

## Tips for Child Advocates

Sometimes a word or act can help change a child's life. Often, the system needs a change. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests these steps to advocate for change.

### ■ Choose your issue.

You see problems every day. What can you do to help with a family or community issue?

Decide what you would like to change.



### ■ Identify solutions.

List everything you can do to successfully resolve your issue. What time, manpower and funds will you need? Choose what you can do best with what you have.

### ■ Identify supporters.

Chances are good that you are not the only person or group working on an issue. Talk to parents and parent groups. Use the Internet to find other people or organizations that are working on related issues. Seek their assistance. Also, choose a legislator or public official to sponsor and work for your issue.

### ■ Develop a strategy.

Do you want to make a local, state, or federal change? Who can help you achieve your outcome? How can the executive, legislative, or judicial branches help? Who will oppose you? What can you do about their effort?

### ■ Frame your message.

Work with a media expert to develop and send a clear, concise, and consistent message.

### ■ Educate.

Attend meetings and conferences. Offer to speak. Meet with lawmakers and officials. Write letters to your newspaper.

### ■ Mobilize supporters.

Plan an e-mail alert systems and telephone tree. Ask supporters to make their lawmakers aware of the need. Ask for their support.

### ■ Testify.

Offer to tell your story at a public hearing. Stories are a powerful tool to convince officials to make changes.

### ■ Do not give up.

It takes more than one attempt to enact a new law or make a change in public policy.

### ■ Vote!

Know what candidates want for children. Vote for the people who will help your issue. Take a child with you when you vote. It teaches him about this civic duty!



From [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.  
1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.