

Parent Leaders as Strong Advocates

In the normal course of daily life there are many times Parent Leaders take a stand, support people and ideas they believe in, or seek clarification on an issue. Parent Leaders are often strong advocates for themselves, their own and other families and their communities. If you are a parent, use the questions below to help identify the many ways you act as an advocate and a Parent Leader.

Can you imagine yourself doing any of the following?

1. Getting together with other parents to start a new program for parents in your community.
2. Helping a neighbor who gets a confusing letter from school about his or her child's behavior in class.
3. Making a presentation at your church about how you became a Parent Leader, or how they can strengthen and support families.
4. Responding when your child's school says they may change the rules about whether pregnant teens can stay in school, and they want to hear from parents.
5. Testifying as part of a panel before a state legislative committee on the importance of state funding for family strengthening programs.

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then you are an advocate, because each one is an example of advocacy. For example:

- ✓ The first question relates to “self” advocacy, something we do all the time when we speak up for ourselves or our families.
- ✓ The second question relates to “case” advocacy, which often involves helping someone else resolve a concern with a complicated bureaucracy.
- ✓ The third question relates to “public or community education,” which is another form of advocacy.
- ✓ The fourth question relates to “administrative or regulatory” advocacy, which includes responding in writing when a governmental department asks for feedback from the public when it proposes a change in its rules.
- ✓ The fifth question relates to “legislative” advocacy, which includes taking steps such as testifying, making a phone call or writing a letter to educate and influence a legislator's position.