



Ensuring a Place at the Table for Every Family

## **NATIONAL PLACE ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021**

What has the National Center for Parent Leadership, Advocacy, and Community Empowerment (National PLACE) been up to over the last 18 months? We've been BUSY! And we couldn't have done it without YOU AND YOUR DUES! We accept NO government funding so we are beholden to no one except you, our members. This report highlights our key areas of work over the last year – collaborations and public policy, including legislation and regulations that would support our mission and strengthen parent leadership. But let's start with our impact!

### **National PLACE | Impact**

Under the previous Administration, National PLACE provided significant, detailed comments and recommendations regarding the US Department of Education's proposed revisions to their State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report data collection and reporting requirements. Our focus was on strengthening the role of families – and family organizations such as Parent Centers – in the SPP/APR process. In reviewing the final version of the requirements, it is clear that our comments and the comments of National PLACE members had a significant impact on the guidance, in terms of stakeholder involvement and reporting requirements, partnerships with Parent Centers, and ensuring representativeness of survey responses on parent involvement in early intervention and special education.

### **Collaborations |**

*Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD)*, largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. We serve on the CCD Education, Health, and Developmental Disabilities, Autism and Family Support Task Forces. Through this Consortium, National PLACE helped shape CCD comments on COVID, LRE/inclusion, disproportionality, IDEA studies, access to health coverage and health care, and state determinations regarding early intervention and special education, among other topics. We also assisted in preparation for a Listening Session with the US ED Office of Special Education Programs. We worked on the CCD Education, Health, and Rights Task Force Transition Memos. Finally, we participated in a meeting with the Biden Administration Transition Team on education and with US ED Secretary Cardona and presented on the importance of family engagement in the process at the individual and systemic level. The US ED guidance on stakeholder engagement in ESSER/ARP planning is consistent with several of our recommendations.

*Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCHR)*, the nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition. We have worked with LCCHR on a statement condemning the former White House move to censor race and gender equity training. We participated in a

meeting with the Biden Administration Transition Team on civil rights. We provided information for an advocate directory the LCCHR developed and shared with the Biden Administration with information on topics of focus/expertise and shared the opportunity to contribute to the directory with our members. We met with the new head of the US ED Office for Civil Rights on the education civil rights data collection and how advocates can access and use the information, and are working with them on a webinar for family organizations.

*The Advocacy Institute* and *the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health* on public policy initiatives. And we have provided family and professional development on *Serving on Groups that Make Decisions* and *Leading by Convening: The Partnership Way* to family organizations, state agencies, and others.

The *National Disability Rights Network*, the *Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)*, and the *National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)* invited National PLACE to sign a joint statement on serving students with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis as **the** family organization representative. The outcome - we were able to persuade them to add language about the need to increase funding for the organizations supporting families to navigate IDEA during the crisis, i.e., Parent Centers, and to strengthen language about the role of families during the crisis, as a condition of agreeing to sign onto the letter.

**Public Policy – Legislation and Regulations** | We've submitted &/or signed onto comments on:

### **Legislation**

- Preventing waivers of IDEA, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the Perkins Career & Technical Education Act, and the Every Student Succeeds Act (*success!*)
- Increasing COVID-related funding across early childhood, education, health, mental health, human services, disability issues, etc. (*success!*)
- COVID-19 non-discrimination provisions in education and health/mental health (*success!*)
- Ensuring language access in COVID-19 relief (*success!*)
- Increasing funding for Parent Training and Information Centers and Family to Family Health Information Centers (*pending*)
- Removing police from schools; federal policing priorities and principles for safe, equitable schools (*pending*)
- Amending the Public Health Service Act to reduce health inequities experienced by members of historical racial and ethnic minority groups under State Plans under the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant Program (*pending*)
- Telehealth equity principles (*pending*)
- COVID-19 civil rights data collection (*pending*)

### **Regulations**

- Proposed changes to the State Professional Development Grant program of the US ED
- Part B (Preschool and Special Education) and Part C (Early Intervention) Data Collection and Reporting
- IDEA Paperwork Reduction grants
- IDEA Equitable Services for Students Placed by their Parents in Private Schools

### ***Non-Regulatory Guidance & Other Administrative Initiatives***

- Maternal Child Health Bureau Framework for Children with Special Healthcare Needs
- Maternal Child Health Bureau Strategic Planning Request for Assistance
- Leadership at the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children and Families, USDHHS
- Qualities for the Secretary of the US Department of Education
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Guidance on ADA and COVID
- US Department of Health and Human Services re: disaggregating COVID-19 data collection
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services re: coordinating care across state lines

