

Building Relationships with Legislators



Dear Coordinator,

I hope this document “Building Relationships with Legislators”, will be of help to you. As coordinators we need to be building a strong relationship with our Legislator. First we need to know who the Legislators are, then introduce our self to them and contact them on a regular basis. So when it’s time for us to ask for their support they already know who we are and what we do. We need to share information about our programs and your schools and invite them on a regular basis. They will not be able to come to every event at our school; however they will remember you did take the time to keep them informed.

Our success as coordinators will be enhanced by building relationships and being informed of the advocacy process. With advanced preparation we will be more confident to advocate for our centers. When you make contact with your legislator’s keep a record so you can share with our FRYSCKy Public Policy Committee.

I want to thank each of you for what you do. Each of you are important to the continued success of our program. Being a member of a coalition that has a strong voice in Frankfort gives us credibility when meeting with the leadership in both the house and senate

Again, we hope this will be a valuable tool for us. If I can do anything to help you please feel free to contact me at 606-478-5550 or brian.akers@floyd.kyschools.us.

Sincerely,

Brian H. Akers
FRYSCKy President

1. GET INFORMED

My state senator: _____

My state representative: _____

2. CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

CONTACTED DURING INTERIM:

(date)_____ (phone/email/letter/in-person) _____

(date)_____ (phone/email/letter/in-person) _____

(date)_____ (phone/email/letter/in-person) _____

CONTACTED DURING SESSION:

(date)_____ (phone/email/letter/in-person) _____

(date)_____ (phone/email/letter/in-person) _____

(date)_____ (phone/email/letter/in-person) _____

3. SHARE INFORMATION

Action (date and description) _____

Action (date and description) _____

Action (date and description) _____

4. INVITE AND INVOLVE

Action (date and description) _____

Action (date and description) _____

Action (date and description) _____

5. COME TO FRANKFORT

Trips to Frankfort (date and description) _____





YOU CAN FIND contact information for your legislators at www.lrc.ky.gov or you can go to the FRYSCKy website at www.fryscopy.org and look under *Know Your Legislator*.

MY SENATOR

Name _____

District Number _____

Address _____

Local Phone _____

Frankfort Phone _____

Email _____

MY REPRESENTATIVE

Name _____

District Number _____

Address _____

Local Phone _____

Frankfort Phone _____

Email _____

1. *Get Informed*

THE FIRST STEP in effective advocacy is to get informed. It is important that you as an advocate understand the issues and are comfortable with your knowledge of them. Thorough preparation will make you a more confident and successful advocate.

There are many resources available to help you build your knowledge base.

- Read and review legislative updates from the FRYSC Coalition (FRYSCKY, Inc.)

The legislature's website (www.lrc.ky.gov) also provides valuable information:

- Biographies of your legislators
- List of legislative leadership
(both Senate and House of Representatives)
- Track Legislation through Bill Watch
(<http://kentucky.gov/services/pages/billwatch.aspx>)
- Meeting schedules & Visitor Information



2. *Contact your legislators*

BY REGULARLY CONTACTING your legislators and developing a relationship with them, you will be able to influence their decision-making process on education issues, specifically those that affect family resource and youth services centers. You can use email, write letters or make telephone calls. **Contact your legislator prior to a legislative session to introduce yourself and develop a relationship.**

Don't make your first phone call to your legislators during a legislative session. First, establish a relationship. Then, when you call about an issue during a legislative session, your legislator will be more willing to consider your point of view. Make a friend before you need one!

WHEN YOU CALL DURING THE INTERIM:

Give your name, title, the name of your center, and the school district in which you are located.

Don't be surprised if you have to schedule a time to speak with your legislator; remember, most legislators have full-time jobs during the interim.

Focus your conversation on one or two top priorities, remembering that your immediate goal is to introduce yourself and offer yourself as a resource for the legislator on FRYSC issues.

Invite your legislators to activities sponsored by or involving your center. If possible, give the legislator a role in your event.

WHEN YOU CALL DURING A LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

Ask to speak to the senator or representative, but be prepared to discuss your issue with a legislative assistant or to leave a message.

Give your name, title, the name of your center, and the school district in which you are located.

Focus your call on ONE issue or bill, and if possible, identify the bill by number; briefly state what position you want the legislator to take and be prepared to offer your rationale based on local impact.

NOTE: Very often the FRYSC Coalition will have gathered information and presented it to its members to make an effective statement to legislators.

As always, ask your legislator what position he or she will be taking on the bill or issue.

Share with the FRYSC Coalition public policy committee or your regional representative what you learn about legislators' positions on issues.



3. Share information

THE NEXT STEP in effective advocacy is to share the information you have gained with your advisory council, your families you serve and your community. No one is more qualified than you to talk about your center and what is going on within it.

Formalize legislative advocacy on your advisory council by creating a standing agenda item for legislative updates. Use this time to update your advisory council and – by extension - your community, on important legislative issues. Report on your contacts with legislators and encourage your advisory council to make similar contacts.

Keep your civic and community groups informed on legislative issues that affect family resource and youth services centers. As a coordinator, you are a community leader, and you can have great influence in your community's attitudes.

4. Invite and involve your community

Invite your legislators and members of the public to visit your school and/or center when highlighting successful programs. Showcase your achievements and successes. Be sure to call or email media representatives in advance and prominently thank legislators for coming.

5. Come to Frankfort

AS THE CULMINATION of your advocacy efforts and to help ensure a successful legislative session for issues affecting family resource and youth services centers, go to Frankfort to meet directly with legislators.

