

MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

40 years of achievement, fighting for the rights of children excluded from educational opportunity

MAC conducts its child advocacy...

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD: It is the child first and foremost who suffers the pain of exclusion and the loss of his or her potential. MAC's individual case advocacy puts the child at the center of our systemic advocacy to change conditions for many. Individual cases inform MAC, helping us to understand how systems are impacting individual children and their families, and grounding our ability to bring the child's voice to the administration, the legislature, and the courts.

HEART OF A PARENT: Parents, the primary advocates of their child, have a unique ability to see the world through their child's eyes. It is the parents who will move heaven and earth to get the right supports their child needs to succeed. It is from their hearts that all advocacy begins, that communities are mobilized and that laws are enacted. MAC empowers parents with skills and support through training, technical assistance and legal advice and representation to be strong and passionate advocates for their children's rights.

This past year we were faced with a very serious educational situation requiring the skills of a highly trained legal professional. I truly began to think we had finally reached a point in time where I would not be able to insure my son received the support he desperately needed... The answer came unexpectedly during a phone call to Mass Advocates for Children... Without your help, I'm not sure my family would have survived this crisis. Not only did you commit to helping my family resolve this issue, you replaced hopelessness with empowerment. Thanks to your efforts, my son is once again in an educational setting with the support and structure required to meet his needs. He is focused on the future and looking forward to a successful life. -Christine M. Kelly, parent

CARING OF COMMUNITY: We must support all children in the community as our own. MAC's coalition building and leadership development is designed to mobilize communities to advocate on behalf of the children and families we serve. Schools are one example of a community to nurture children and help them thrive. MAC supports inclusive and trauma-sensitive schools as such models. MAC works closely with coalitions, parent groups, and professionals to help schools become supportive, connected communities where ALL children can focus, behave appropriately and achieve at their highest potential.

One of the things I appreciate about MAC is that they really began the whole notion of advocates as allies...who would think about what the needs of children are, put information in the hands of those who could make the change, and work with parents, communities and other collaborators to achieve that change. -Klare Shaw, Barr Foundation

LAWS OF THE LAND: MAC uses the legal process to help establish, expand and protect educational and other rights for vulnerable children, like the thousands of children who were excluded from Boston schools in the 1960s and the thousands more who are still excluded from educational opportunity statewide today.

“Having a teacher tell me that I was never going to amount to anything just made me feel like a failure.”

Andre Atkins, student

Child advocacy is a vital tool to help us craft good laws and then to make sure the laws are implemented; nobody does that for kids better than MAC.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy
