

Starting Ahead.

STAYING AHEAD.



Early Childhood Symposium Series: Disability Policy and Advocacy

Discussion Summary and Recommendations for Next Steps

1. Focus on family integration & interaction

Define what a successful partnership would entail from all sides; create ombudsman positions; maximize opportunities to engage with parent resource centers or recruit and train parent leadership to liaise with services and supports

2. Communicate accessibly

Improve communications with parents by simplifying messaging using lay language; familiarize families with professional jargon through providing examples and explanations in lay language; take time to tailor information to the individual's child and family circumstances

3. Embrace advocacy role

Do not expect families to be the only bridge between their child and services and supports; create ways for professionals to embrace their role as parent/child advocates

4. Commit to building trust

Identify observable and measurable actions or behaviors of practitioners or families that can be used to define trusting partnerships; for the best long-term results, start with the early years

5. Focus on training

Develop and implement anti-bias, human dignity and cultural awareness training for professionals to achieve steps 1-4

6. Create a common language and standards around the core concept of “dignity”

Develop a working definition of “dignity”; identify observable and measurable actions or behaviors that reflect the definition of dignity; develop measurement tools and strategies that operationalize dignity; develop accountability standards focused on dignity

7. Review existing laws through the lens of dignity

Audit current legislation with a dignity lens, and look for opportunities for improvement or change