

BUILDING FAMILY ADVOCATE NETWORKS

HOW TO BEGIN A FAMILY ADVOCATE NETWORK IN YOUR STATE

Child Care Aware® of America is our nation's leading voice for child care. Our goal is to have a Family Advocate Network in every state to be a voice for strengthening child care policies at the state and federal level. Parents and families want access to quality, safe and affordable child care. The reality is state laws vary greatly and the federal law provides no minimum protection for children. Family action is the first step toward improved child care policies.

Why is Family Participation Crucial?

While child care is for children, parents are the consumer and...

- **Lawmakers want to hear from their constituents.**
- **Families' stories about child care are personal and paint a picture policymakers can understand.**
- **We all need to educate lawmakers, parents, and the community about the importance of affordable, safe, and quality child care.**
- **Parent voices need to be heard because they represent nearly 11 million children in child care.**

How to Begin a Network

There is power in numbers, and the first step in getting a team started is "capacity building". We build volunteer capacity through building teams of volunteers who all care about child care. There are several tactics that can help grow teams and get parents active:

- **1-on-1s:** Meet with a parent to share your personal story and to hear their personal story. Knowing why each of us is here keeps us motivated and helps us challenge ourselves and push others forward. A 1-on-1 is a great place to start building a relationship with a parent.

- **Organizational Meetings/Strategy Sessions:** Organize a community meeting with a group of parents to discuss ways to be a part of child care advocacy on a local and national level. Assign action responsibilities for parents in order to delegate the workload and give everyone a sense of responsibility.
- **Media and Social Networks Organizing:** Ask parents to join and invite 5 other parents to our Facebook, Twitter, and parent network events.
- **Trainings At All Levels:** Invite them to monthly conference calls and webinars being held at their local CCR&R or through Child Care Aware® of America.

Tips on Where to Find Family Advocates

- **Facebook, Twitter and Online Outreach.** We know that families are busy. Reaching out to them online gives them an opportunity to get involved in a convenient way. Ask other parent friends and friends of friends to join our social networks and invite them online to the next CCR&R or Child Care Aware® of America event.
- **Take Action!** Use your state CCR&R action center or Child Care Aware® of America action alerts to cultivate relationships with parents.
- **Attend Local Family-Friendly Events** (i.e. community days, farmers markets, local parks) with a sign-up sheet.
- **Set Up "Lunch-Ins"** at local businesses, schools and other places families have young children.



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