



Organizational Policy Leadership and the CAYL Schott Fellowship

Case Studies of Cape Cod Child Development (CCCD) and Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)

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One of the desired results of the CAYL Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education is that organizations where CAYL Schott Fellows work become policy and field leaders in areas of early care and education. Two organizations have had multiple staff participate in the Fellowship program over several years. They are **Cape Cod Child Development (CCCD)** and **Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)**. These organizations offered to become case studies so that the CAYL Schott Fellowship could learn how organizations with multiple Fellows engage in and develop policy leadership within their organizations.¹

These case studies offer a deeper understanding about how policy leadership develops within organizations and how CAYL Schott Fellows are influencing organizational policy priorities and the organization's efforts to expand and institutionalize policy leadership and leadership development.

The data gathered for these case studies came from the following sources:

- CAYL Schott Fellows from each organization were interviewed;
- Focus groups were held on site with Fellows and key organizational leaders;
- Interviews with key stakeholders, e.g., CCCD's Executive Director and ABCD's Legislative Liaison were conducted;
- Organizational materials were reviewed such as annual reports, newsletters, and strategic plans.

A case study write-up of CCCD may be found in Attachment A and a write-up of ABCD in Attachment B.

Below are some of the key organizational benefits that are linked to participation in the CAYL Schott Fellowship. These benefits may also be interpreted as indicators of enhanced organizational policy leadership. At the end of this piece we reflect on the opportunities these organizations have for an expanded policy leadership role.

Key Organizational Benefits

Expanded Networks

- Increased staff visibility within early care and education leadership networks
- Increased collaboration with peers on critical early care and education issues that are important to the organization and the field

¹ CCCD has had 3 staff participate, and ABCD has had 5 staff participate.

- Greater knowledge of and access to leaders in the field who can offer support, advice, job recommendations, etc.

Organizational Leadership

- More distributed leadership within the organization around policy, advocacy, and media relations
- Increased attention to policy issues at staff meetings and in the strategic planning process
- Increased leadership responsibilities within the field (bringing early care issues to other fields like public health, and serving on regional and statewide policy boards)

Leadership Development

- Increased education and engagement of parents and staff as policy advocates through trainings, newsletters, team meetings, and campaigns
- Increased opportunities for staff to assume leadership positions within coalitions, advisory committees and other community leadership efforts

Reflections on Opportunities for an Expanded Leadership Role

Cape Cod Child Development

CCCD is well positioned to continue to develop as a policy leader on issues that are central and important to young children and their families. Through their work delivering services to a wide range of children and families, they are an integral player in Cape Cod's social services sector. (CCCD is one of the largest social services organizations on the Cape.)

The senior leadership of CCCD has a strong commitment to child, family, and community-centered care and they take a leadership role in advocating for continued support for this type of care. Since many of these debates happen in Boston, CCCD leadership has encouraged staff to go over the bridge and participate in the CAYL Schott Fellowship. Both the psychology of the Cape and its sense of being removed and remote from the rest of the state can sometimes make it difficult for Cape organizations to take up a statewide leadership role. CCCD has successfully managed to do that and continues to expand that role.

They are expanding their capacity significantly to engage and educate staff and parents to become more effective policy advocates. A wide diversity of staff is being given leadership responsibilities to represent and speak on behalf of CCCD within various task forces and committees. Parents are telling their stories to legislators to persuade them to continue support for early care and education.

Policy has become part of the CCCD's strategic plan. It is regularly featured in the newsletter. Advocacy and policy education are among the most popular offerings at the staff training day. Continuing to follow, CCCD's success in educating and mobilizing parents and staff will provide valuable lessons for the field.

One of the factors that positions CCCD to continue to develop its leadership role is the commitment of the Executive Director and the senior leadership team to focus on policy as a priority and develop the leadership skills of staff and parents. Areas of further growth are in the staff's capacity to develop relationships with the media and using other communication tools, and in more effectively engaging the board in the organization's policy leadership.

Action for Boston Community Development

ABCD brings enormous assets to any policy issue it prioritizes. Resources, political relationships and a long legacy of fighting poverty and civil rights make it a leader in Boston and statewide. ABCD's primary commitment in the area of early care and education is funding and supporting Head Start. ABCD took a leadership role in getting the state to increase its supplemental funding of Head Start from \$6 million to \$9 million in the past three years.

