



How to Begin a Child Care Parent Advocacy Network in Your State

NACCRRRA, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, is our nation's leading voice for child care. Our goal is to have a Parent Advocacy Network in every state to be a voice for strengthening child care policies at the state and federal level. Parents 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. Parent action is the first step towards improved child care policies. This guide is to help grow a parent network in every state.

Why is Parent participation crucial? While child care is for children, parents are the consumer and...

- Lawmakers want to hear from their constituents
- Parents' 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 the over 11 million children in child care

How to begin a Parent Network in your State

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 gives us the basis to challenge ourselves and push others forward when there are challenges. A **1-on-1** is a great place to start building a relationship with a parent to let them know how they can be involved.
- **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 NACCRRRA parent network events.
- **Trainings at all levels**: Invite them to monthly conference calls and webinars being held at their local CCR&R or through NACCRRRA.

Tips on where to find parents:

- **Facebook, Twitter and online outreach**. We know that parents 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 NACCRRRA event.
- **Take Action!** Use your state CCR&R action center or the NACCRRRA action alerts to cultivate relationships with parents.
- **Attend local parent 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 parents have young children.

Questions? Please contact Michelle Noth at Michelle.Noth@naccrra.org or Kim Kober at Kim.Kober@naccrra.org.