

Month to Month Advocacy

May

Find out who your state representative and senator is by calling your county clerk (see attached page for phone numbers) or by going to www.vote-smart.org and entering your zip code.

June

Write one hand written, one page letter to your state representative and senator. Include a photo of your family/child with a disability. Tell your story and introduce yourself to your legislator.

Please refer to the "10 Minute Advocate". Begin developing a relationship with your state representative and senator – whatever you are comfortable doing.

July

Talk to family and friends about all issues at holiday gatherings, picnics, trips, etc. (i.e. roads, higher education, disability issues).

Get the conversations going about what is important to everyone for full community support.

August

Get ready for school or start your Christmas shopping.

September

Write a second letter to your state representative and senator – hand written and one page again. Thank them for their time and interest in your family as you are a constituent and voter. In this letter, talk about your needs and family situation.

Remember go get registered to vote – call your county clerk or check your phone books for the form.

October

Find out what issues will be discussed in the next legislative session by contacting and getting involved with one of the following advocacy groups (please see attached information). Working together with disability issues will make us all stronger. Ask to be a part of an email list or phone calling tree to stay informed with legislative happenings.

November

Vote in an election year.

Find out how your legislators would like to be contacted – email, phone, fax, or letter.

December

Send a holiday card to your state representative and senator.

January

If possible, plan to visit the State Capital – attend the annual Reception for Legislators hosted by the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities. Watch for information from all advocacy groups for events during the legislative session. The legislative session is 45 days long and there are events occurring for that entire time.

February

Do what you can, when you can. Talk to family and friends to add their voices to what you would like to education and inform legislators about in all areas. Visits to the Capital, emails, and faxes are helpful. There are advocates who are there every day that you can contact if you would like.

March

The legislative session ends. Send a thank you note to your state representative and senator.

April

Re-group and take a deep breath!

More ideas – if you have the time (and energy)!

****Remember – anything you do will help educate legislators about your family's needs and concerns.**

- Invite legislators to your home
- Attend town meetings hosted by legislators
- Cottage meetings
- Become involved in a campaign during an election year
- Invite you legislators to a local Family to Family Network meeting
- Contact other local elected officials (i.e. school board, city council, mayor)

Sample Letter

Here is a sample introduction letter taken from an actual letter sent by a parent to their state representative and senator.

Dear (Representative/Senator):

My name is _____. My son, _____, will be ___ years old next month. We have been on the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) waiting list to receive respite services for almost ___ years.

Our son has autistic-like characteristics with severe intellectual disabilities. He is a great kid, but as he gets older it is more difficult to find and pay people who are qualified to stay with him when both my husband and I are gone. In order for our family to stay strong, we need respite to help provide a way for my husband and myself to get recharged so that we are able to provide a home where _____ can be nurtured and cared for with the energy and help he needs. Please help keep our family strong.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
1234 Anywhere Road
Your Town, UT 84111
(801) 987-6543
(Sign name with contact information)

**“People of
good will who
are working
for the
common
good will
always make
good
choices.”**

- Dr. Bill Cook

Sample Email

The following is from an email sent at the end of April to help advocacy efforts for next year and the 2008 legislative session. It is a sample of what you will see when you get involved with any of the advocacy groups.

Alice Perrault Stuebing has asked me to pass this message on to those of you interested in the Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) Waiting List. With the 2007 legislative session behind us, now is an excellent time to contact your legislators and let them get to know you and your personal situation. Thanks for all your advocacy efforts.

Joyce Dolcourt

Alice's message follows:

Hello again friends,

Joyce Dolcourt contacted me with a correction that I want to pass on to all of you. It is NOT the Medicaid Interim Committee that is taking on the DSPD Waiting List. It is the Health and Human Services Interim Committee taking this on – still a “successful move!” Below is a list of those serving on this committee if anyone would like to make contact. Phil Riesen is our representative and we only had a brief meeting during the session so I am going to invite him over to meet Julius and our family and talk about the wait for families. Please don't hesitate to the same with your representatives [and senators], even if they are not on the list below. This way, next year, we won't all be scrambling to build relationships with our representatives [and senators] during the session. They'll already know us well and in the intimate settings of our homes and neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Alice Perrault Stuebing

Health and Human Services Interim Committee 2007:

To study the DSPD Waiting List

Sen. D. Chris Buttars, Co-Chair
Rep. Paul Ray, Co-Chair
Sen. Allen M. Christensen
Rep. John Dougall
Rep. Jack R. Draxler
Rep. Julie Fisher
Rep. Jon J. Greiner
Rep. Wayne A. Harper
Rep. David Litvack
Sen. Scott D. McCoy

Rep. Rosalind J. McGee
Rep. Ronda Rudd Menlove
Rep. Phil Riesen
Rep. Stephen E. Sandstrom
Administrative Assistant - Joy L. Miller
Policy Analyst – Mark D. Andrews
Associate General Counsel –
Cathy J. Dupont
Associate General Counsel –
Thomas R. Vaughn