One of ABCD's assets is the strong support from the executive leadership of the organization to support and encourage staff to participate in and assume leadership roles in coalitions, committees, and on boards at the local and statewide levels.

Given the size, resources, and breadth of focus that ABCD has, they are often a key player on issues they care about. There are several challenges that this creates. Other organizations sometimes perceive ABCD as the "300 pound gorilla in the room." ABCD elders need to be aware of this perception and exceptional at listening and being a team player.

ABCD's leadership sets priority policy objectives for the organization's legislative and media departments. In an organization that focuses on multiple issues, this means that early education may not be a priority focus in any given year. Policy activities continue if the organization has a structure for making policy a focus. The newly constituted Early Childhood Policy Group was formed after the Schott "Policy Learning Dialogue." The critical mass of CAYL Schott Fellows within ABCD has made policy activities a core part of people's job responsibilities.

With Sharon's new role as Chair of the EEC Department's Board, ABCD is well-positioned to take up an expanded leadership role in the field that includes but is not limited to issues that directly affect Head Start. The success of these efforts will depend in part on mobilizing neighborhood center staff and parents to become stronger policy advocates – a process that is only just beginning at ABCD.

Both of these organizations are focusing more attention on early education policy. They seek ways to institutionalize policy as a priority into the structure and culture of their organizations. They seek ways to educate and empower staff and parents to become part of the process and have their voices heard. They seek ways to expand their leadership networks, and increase their effectiveness at aligning and collaborating with other organizations around a policy agenda. They seek ways to take actions that significantly improve outcomes for children and their families.

Attachment A
Cape Cod Child Development (CCCD)
Case Study

Cape Cod Child Development (CCCD) is nestled near the harbor in the town of Hyannis, an hour and a half from Boston. For over thirty years, CCCD has provided childcare; education and developmental intervention; and family support services to Cape families. CCCD has a commitment to high quality child-focused, family centered programs that are accessible and affordable to all families. Since 2005, CCCD has had three staff participate in the CAYL Schott Fellowship.

Mal Hughes, the Director of Preschool Services, was the first to participate in 2005. Mal had spent much of her career in the private sector and had little experience in human services when she came to work at CCCD. Mary Pat Messmer, CCCD's Executive Director, encouraged Mal to apply for the Fellowship because she believed it would broaden Mal's understanding about the child development field and the nonprofit world. Mary Pat wanted her senior staff to feel more comfortable meeting with legislators, testifying at hearings, speaking to the media, and participating in high visibility statewide coalitions. In a 2005 interview Mal spoke about how her confidence to meet with legislators increased after participating in the Fellowship.

I have learned a lot more about the legislative process and what is expected of me and what I need to bring to the table. I have a much greater comfort level about meeting with legislators; it's far less threatening and intimidating for me. Each time I meet with them it has gotten better. We are the experts in this and we need to give them information. My boss always met with legislators. Now I feel comfortable meeting with them independent of her and bringing the information back to her. She's thrilled with that. She's been very vocal that we all need to take a piece in the policy work and the fact that I'm now on board is beneficial to the whole agency.

Barbara Prindle-Eaton, Deputy Director and Director of Early Intervention Programs, participated in the Fellowship in 2006. A thirty-year veteran in the field, Barbara did not exactly fit the profile for the Fellowship, according to Mary Pat. She encouraged Barbara to participate because she believed it would push Barbara beyond her comfort zone to take more leadership within the agency and in the field. Barbara has been a leading force to institutionalize policy discussions within the agency. Making good on a commitment she made during her Fellowship, Barbara has made sure that the agency regularly offers an advocacy workshop during Staff Day and that there is a policy-related article in every staff newsletter. Barbara has also taken a leading advocacy role on social emotional issues (the focus of her group's policy project). As chair of the Interagency Coordinating Committee for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Barbara recently led a strategic planning process for early intervention where social emotional issues came up as the highest priority.

I do think that my involvement with the social emotional group has had an impact within my own field. [Mass DPH] has taken those issues on in a deeper way. The knowledge I gained put me in the position to push that agenda, do more, and take it in a new direction. We are now asking whether people are prepared for us to change the system because that's what we want to do.