Attend FRYSCy, Inc. sponsored events. During the budget legislative session (60 day session, held bi-annually), the FRYSC Coalition hosts a legislative reception. This event has proven to be beneficial to both coordinators and legislators. The FRYSC Legislative Reception is one of the best attended events by legislators during the session. Each region is provided the opportunity to highlight programs in their respective areas. Coordinators are also given a more casual environment to discuss issues with their legislator.

Important Information

Follow up with FRYSCKy

Let us know how your conversations go with your legislators.

Contact your FRYSC Coalition regional representative or

FRYSC Coalition of Kentucky, Inc.

2220 Nicholasville Road,

Suite 110-333,

Lexington, KY 40503

Phone 859.333.4209

www.fryscopy.org

Simple Tips to Stay in Touch with Local Legislators

1. Send them a birthday card. (Find the information on <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Legislators.htm>)
2. Invite them to school open houses, parent nights or programs.
3. Read the news paper and listen to news reports. Go where they are going (ribbon cutting ceremonies, picnics, community events) and make sure that your legislator KNOWS you are there. Take a minute to reintroduce yourself, say hello and thank you for the job they are doing.
4. Send them a copy of your center newsletter or flyers for activities in your center.
5. Send handwritten invitations to center activities.
6. When you see your legislators in public ALWAYS say hello and thank them for their service to your community. Let them know that you appreciate their support of your programs.
7. Invite your legislators to bring the America's Legislators Back to School program to your schools. Work with your classroom teachers (4th or 5th in elementary, social studies teachers in middle or civics teachers in high school) to have legislators visit at times that are most beneficial to the program of studies. Learn more at <http://www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?TabID=746&tabs=1116,88,407#1116>
8. If you are hosting a big event and want to invite your legislators be sure to tell them how many people have attended in the past. (Last year over 1,200 people attended this exciting and informative event.)

9. Send them a Christmas or holiday card (most have religious affiliations on their bio page at <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/Legislators.htm>)
10. Call and leave a message on your legislator's home phone. Ask them to keep a look out for materials you are putting in the mail. Always leave several contact numbers such as center number, your home number or cell phone number.
11. When you invite your legislators to center events always send a ticket in the invitation EVEN if no ticket is necessary. It gives the impression that it is a "special" event.
12. When invitations are sent to legislators for well attended events let them know that you will have a spot reserved for them in your parking lot. Put their name on parking signs in lot.
13. When you are attending events in Frankfort, contact legislators and ask if you might be able to just drop by and share some information with them. This might be something as simple as notes from children or as important as information concerning changing demographics in their area. This is an opportunity for a face to face contact with our political decision makers.
14. Let your legislator know that you understand that people contact them all the time needing assistance. Send them a few business cards and ask them to share them with families in need. Let them know that you consider yourself as part of their team and want to help them meet the needs of constituents.
15. Give your legislator an award. Be creative and acknowledge them for an act of kindness, a significant milestone or service to the community. Provide for photo ops with children. ALWAYS send out a press release to local press. If the press does not attend submit a story to local papers for publication.
16. Ask their opinion about a program or an event you are planning. Your legislator is a wealth of information and they like to feel helpful!
17. When the legislature is not in session, request an appointment at your legislator's home or office. Let them know that you have some important information to share and would like to discuss it with them personally. Always be honest about how much time you will need don't say 5 minutes when you really need 15!
18. Send your legislators thank you notes for serving our state. Specifically thank them for anything they have done for children such as education, health, childcare, etc. Share how this will impact our work as FRYSC coordinators and how their efforts are appreciated.
19. Ask them if they need more information about a topic. Make sure that they are getting factual information about our programs. YOU are the expert! Make sure that your voice is being heard.
20. Do you have a Face Book page? Do you twitter? Have you invited your legislator to become a friend?
21. Send your legislators an email with the web address of your center webpage. Send them an email when new information has been added to your page. (Make sure it is up to date!)

22. Share stories with your legislators about how your center has impacted the life of a child or a family. Be specific! Legislators like to know that we are impacting the community in a meaningful way.
23. When you have the opportunity to talk with legislators let them know that you are working with other programs to meet the needs of children. Share the wealth and let them know that it really does take a “village” and that we are a significant part of the tribal council!
24. Be a name dropper. We may not always know our legislator on a personal level but remember the game Six Degrees of Separation? We can always find someone that we know who knows them. A personal connection always makes for an easier conversation.
25. Invite them to come “fill in” on Grandparents Day for a child being raised by a grandparent who is still working and could not attend the event. Speak to them about the growing numbers of grandparents raising grandchildren in your school community.

This is just a short list to get you thinking of ways to stay in contact with your local legislator. The important thing is that you be creative and consistent in your contact.

State Offices

Governor
State of Kentucky
Capitol, First Floor
Frankfort, KY 40601
502.564.2611

Lieutenant Governor
State of Kentucky
700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 142
Frankfort, KY 40601
502.564.2611

Attorney General
State of Kentucky
Capitol, First Floor, Suite 118
Frankfort, KY 40601
502.695.5300

Agriculture Commissioner
State of Kentucky
32 Fountain Place

Frankfort, KY 40601
502.564.5126

Auditor of Public Accounts
State of Kentucky
105 Sea Hero Road, Suite 2
Frankfort, KY 40601
502.573.0050

Secretary of State
State of Kentucky
Capitol, First Floor, Room 152
Frankfort, KY 40601
502.564.4075

State Treasurer
State of Kentucky
1050 U.S. Highway 127 South, Suite 100
Frankfort, KY 40601
502.564.4722

