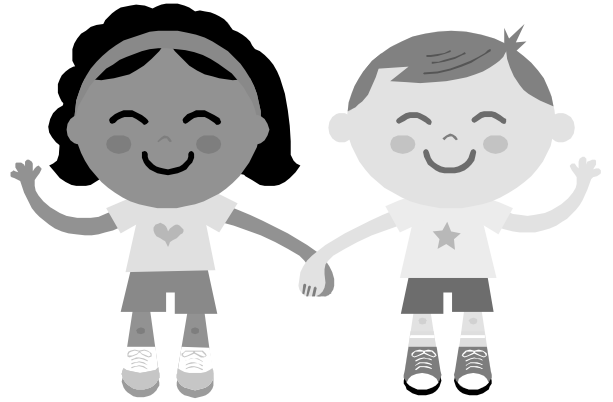


Make Kids Count

Kids can't vote or speak for themselves in most arenas where important decisions about their lives are made. They're counting on adults like you to stand up on their behalf.

Become an advocate for children in your community, your state or the nation on issues such as quality child care, education, health care and parenting resources.



To be effective:

1. Know Your Subject Matter

Throughout the year you can stay abreast of children's issues by subscribing to advocacy updates through e-mail, reading your local papers, and tracking legislation on-line. This is the best way to be alert when bills that need support or condemnation are introduced.

2. Work With Others

There is credibility in numbers. You can multiply your influence and be more effective by having a position that is consistent with other groups and individuals. If you are advocating as part of a coalition, communicate the coalition's position and identify your participation in the coalition.

3. Contact Your Legislators

You can contact your legislator in a variety of ways:

Write! Send a letter to your state legislator to voice your concerns.

Call! You can obtain phone numbers for all legislators while the General Assembly is in session online. You can also call (800) 889-0229 or (804) 698-1990 and ask to leave a voice mail for your legislator.

Visit! Probably one of the best ways to show legislators that you really care is to see them in person. Come to committee meetings, public hearings, etc. and show your support. When they are "at home," set up times to meet with them in person and discuss your advocacy concerns.

4. Stay Involved

You may not succeed in getting legislators to agree with your point of view the first time, but there will be other opportunities. Always try to part on good terms.