Barbara Kozma, Education Coordinator, joined the Fellowship in 2007. Barbara reflects on CCCD's commitment to policy leadership development.

What has been wonderful about having Barbara and Mal involved is the strong support within and outside the organization on policy issues. Without this support system within the organization to do this wonderful work, it would be impossible to do what I have done with the Fellowship.

All the Fellows echoed how important Mary Pat's leadership has been in supporting them to expand their horizons, move beyond their comfort zones, and engage in advocacy. Mary Pat reflects,

My job is to support each of them to grow individually in ways that support the organization...The value of this Fellowship is that it has moved people out of their comfort zones and their current area of expertise. There is no way that can't help the organization. For me to have managers explore other things allows them to develop another side of themselves. Also to take them out of their day-to-day running of programs has broadened their perspective.

Mary Pat has been engaged in policy and advocacy for the past 10-12 years. Dealing with budget and political issues instead of spending time with children has, she reflects, caused her to lose some of her passion. It is that passion and day-to-day knowledge of working with children and families that her staff bring to their conversations with legislators. "It makes a whole different statement to them."

Because of the CAYL Schott Fellowship, the senior management team regularly discusses policy issues.

We bring policy up at our senior management meetings and make sure that we are all informed not just about what is going on programmatically but also what is going on legislatively in our program, where we might need support, what's changing at a federal, state level that isn't just going to impact our program but the broader group. It's now the way we are thinking about our work. At least once or twice a month, legislative issues come up...we have many more conversations with more input because we are all tracking it more. I've gotten on three or four more listservs to get me more informed about what is legislatively going on.

The Fellowship has helped us build priorities, develop a common language and common understanding of how to attain things that applies across all our programs.

CCCD recently engaged in a strategic planning process with the whole staff in which they articulated program goals and objectives. One of the primary goals for the agency is that "staff and families are competent in legislative advocacy." That's the first time advocacy has been written into the strategic plan.

Every year CCCD holds a Staff Day, a day devoted to workshops for everyone in the agency from the ED to bus drivers and part-time teachers. Since 2006, advocacy has been one of the workshops offered. In 2007, 25 staff signed up to attend the Advocacy Workshop. "We had family day care providers, early intervention staff, and teachers from across all our programs who signed up for the workshop." At one of the workshops, a staff member said, "I couldn't believe how interested my legislator was in what I had to say." It is small successes like this, Barbara Prindle-Eaton says, that continue to grow people's interest in advocacy.

One means of encouraging staff and parents to take policy action is having a legislative corner in every issue of the newsletter letting people know what they can do to influence

policy issues that affect the agency and the people they serve, and giving them tips on being effective advocates.

Another means is encouraging staff to actively participate in community coalitions, committees and task forces.

The preschool program staff sits on 22 groups. I added this as a job requirement for all my staff that they must participate in at least two community groups.

The challenge at first was having everything come back to the director when decisions needed to be made. Eventually, senior staff decided to spend more time helping staff understand what's important to bring back and what responsibility they have when they sign off on something themselves. Distributing leadership more broadly among staff has had the positive benefit of increasing CCCD's leadership presence in the community, building staff leadership capacity, and freeing up time for senior leaders to take on statewide leadership roles. CCCD senior leadership acknowledges that they are still trying to figure out how to productively share information, e.g. find the right balance between sharing too much information and not sharing enough.

Barbara Prindle-Eaton was part of the CAYL Schott Fellowship policy working group on social emotional issues. Her work on this issue had significant impact for CCCD.

Within my own agency we've applied for three grants all around mental health and social emotional issues. We attached the policy brief to the grant and used a lot of the information from our policy project in writing the grant. We were successful at getting social emotional screening and assessment tools for early intervention and school age. We also have a grant pending to get more consultation on social emotional issues into the pre-school along with expanding our capacity to train other providers outside our agency.

Since participating in the CAYL Schott Fellowship, CCCD staff has expanded their statewide leadership activities. Several staff members hold leadership positions. Mary Pat Messmer is on the Executive Board for MADCA and serves on a Department of ECE advisory committee. Mal participates in the statewide Head Start group.

