

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

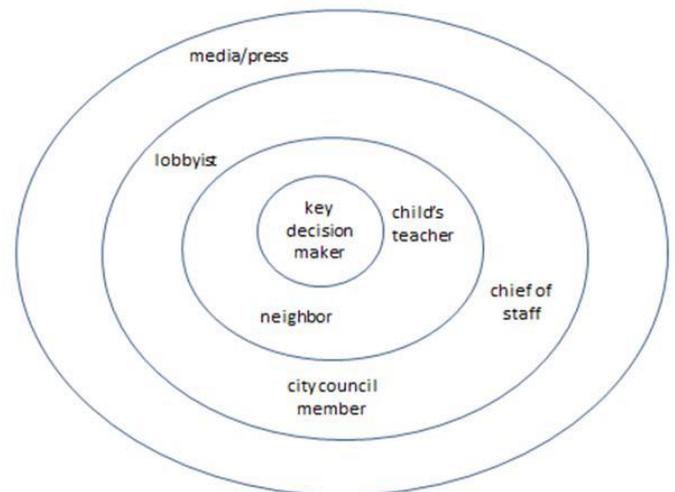
Purpose

Helps group members identify the sphere of influence on key decision-makers to build grassroots pressure for policy change through informal channels.

Steps

1. Draw a series of concentric circles (a bull's eye target) and place the key decision-maker in the center. To determine the key decision-maker, ask: who has the power to make the policy or system change?
2. Now ask who has influence on that person, starting with closest advisors -- political or personal.

- a. The circle closest to the center will hold those with the strongest influence on the key decision-maker. These could be personal connections such as a neighbor, the decision-maker's child's teacher, or other connections that make sense.
- b. The next circle working out might be public and political influences: fellow councilors on a city council, the Mayor's or Governor's chief of staff, or lobbyists with solid relationships.
- c. The outermost circle can represent media or the press -- influencing but not necessarily personally touching.



3. Write as many names as you can in a quick brainstorm.

Now consider how to make use of the sphere of influence to directly message to the key decision-maker about the desired policy change. How many contacts in the circles does your network have direct relationships with?

Carefully consider who knows whom and how you can build a strong circle of influence to provide information about the proposed or desired policy change to the key decision-maker.