### ***Other Public Policy Issues.***

- Submitted comments to the New Jersey Bar Association regarding advocates at IEP meetings and the "unauthorized practice of law" (*success!*)
- Signed onto an amicus curiae ("Friend of the Court") brief in a lawsuit regarding the reduced parental and student rights in charter and voucher programs (*results pending*)
- Signed onto an amicus curiae brief in a lawsuit regarding language access for parents of children with disabilities in Philadelphia public schools (*results pending*)
- Signed onto an amicus curiae brief on the right to compensatory services for Native American students at a Bureau of Indian Affairs school (*results pending*)

### **Education and Support to National PLACE Members | Webinars** | We planned and presented 5 webinars addressing the needs of our members and other family-led organizations, reaching

- *Back to School with National PLACE* (developed a guide in English, Spanish and Vietnamese): 95% reported the webinar helped them understand important individual considerations regarding return to in-person schooling; 100% reported it helped them understand important systemic considerations regarding return to in-person schooling; 90% indicated they learned new information to share with families; 90% indicated it increased their understanding of strategies to impact decisions about the return to in-person school; and 100% indicated it was useful to them and their family organization
- *Impact of COVID-19 in the Work Place (members only)*
- *A Deeper Dive into Federal Stimulus Package Impact on Family-Led Non-Profits (open)*
- *Ensuring Services and Supports for Children and Families Part I: Early Childhood and Education (members only)*
- *Ensuring Services and Supports for Children and Families Part II: Health and Human Services (members only)*

### **Education and Support to National PLACE Members | Other Information** | We have disseminated information to our membership and other family-led organizations on key issues and opportunities including:

- COVID-19 funding opportunities for non-profits including Paycheck Protection Program loans/grants
- COVID-19 funding for services for children and families
- COVID-19 waivers in education, Medicaid, and other services for children and families (including an invitation to participate in the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities legislative Hill briefing on IDEA waivers); we disseminated the CCD letter, the National PLACE letter, and developed and widely disseminated a short family organization letter
- COVID-19 non-discrimination provisions in education and health/mental health

- Opportunity for partnership with state education and early intervention lead agencies on the State Professional Development Grant applications
- IDEA Part B and Part C SPP/APR Data Collection and Reporting
- The opportunity to share information about their organization and their education priorities with the LCCHR and the Administration
- Data analysis on new IDEA student data from member The Advocacy Institute
- US Census Bureau webinar on finding and using race/ethnicity data from the Census
- LCCHR Education Fund's Learning for Action webinar to learn about Miguel Cardona and how to help ensure the ED lives up to its responsibilities to advance public education and ensure equal educational opportunity
- Alliance for Health Policy briefing on understanding budget reconciliation
- Day 1 Presidential Executive Orders
- Public education funding including COVID-related and the Consolidated Appropriations Act from member The Advocacy Institute
- Member National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health new national SAMHSA-funded TA Center, the National Family Support TA Center
- Summary of the all of the COVID funding packages

We have also solicited input from our members and shared them with policymakers, such as:

- Recommendations for the Biden Transition Teams in education, health and civil rights
- Talking points for our meeting with US ED Secretary Cardona

**Other Presentations** | We provided several other presentations, including:

- A fee-for-service webinar for the Region D Parent Centers on the COVID-19 related economic resources to support Parent Centers as non-profits (\$500 fee for National PLACE)
- A fee-for-service workshop on policy advocacy to support inclusion at the PEAK Center's National Inclusion Conference (\$1000 fee for National PLACE).
- A national podcast by the Ethical Schools Network on the gaps in access for students of color, low income students, students with disabilities, LEP students, etc. in virtual learning (see <https://ethicalschoools.org/2020/04/vulnerable-students-needs-and-rights-in-pandemic-threats-and-opportunities/>)

We have also provided technical assistance to National PLACE members on lobbying, securing resources for policy advocacy, public policy campaigns, and parent leadership development.

**What's next?** | National PLACE is preparing for the next phase of our growth and development! Please review our 2021-2024 Strategic Plan and let us know how you can help!

**Please renew your membership TODAY!**

*So National PLACE can continue to represent YOUR interests, and the interests of families and family-led organizations, at federal policy tables, and can continue to support YOU in your advocacy to ensure "the parent's place at every table!"*