ba ba da da da,
Ba ba ba ba ba ba
It takes that one voice

Just One Voice
Singing in the darkness,
All it takes is One Voice,
Shout it out and let it ring.
Just One Voice,
It takes that One Voice,
And everyone will sing!

Tips and Tricks

At a recent conference I had a request to put the fun "child care ad" that I read at the beginning of my "Crazy For Kids" keynote into the newsletter. It is what a want ad for a child care provider would look like in the paper if it were completely honest about what the job really entails! Enjoy....

WANTED: CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Long hours, low pay. Must be willing to be peed on, puked on and spit up on. All candidates must have experience with cooking, cleaning, lesson planning, accounting, working with state officials, simultaneously teaching children of a wide variety of ages in a developmentally appropriate manner for each of the ages, and be able to work closely with parents on issues parents feel threatened by discussing in the first place. Majority of income will be expected to be returned to the business by purchasing more supplies and obtaining training. Little or no respect for position should be expected. Once beginning, must be willing to stay in the business indefinitely so as not to put out any parents. High patience level required in order to maintain calm during hours of crying,

screaming, whining, fighting and general chaos. If this sounds like the job for you, contact your local child care center to find the under-staffed room for you! Or, if you have a family willing to turn their home into a child care center and still live in it, contact your local licenser to begin the mountains of paperwork and dozens of changes you will have to make to your home in order to meet their standards!

(And all of you said YES! It's okay, I know the real reason you took the job – we love kids!)

If you have some great tips to share, send them to: contact@patriciadischler.com to be included in the next newsletter!

IN THE NEWS

ATTENTION WISCONSIN PROVIDERS – LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

We've been working hard to advocate against the new Attendance-Based Policy and discovered a new angle for this. Governor Walker has created a task force to look at the policies in the state that harm small businesses. Family Child Care IS a small business! So, go to this link, fill out the form and tell them how this policy is affecting your business. WFCCA collected about 50 of these forms at our conference and I mailed them in, but we need more! Go to: www.bestpractices.wi.gov. Click on the general "Contact" link for a form you can use to tell your story. And THANK YOU!

Kauai Child Care Conference 2012 – Don't miss this opportunity to combine a fantastic vacation with some quality training! Plan now to attend August 9-11 at the beautiful Kauai Beach Resort in Lihue, Hawaii. My good friend Marva Lyons organizes this amazing conference each year, to learn more contact her at 510-521-3997 or happymarva57@yahoo.com.

Start now to plan to attend the 2012 NAFCC Conference –

Join me in Atlanta, Georgia! Easy layaway plan available, check it out at: www.nafcc.org. Lots of networking, fabulous trainings, terrific keynotes, an Accreditation Celebration, and in one beautiful hotel! YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS! The NAFCC conference is where leaders are born. I know from experience! Come and join our 30th Anniversary Celebration, check it out at www.nafcc.org.

THIS MONTH'S SALE ITEMS

May Sale Item: 101 Tips & Tricks - \$2 Off

Filled with 101 ways to save money, time, make your job easier, and make fun stuff for the kids, this book is a compilation of all the great tips and tricks I've learned and accumulated over the years. One of my most popular workshops and guaranteed to give you lots of creative ways to do things differently.

Regular Price: \$8 Sale Price: \$6

June Sale Item: Patty Cake Kids & The Lost Imagination Cap – Only \$6!

This children's book will get your kids creative juices flowing! Follow the Patty Cake Kids as they use their imaginations to help a friend. Set in a family child care home. Great to use with a follow-up art project making paper hats!

Regular Price: \$9.95 Sale Price: \$6

Order yours today at: www.patriciadischler.com or www.KIDBIZResources.com!

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 4 & 5th, 2012

Family Child Care Professionals of South Dakota State Conference
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Keynotes: *Teaching Outside the Box, Professionalism*

Workshops: *Teaching the 3 Cs, Controlling the Crazies, Crazy for Kids*

For more information visit: www.sdchildcare.org

May 10-12, 2012

Wisconsin Family Child Care Association State Conference
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

Preconference Day Training: *NAFCC Accreditation*

Workshops: *Marketing & Interviews, Teaching the 3 Cs, The Parents Can't Hear Me!*

For more information visit: www.wisconsinfamilychildcare.org

May 19, 2012

Providers Empowering Providers (PEP) Conference
Cheyenne, Wyoming

Keynote: *Crazy for Kids*

Workshops: *Filling Openings vs. Finding Partners, Creating a Parent Handbook, The Parents Can't Hear Me!*

July 25 – 28, 2012

NAFCC 30th Annual Conference

Atlanta, Georgia

Association Leadership Day Training – *Creating Magic*

– *10 Leadership Strategies from Disney*

Friday Workshop – *Tea Party Celebrations*

- To learn more about bringing me to your child's school to inspire the emerging writers there check out www.patriciadischler.com/school.htm
- If you are a member of a group planning a training event and would like to book one of my keynotes or workshops, visit the Lecture page on my website and contact me for availability. Visit www.patriciadischler.com/lecture.htm.

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Patricia Dischler

Author, *Teaching the 3 Cs, From Babysitter to Business Owner, Because I Loved You, Tips and Tricks* and *The Patty Cake Kids & The Lost Imagination Cap*.

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