

CONTACT US



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Achieve with us

The Advocacy Alliance

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Visiting the Statehouse

*Tips for Productive Advocacy
Before, During & After*



WHAT IS SUPPORTING FAMILIES DAY?

Supporting Families Day is an initiative of The Arc of Massachusetts, in collaboration with its Family Support Coalition partners. The Family Support Coalition was formed four years ago, in response to the need for more caregiver awareness, understanding the impact of long-term caregiving (stress and the risk of developing chronic disease) and the critical need for funding programs and services that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), autism or complex medical needs and their families deeply rely on. Family caregivers provide the greatest level of support to people with disabilities in the state and in the nation.



WHY ADVOCATE?

- Sharing your story is the single most effective advocacy tool
- Legislators are elected to listen to their constituents, support their issues, and most important, they **want** to hear from you.
- The decisions made by Legislators directly impact the availability of funding to create and sustain the services and supports that afford our loved ones with disabilities access to live a good life.
- Advocacy has a direct effect on your loved one's quality of life



AFTER (MAKE A LASTING IMPACT)

- Continue communicating regularly.
 - Letter, phone, email, State House Visits, Local district office hour visits.
 - Not all advocacy needs to happen at the Statehouse. There is incredible value in visiting your legislators in their local district office.
- Attend events hosted by your legislators.
 - Town Halls, Legislative Breakfasts, Fund raisers, Ribbon cuttings,
- Learn the legislative process.
 - Know the times of year it is most effective to influence your legislators – Timeline/ Follow the Money
- Stay connected to your issue.
 - Sign up for email notifications through The Arc of Massachusetts [website](#)
 - Follow [@TheArcofMass](#) on social media.
- Don't give up!

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The average amount of hours of support that caregivers provide to individuals with I/DD per week:

57



85%

balancing family responsibilities



82%

dealing with breakdowns in support



82%

are physically fatigued



76%

meeting work responsibilities

As a result of these long hours, these are some of the main challenges facing individual caregivers:

The 2017 FINDS Survey of Caregivers reported that

48%

WERE EITHER VERY OR EXTREMELY STRESSED

by having to provide care for an individual with I/DD



The State of the States report cited above found that in 2015 more than

871,000

people with I/DD lived with caregivers who are 60 years of age or older

This figure will continue to grow, as more and more caregiving parents of children with disabilities continue to get older.

BEFORE (PLANNING)

- The State House is located in Boston at 24 Beacon St.
- For Accessibility requests, such as: braille, large print, captioning, assistive listening devices and systems, communications access real-time translation, sign Language, interpreting services contact:
Carl Richardson- ADA Coordinator
Ph: 857-400-5502
Em: Carl.Richardson@state.ma.us
- The Ashburton Park entrance of Bowdoin Street is wheelchair accessible, but you need to contact your legislator if you require accessible parking
- If you are traveling by car, a good parking option is at the underground Boston Common Garage. Its entrance is on Charles Street across from the Public Garden.
- Visiting with friends? Plan to carpool!
- Find your legislators – link to find your legislator webpage
Print a map of the State House
- Call your legislator's office, and let them know when you'll be there, and arrange a time to meet. It's OK to meet with a staff person if the legislator isn't available. Prepare what you're going to say to your legislators
- Link to share your story and Arc Legislative Platform
- Stories are more effective when they are tied to legislation. Know the issues, know your position on the issues. What is your connection to the legislative priorities, does your family story resonate with a piece of legislation?
- Prepare your story in written form
- Know the action you want your legislator to take after your visit.
- Always be respectful when addressing your legislators and their staffs. Thank them for the work they do.
- Dress appropriately for meeting with a legislator.

DURING (SHARE YOUR STORY)

- Have a picture of your loved one.
- Have a business card, or form of contact information you can leave behind with your legislators
- Get contact information (phone numbers and email addresses) for legislators and their staff.
- Be on time for your appointment.
- Call if you are going to be late.
- Tell your story to your legislator or their staff representative.
- Leave behind a written copy of your story.
- Arrange follow
- Stay in contact.
- Thank them for their time.

