Strengthening Your Voice

- Educating and Bringing Awareness to Policymakers
  - Our Community
  - Programs That Work
- Preparing
- Following Up
Why Get Involved

- You Are

- You Can
  - You already have the skills you need
  - It doesn't take that many of us

- You Should
  - There are things we want known
  - Democracy=Responsibility
  - Decision-makers REALLY need our help
How Do We Affect Change?

Educating the people who can make the changes you want

- Informing Decision-Makers
  - Child abuse and neglect issues within your county
  - About great work being done
  - Using data, information and stories

- Talk to Other People
  - About issues of concern
  - Sharing the good work
What You Need to Know

- WHAT we are talking about – the issues
- WHO are making the rules – the players
- WHEN to target them – the process
- HOW to assure that they are informed – the message
Know the Issues

- We Know the Issues
- We Are Experts in Life and Work
- Solution as important as the problem, and we know those too!
Michigan Context

- Families Remain in Economic Distress
- Good/Bad News! Fixed our Structural Budget Deficit
- Limited Economic Tie To Child Well-Being
- Needs and Priorities Disconnected, Why?
  - Competition and ideology
  - **Policymakers may not hear about issues of concern or community successes**
Know the Players

- Who can make the change
- What interests them
- Who Do We Know
- Who Do We Need
What Motivates You?
What Motivates Decision Makers

- Friends
- Title or position
- Information
- Numbers
- Constituents
- Success
- Money
“When you need a friend, it’s too late to make one.”

Mark Twain
How Do We Get Them to Listen?

- We use mental shortcuts to make sense of the world
- Based on our life experiences, including the media
- We use “frames” to filter new information
Putting Strategy Into Practice

- What is your message?
- Who are your best messengers?
- What could you do to prepare?
  - KEY: Make an appointment for 4/16
- What could you do to follow-up?
What To Expect in Lansing

- Short Meetings
- Often Meeting With Staff – Hooray!
- Hand Them Something
- Leave With a Plan for Next Steps
Prevention Awareness Day Follow-Up

- Thank You
- Extend Invitation to Visit
- Ask About Coffee Hours and Go
- Include Policy Makers in Communications
- Build Relationships With Key Partners
Always Keep the Door Open

- If they don’t make decisions that you agree with...
  - Can you blame them? Did they know what you know?
  - Express disappointment, but look for other possibilities
- If all else fails...
  - Don’t get angry
  - Get a better person elected/appointed/hired