

# Pathways for building parent leadership: A powerful force for equity and policy reform

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## Ounce of Prevention Fund Policy Exchange

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# Overview of Session

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- Explore a Parent Leadership Theory of Change that maps parents' pathways from the political margins to active community leaders
- Learn about the Parent Leadership Indicators Project to help initiatives evaluate their work.
- Hear directly from parent leadership initiatives about how they advance policies that support transformative parent leadership
- Discuss how these might apply to your work and different contexts.

# Icebreaker



The “One-to-One” --  
a powerful tool for  
relationship-building

# Capturing the Ripple Effect

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When parents gain civic leadership skills, they can become powerful advocates for greater opportunities for children, and the family becomes a vital constituency for better child/community outcomes.

**The Challenge: Parents lack opportunities to develop civic skills and advocate for better opportunities for their kids.**

*“I was just a mom. I had no platform to work from.”*

# Capturing the Ripple Effect

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## *What is our Theory of Change?*

**1. Parent leadership initiatives build capacity:** Parents learn knowledge and skills; promote civic values; and build confidence.

***We have become like family, and my family holds me accountable.***

**2. Parents feel transformed as they become civic leaders:** Parents raise awareness of inequities, build networks across race and class, and work for real solutions. Their children, family and neighbors notice....

***We have networks and can bring in others with clout & credibility.***

# Capturing the Ripple Effect

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**3. Public officials see parents as allies and assets:** Public officials learn from parent leaders about local and state issues. Support grows for greater resources for all children.

***Parent leaders are the eyes, ears and voices for our committee!***

**4. Parent leaders bolster collective action for children and influence grassroots networks:** As parents identify gaps and inequities, they use data and their own experience to advance policy, practices and legislation.

***We brought officials, providers and parent leaders together to talk through the challenges and come to concrete solutions!***

# Capturing the Ripple Effect

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## ***5. Parent leaders' actions invigorate democracy:***

Parents become key informants. Leaders create more forums for dialog. Impetus grows to build grassroots support for better outcomes for kids. Agencies engage parents as advisors and staff. Parents serve in positions of authority; some enter political life.

***We pushed for improved standards and increased quality of child care – and won!***

This theory of change was co-created with parent leaders from seven parent leadership initiatives around the country. (See handout.)

## Capturing the Ripple Effect: Theory of Change





# Let's hear from Parent Leaders



Pathways to Civic Engagement

Lori Pittman

Rosazlia Grillier

Ellen Schumer

# Reactions and Discussion



What can public officials learn from parent leaders?

How can ideas from parent leaders contribute to more effective policies?

# Resources on Evaluation

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- ❑ **Parent Leadership Evaluation website:**  
<http://parentleadershipevaluation.steinhardt.nyu.edu/>
- ❑ **Capturing the Ripple Effect: Developing a Theory of Change for Evaluating Parent Leadership Initiatives Full Report**  
[http://parentleadershipevaluation.steinhardt.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/capturingtherippleeffectreportweb\\_0.pdf](http://parentleadershipevaluation.steinhardt.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/capturingtherippleeffectreportweb_0.pdf)
- ❑ **Link to all downloadable resources on PLEN**  
<http://parentleadershipevaluation.steinhardt.nyu.edu/resources>

# Resources on COFI

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- **Community Organizing for Family Issues (COFI)**  
**[www.cofionline.org](http://www.cofionline.org)**
- How We Got Johnny, Jada and Jose into Preschool  
- <http://www.cofionline.org/cofi-reports/policy-briefs-complete-set/>
- Why Isn't Johnny in Preschool -  
<http://www.cofionline.org/cofi-reports/why-isnt-johnny-in-preschool/>
- “The COFI Way of Policy & Systems Change” -  
<http://www.cofionline.org/cofi-reports/the-cofi-way-policy-systems-change/>

# Resources on Parent Ambassadors

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- Website: <https://wsaheadstarteceap.com>
- Parent Ambassadors by the Numbers:  
[https://wsaheadstarteceap.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=menus&menu\\_id=196&pId=8](https://wsaheadstarteceap.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=menus&menu_id=196&pId=8)
- One-pager:

[https://wsaheadstarteceap.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=menus&menu\\_id=196&pId=8](https://wsaheadstarteceap.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=menus&menu_id=196&pId=8)

# United Parent Leaders Action Network

## UPLAN

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UPLAN is a parent-led action network of parent leaders and parent leadership initiatives across the nation.

We come together to build a powerful Voice to influence policies and programs that matter to families and children, especially young children.

UPLAN parent leaders are low and moderate income parents, parents of color, immigrants, grandparents -- parents who truly know what communities need to succeed and thrive.

