



# Delivering Concise Messages

List the main messages you've delivered in the last month.

List the main audiences you deliver messages to.

Choose an Audience \_\_\_\_\_

Ask:

- What are their key values?
- What's the benefit to them?
- How do they currently feel about your message?
- How can you motivate them around something they already believe?

## Effective Messages:

- Visceral not just intellectual
- Simple
- Balance facts with emotion
- Avoid jargon or complex data
- Specific examples
- Vivid language – social math
- What's in it for them?

**The Problem  
Grab them.**

**Action  
Statement**  
What do  
you want  
them to do?

**What's being done?  
Commitment**

**The Importance  
Connect to Audience.**

## 3 Key Points – Your Mantra

- *Supportive statements  
and examples.*

## **Children are paying the price for the state's refusal to adequately fund Birth to 3.**

In 2000, Wisconsin served nearly 7000 children in the Birth to 3 program. Birth to 3 participation has increased 21% statewide since 1996 while state funding has remained flat.

Lack of funding means county Birth to 3 programs may not be able to offer enough services to meet the needs of a child and family.

Housing, job supports and safety for adults with disabilities is at risk as counties struggle to cover Birth to 3 costs by shifting money from other critical programs..

Parents want legislators to know the daily struggles of raising a child with special needs. The Birth to 3 program is essential for their development and future.

By intervening early, children who are experiencing delays will get the help they need to prevent or lessen learning problems later on.

## **Several county Birth to 3 programs are in violation of federal law, and others are in danger of breaking the law because of lack of funds.**

In November, Ashland County families received a letter saying early childhood education and some therapies would be cut because of a budget deficit.

Last fall, Dane County Birth to 3 services were suspended for one week for some families due to lack of funding.

Even though it is illegal, many counties have threatened to impose a waiting list for Birth to 3 children because they cannot handle the financial burden.

In 2000, Dodge County was forced to pay nearly \$200,000 in deficits to Birth to 3 therapy agencies due to travel expenses, etc. not covered by state/federal funds or private insurance.

**Increase  
Birth  
to 3  
Funding!**

## **The state needs to pay its fair share to support Birth to 3 families.**

Parents are asking for \$4 million to fully fund Birth to 3.

Since 1996, federal funding has increased 9.8%, while county funding has been forced to increase 34%. Counties now pay 47% of total Birth to 3 costs.

Most counties believe in and support the Birth to 3 program, but struggle to keep it afloat financially. Counties say they cannot adequately serve children without additional state dollars.

Private insurance is contributing less and less to cover Birth to 3 therapies each year.

## **Create Preschool Options in Your District**

**Wisconsin has a vision for serving preschool children with disabilities and the supports in place to achieve these goals.**

The State Improvement Grant (SIG) supports every school district with a variety of resources – including local mini-grant dollars - to improve the outcomes and opportunities for students with disabilities.

Based upon research findings, best practice and what's good for children, within 5 years, Wisconsin would like see fewer than 32% of preschool children with disabilities served exclusively in special education settings.

The Preschool Options Project is a DPI funded project that provides training to assist local school districts in developing a range of options in Least Restrictive Environments (LRE) for young children with disabilities.

Wisconsin model early learning standards have been developed by the state to prepare young children for success in school.

Some Wisconsin communities are making exciting progress – Neillsville has nearly tripled its offering of community placement options for young children – Mondovi has eliminated segregated settings all together.

**Options are not optional – the law requires districts to offer a variety of placements to preschoolers with disabilities.**

Federal special education law – IDEA - says that children should be educated in the least-restrictive environment.

The law dictates that community-based settings with typically developing peers must be available.

**Research supports that children learn best when they learn alongside their peers.**

Teacher concerns are to be expected, but research has consistently shown that skills gained by children in inclusive settings are at least comparable with self-contained placements.

Children from segregated preschool settings are twice as likely to retain special education eligibility and three times more likely to receive services in segregated settings.

One research study shows that following community placements “families realized that the children did better than we all had expected in the community placements and that they were acting more like children than special education students.”

**The benefits of expanding preschool options for young children with disabilities are clear for all - children, families and service providers alike.**

It is not difficult to imagine the possibilities when children with disabilities have age-appropriate peer models and friends to stimulate their development and learning.

Teachers have seen children without disabilities demonstrate more positive attitudes toward disabilities.

Families have less stress in their lives as transitions, transportation and needed coordination are reduced.

Service providers benefit from reduction in duplication of services and sharing of resources.

**A basic quality education for each student must come before anything else.**

Special education supports are not a frill. With further budget cuts, many students – those with and without disabilities – will be left behind.

A struggling student, even one without a disability, benefits from the adaptation and creative ideas that quality special education staff bring to a classroom.

The district must invest in, support and train staff to be successful in proven strategies – only then can all children reach their potential.

While some groups are calling for ability-tracking of students, Partners believes the important life lessons students learn in school are about more than just academics. Our classrooms need to be diverse.

**While the school district struggles with funding issues, Partners is offering solutions which can continue to build on quality and maximize resources.**

Partners can share training opportunities and resources with families to help them become more informed partners within the school district.

Parent leaders can provide valuable input on search teams for key leadership positions.

Partners is a growing organization with more than 200 parents and professionals connected and discussing quality special education issues and effective inclusion to benefit all kids.

We have a resource-rich community - Partners can help access these resources and share them with staff and families.

Let's work together to improve outcomes for all children.

**Use Partners as a Resource to Improve Education for ALL Kids.**

**Parents in special education want the same things for their children that all parents do – independence, contentment, success, friends and striving for potential.**

Students with disabilities in particular will be at risk for failure with further budget cuts.

Children with disabilities deserve an appropriate education. When comparing two students, fair does not always mean equal in terms of necessary supports.

Many parents of children with disabilities are also parents of regular education and talented and gifted students – their concern is global – for consistent quality across all schools for all children.