



FFLIC

HOW DO I CHANGE WHAT'S HAPPENING?

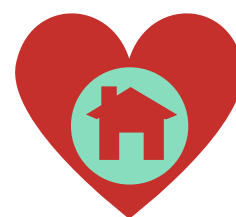


Parents are the solution to creating safe and effective schools, as they are the experts on what children and communities need. These unjust systems continue to grow when people don't act; they want you to stay uninformed so that they can stay in power. But you have some powerful tools to help your child. The next step is helping to defend ALL children. We know that when children make mistakes, consequences should be just and fair. Children should be nurtured and educated, not locked behind bars. We also know that these systems extend outside of the school. When we use our rights and our power to advocate for justice, we create more opportunity for justice to thrive everywhere. We can and must spread knowledge, use our voice, and fight for our children as individuals, families, and communities so that we can transform the system to uphold justice for all. You are the one you have been waiting for and we're so glad you're here. We can't do this without you and your wisdom, experience, and voice. We need you to defend ALL children. But how do you do this? First, you begin by realizing you have all the knowledge, support, and power you need.

Who is a leader?

As a parent or guardian, you are already a leader. Your child looks up to you as a role model and example. As leaders, we can energize and uplift our community to show that children are worth fighting for.

When we use your voice and power to fight for children, the loudest message those children hear is "you're deserving and loved," instead of the story they hear when they're punished for being themselves. If the schools continue to give them the idea they're bad, children will begin to believe it. As leaders we have to create a louder message that reminds schools and students alike that our children are capable, expressive, unique, and deserving of the best possible education. So look no further than yourself for the leadership you need. What are some other qualities that you believe a leader has? How are you already demonstrating those qualities?



Leadership starts at home

The messages children hear have a huge impact on them, and they are getting them everywhere. Most often though, they get them at home. We can start to advocate for the best possible outcome for our children at home. You can do this by reviewing the Whole Child Check-In on a monthly basis with your child. Ask them questions about their school to help them to see that you value their opinion and that they have a say in their education.



FFLIC

HOW DO I CHANGE WHAT'S HAPPENING?



Additionally, we want to create the same caring environment that we want the school to be. For example, we know that Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and restorative practices are methods with proven benefit, and we can model these so children know there are loving and effective alternatives to harsh discipline. Be open to thinking about and trying new ways of discipline. Look for resources on PBIS such as the Dept. of Education's "Getting Behavior in Shape at Home." Finally, you can explain to your child what school alternatives to discipline are, so they can inform you when these aren't taking place at school. Helping your child learn what is and isn't acceptable for school officials to do can give them the tools to report more accurately to you. More information is always better, especially when you need to share a report or send a request for a meeting.

Leadership in the Community

When we become leaders in advocacy, we join a heritage that started and continues the civil rights movement. When we become leaders, we join the ranks of our heroes who were just ordinary people like us, standing up for their right to a better quality of life. You have something valuable to give, but it can be overwhelming to know where to start. But there is a role for you here that only you can fill, so let's look at the different ways to contribute to find the right fit for your natural gifts and resources.

Leadership in advocacy can take many different forms. In fact, the more approaches to advocacy we can take the better. We provide a number of approaches to advocacy that might work for you, depending on your time and resources. These approaches include the following types of advocacy:

- Grassroots organizing
- Institutions
- Policy
- Courts
- Media

Leadership is Love

The efforts to fight for rights, in all their varied ways, is a long tradition that has brought many gains to our communities, and there is not one form that has greater value. Leadership in advocacy takes time, effort, patience, dedication, compromise, and heart. It is work and it's not always easy. Leadership is a lot like love in this way. In fact, you could say that being a leader is the act of loving something publicly. When we are leading, we are loving our families and our communities better, and asking others to do the same. Leadership is a constant, in some form or another, but so is the love that got us here and continues to sustain us.

Please contact FFLIC to learn more about how FFLIC can help you lead the change.

Call or Email 504-708-8376 or fflic@fflic.org