Barbara Prindle Eaton finished as co-chair of the ICC and is now focusing on monitoring early intervention. Barbara has also become a recognized expert on social emotional issues and young children. She was recently invited to participate in a forum in Western Massachusetts on this topic because of her work on the issue during the CAYL Schott Fellowship. Barbara has also been a strong advocate for better understanding the impact that post-partum depression has on children. She recently went up to Ipswich at the invitation of another CAYL Schott Fellow who is trying to raise awareness in his community about the impact of post-partum depression.

CCCD staff has provided testimony to a school age commission that is seeking input about whether community based agencies will continue to receive money to run child care programs or whether that money will go to the public schools.

One area where Mary Pat would like her staff to push themselves more is in their relationships with members of the press.

I haven't quite gotten them to talk to the press like they need to but I will get them there. The message has to be given out in different ways. How the media presents

things is very important to the message. What we do doesn't get communicated well. We need the media to be a partner with us, to cover stories that are going on in our communities that affect the lives of children and families.

Another area of growth for the organization is to more fully engage and educate the board of directors about policy issues.

CCCD staff concur that one of the most pressing policy issues for CCCD and the field is insuring that there is a highly trained and qualified workforce who are committed to the mission of educating and caring for young children and their families.

Attachment B
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)
Case Study

ABCD is the largest non-profit human services agency in New England. ABCD's mission is to combat poverty by promoting self-help for low-income people and neighborhoods. Through its Neighborhood Service Centers, Head Start and Child Care Centers, and other neighborhood programs, ABCD has initiatives in:

- Early Care and Education
- Education, Employment and Dropout Prevention
- Career Development
- Higher Education
- Fuel Assistance and Homeless Prevention
- Community Development
- Elder Services, and
- Health Programs.

ABCD has been a leading provider of Head Start services for forty years. Head Start is the agency's biggest program. In ABCD's most recent annual report, the Board's chairperson honored the difference that Head Start makes for children and families around Boston. She recognized Sharon Scott Chandler, ABCD's Vice President for Head Start and Children's Services and 2005 CAYL Schott Fellow for her appointment to Chair of the State's Early Education and Care Board (EEC).

This is a high honor for Sharon and ABCD.

In 2005, Sharon Scott-Chandler participated in the CAYL Schott Fellowship. Since that time, Sharon has continued to grow as a leader. According to Josh Young, ABCD's Legislative Liaison, "Sharon has grown a lot. She is more knowledgeable about the childcare field in general." In addition to assuming a leadership role on the EEC Board, Sharon was appointed by the Mayor to serve on the citywide Action Planning Team (APT) as part of the city's efforts to bring together services for children birth to five. Sharon believes her appointment to the Chair the Board reflects in part the strong advocacy of ABCD's CEO, who was out front about the need to have qualified early childhood community members who represent the racial, ethnic and economic diversity of the families and children served by the department.

Sharon is a supreme networker, communicating at least once a month and collaborating closely with over 50 people in the CAYL Leadership Network. In fact, Sharon sees the network as one of the great assets of the Fellowship program.

What the Fellowship brings is a network, a group of people that we may not have met or developed relationships with if we had not been Schott Fellows. There are a lot of times when being a Schott Fellow has opened doors to relationships that you might not have made in everyday work.

Since 2005, four additional ABCD staff has participated in the Fellowship: Kathryn Jones (2006), Sonia Carter (2007), Jennifer Amaya-Thompson (2007), and Adrienne Welch (2007). Sharon recruited and encouraged all four to apply for the Fellowship.

What is exciting for them is that they don't get to do policy work in their jobs. I have a lot of opportunity to learn by osmosis because I have a certain level of responsibility both inside and outside the organization. I wanted them to have that

opportunity to get that experience. I'm especially interested in supporting staff of color to become leaders in the field.

Having three staff in the Fellowship during 2007 provided a support system for the Fellows that strengthened relationships among them. One Fellow reflects,

We have a different type of relationship and connection as Fellows. We can rely on each other and we know it's confidential. We can ask how to do something, we can ask someone to see us. It's a different kind of relationship because we have participated in Schott.

