



Advocacy 101

Advocacy is simply using your words and action to create change. Here's how you can advocate for child abuse prevention in Iowa.

What: We know what families need to succeed: Parenting knowledge and skills, a strong community to support them, and concrete support in times of need. We can invest in prevention now, or crisis later.

Why: Child abuse prevention is urgent. The longer we wait to protect children and support families, the more children will be abused. There is a strong correlation between abuse as a child and becoming an abuser in adulthood. We have to break the cycle.

Who: Once you know your message, you need to determine the audience. Who has control of the issue? Who can control the outcome? Don't waste your time and energy on the wrong people.

How: Advocacy work includes a broad spectrum of activities. Some advocates are comfortable tackling the entire spectrum, while some may only use a few.

Who Can Help?

- Federal: President, Congress
- Federal Agencies
- Governor
- Statewide Elected Officials
- State Legislators
- State Agencies
- County Supervisors
- City Council and Mayor
- School Board

Approaching Your Audience

Legislators

Personal contact is best. Call, email, or attend one of their weekly coffees. Find out when and where they'll be in your area. Whether it's the county fair, a demolition derby or a parade, get out there and meet them. If you are going to be in Des Moines during session, **do not hesitate to stop at the Capitol.** You can submit a request at the chamber door. If you can't reach your legislator, you can speak with their clerk or leave a note. **Do not let the building or the process intimidate you. The Capitol belongs to all Iowans!** Remember, your legislator has gotten lost there at least once, too.

Media

See if you can **meet with the local editorial board** and get a supportive editorial. You can also **submit an op-ed**--an article that supports your cause and tells your story. **Send a press release** to the media when you have an event in your area--they are always looking for a good story! Be sure to include contact info so you don't lose an opportunity for follow-up. **Use social media platforms** such as Twitter or Facebook to get your message out. **Partner with like-minded groups and cross-link and hashtag** to increase traffic.

Anyone can be an advocate for children and families!

For more information or additional resources, contact:



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