



Advocacy in Child Care: What is it and Why is it Important?

In our world of child care, we are encouraged to “advocate” and become involved in issues which effect children and families. But what exactly does that mean? Let’s break it down:

To advocate is to:

- Be a voice for those who can’t speak
- Support a cause that has personal meaning
- Provide input towards a solution
- Promote change

Who do we advocate for?

- Children...they are our past, present and future. They are shaped and molded by various experiences and interactions as their little bodies and minds grow and develop.
- Families...they rely on the experts in the field to educate and guide them to seek quality child care.
- Profession...the perspective of child care is changing as research supports the benefits of quality practices on a child’s development.
- Self...YOU know what is best to meet YOUR child care program needs.

What Issues do we do advocate for?

- Health and safety for children
- High quality, inclusive environments
- Funding for Child Care Assistance subsidies for families
- Prevention of childhood obesity
- Access to child care slots

How Can I Help?

- Stay current on issues surrounding child care by becoming a member of local and national organizations like IA EYC (Iowa Association of Young Children), NAEYC (National Association of Young Children), Zero to Three, and NAFCC (National Association for Family Child Care).
- Attend Early Childhood Iowa events at the capitol in Des Moines.
- Send a letter to local representatives and tell a story about how the issues impact YOU personally.
- Attend local town hall meetings and gatherings like City Council or the School Board.
- Become a member of a non-profit board for a child care center.
- Stay connected with CCR&R services through Facebook, Instagram, website, subscribing to emails, attend training, receive consultation services, and update vacancies to ensure parents are receiving correct referral lists.
- Participate in the Week of the Young Child and promote awareness.

Resources

- Child Care Aware Advocacy Toolkit <http://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/advocacy-toolkit/>
- IA AEYC (Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children) <http://www.iowaaeyc.org/advocacy.cfm>
- NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) <https://www.naeyc.org/get-involved/advocate>
- Early Childhood Iowa <https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov/>

- Zero to Three <https://www.zerotothree.org/advocate>
- NAFCC (National Association for Family Child Care) <https://www.nafcc.org/Public.Policy>

Fred Rogers, early childhood educator and advocate said it best:

“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say “It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.”

Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”