In 2006, Sharon hired Diana Watson (a 2006 CAYL Schott Fellow) to become Director of Child Development Services of the Bradshaw Early Learning Center. "She came recommended by Valora which was an important consideration for me." Diana says that being part of the CAYL Schott Fellowship gave her more connections that helped her get this job. In 2007, Sharon hired Yvette Rodriguez (a 2005 CAYL Schott Fellow) to become Deputy Director of Program Operations. Yvette and Sharon had known each other during the Fellowship. Sharon reflects, "Knowing who Yvette was and understanding her skills through the Fellowship made her a shoo-in for the job." Another Fellow, Mei-Hua Fu, was also hired in 2007, as a Director of Child Development Services at the ABCD Chinese Church Head Start, with impressive credentials that included being a CAYL Schott Fellow.

In December 2007 the CAYL Schott Fellows hosted an organization policy learning dialogue, one of the core activities of the CAYL Schott Fellowship. They invited all current and former ABCD CAYL Schott Fellows as well as other key organizational stakeholders, including parents to discuss opportunities that ABCD has to influence policy and what they could do together to increase their efforts. Sonia Carter (2007 CAYL Schott Fellow) took a leadership role in this group. One staff member commented on Sonia's leadership.

Sonia has taken great leadership, really pulling the information from people and pushing the group further along. Whatever went on in those Schott meetings has really paid off. Head Start has such a broad reach to families and providers, so putting that effort into these folks here is going to mean a big gain for many years to come.

Some issues the group plan to address include how to more effectively track the impact of Head Start through longitudinal assessment and better use of the data they have to make evidence based policy statements about what high quality early care and education looks like.

We sit on a lot of data but we don't always use it.

I say we don't use the data at all to push the public policy agenda.

The group also discussed how to more effectively engage parents and staff in advocacy. In the past, ABCD's policy activities were focused on coordinating participation in Advocacy Day once a year, now there is an expanded effort to engage parents to tell their stories more publicly. "Parents are our best advocates."

The Policy Learning Group has decided to continue meeting. They recently renamed themselves the "Early Childhood Policy Group" and will meet monthly to maintain momentum on these and other issues.

ABCD has always had a strong commitment, starting with its Executives, of encouraging staff to participate and play leadership roles within and outside the organization.

We all see ourselves as advocates. This organization gives us opportunities to be leaders. You don't see that very often in many organizations. Not only do they give you opportunities, they push you out there. If there is an issue and they want you to speak to a rep or senator in your area, they ask you to go. That's been instilled in us from the beginning.

ABCD has dedicated legislative and communications resources that it prioritizes depending on where the greatest need for public awareness and education is and the opportunity to influence public policy or broader resource allocation. In the winter of 2007, fuel assistance was a priority issue. The high cost of oil prices was putting heat out of reach for many families. Because of the urgency and political relevance of this issue, communication and advocacy efforts were emphasized to make an impact. Several years ago, Head Start funding was a priority issue as states were being asked to increase their matching funds. Though it is always a high priority issue for the organization, early education may also share the spotlight in any given year with other critical issues facing low income individuals and families. Having leadership on boards, committees, and local and statewide task forces concerned with early education issues gives ABCD important venues for advocacy.

One of the challenges that ABCD faces is its reputation among some early childhood advocates as a "300 pound gorilla." Widely acknowledged as a challenge by the Policy Learning Group, one Fellow reflected on what it would take to improve that reputation.

The biggest thing that ABCD could learn from Schott is ways to work with people towards a common goal. It's misperceived as a big entity that has all this power and wants more, instead of one that has provided critical leadership because it is the right thing to do. In terms of advocacy and working together with others, maybe there would be ways to present ourselves more humbly. I think the approach should be more: "This is how I see the situation and what we can do to move forward together." That's one thing I enjoyed about Schott, it reaffirmed that you can attract more flies with honey than vinegar. You can get your point across but you have to be open that there is more than one way to get to a result. I'm hopeful some of the misconceptions will change.

CAYL Schott Fellows mentioned areas in which they believe ABCD can play an important leadership role: workforce development, parent and staff engagement in policy, outreach to immigrant and non-English speaking populations, and the importance of nutrition and health issues to early education.