

# Rights Advocacy

## Advocacy on behalf of children.

Advocacy on behalf of children is more than simply the provision of needed services to children. Advocacy efforts represent an attempt to increase the responsiveness and accountability of all institutions effecting children.

Although social scientists often conduct and report research related to the child's well-being, these efforts frequently fail to take into account larger social trends affecting children and families. Moreover, they often fall short of informing advocacy efforts.

The changing nature of social responsible for children, juvenile courts, schools, and welfare agencies are all undergoing substantial changes. State by state the juvenile justice system is slowly changing from a court system presumed on rehabilitation to one focused on accountability and punishment. Examples of how advocacy strategies need to change also relating to accessing children or their parents.

Changes in how advocacy strategies targeting legislative and public policy changes are a reflection of how ongoing development of advocacy focus on the family level verses legal and documented inconsistency of our current level of court systems and supports. For example there are 131 federal programs administered by 16 different federal agencies that serve at risk or delinquent youth.

The majority are administered by the HHSD and the Department of Justice. These groups specifically target groups of subpopulations who are abused or neglected. As a part of services to targeted subgroups include youth who are economically disadvantaged, drug or alcohol abusers, exploited or abducted, school drop outs, runaways/homeless youth, as well as juvenile offenders.

Understand these services focus on the report include self-sufficiency skills, crime/violence intervention, substance abuse intervention, job training, assistance support services, parental and family intervention supports as well as job training and program development training in technical assistance in technical job fields.



*There are only two tragedies in life: one is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it.*

*– Oscar Wilde*

## Planning and Program Development

### COMMUNITY VOICES



*Don't go around saying the world owes you a living, the world owes you nothing; it was here first. – Mark Twain*



*The difference between an optimist and a pessimist is that an optimist thinks this is the best possible world. A pessimist fears that this is true.*

It has been known that the international community has voiced its concern for children's rights as early as early as 1924 with the adoption of the Geneva Declaration on the rights of child by the League of Nations. It was not until 1989 with the passage of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, that minimum standards were established for the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children in the form of a legally funding treaty. Indeed the convention provides a guidepost for advocacy on behalf of children in virtually all domains of their lives. The convention on the rights of the child is remarkable and has enjoyed wide and rapid acceptance by members of the international community with the exception of Somalia and the United States as a part of the United Nation.

The Convention has 54 articles among those substantive rights that the convention recognizes the rights to survival protection, development and participation. Examples of these protections include protection from physical, social and psychological abuse and neglect, economic exploitation and abduction sale and trafficking. Some conditions that the convention recognizes as necessary to a child's adequate development include the right to an education, the right to a family environment, the opportunity to engage in leisure and cultural events. Such rights are referred to as nurturance rights as they all contribute to or nurture a child's healthy development. Although the United States signed the convention in 1995 it has not been ratified the treaty which requires approval of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and about 273 majority vote of the senate. Regardless of its legal status however the convention on the rights of the child should be used first and foremost as a guide because it explicitly protects families and stresses parental responsibility.

It is noteworthy to mention that in recent years; models have been developed that provide advocate policy makers and practitioners alike with unprecedented guidance in the formation of coherent, untied policies for children that are rooted in respect for children's dignity. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to ensure those children's own views are heard understood and promoted.

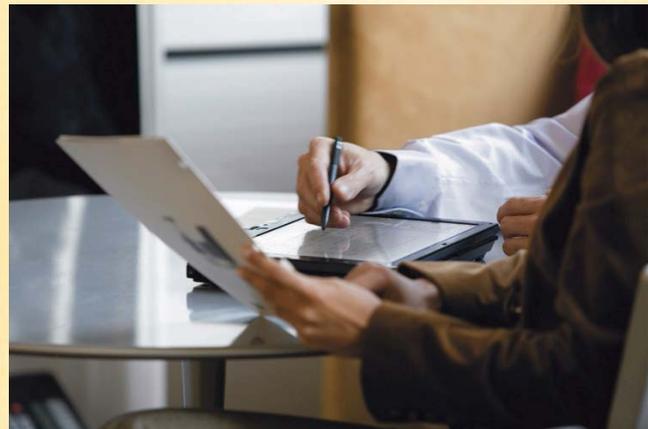
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## GUIDE FOR PARENT'S AND ADVOCATES

1. Promote a child's sense of "Dignity."
2. Services should assume highest "Priority."
3. Children should be important in all matters affecting "Them."
4. Services for children should respect parents and support the families "integrity."
5. The children have a right to a family "environment."
6. The foundation of policy and practice on behalf of children should be "Harm prevention."



*Ideas are funny little things. They don't work unless you do.*



*The more I want to get something done, the less I call it work.*

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*Look, I don't want to wax philosophic, but I will say that if you're alive you've got to flap your arms and legs, you've got to jump around a lot, for life is a very opposite of death, and therefore you must at very least think noisy and colorfully, or you're not alive. – Mel Brooks*