

Save the Date

Friends of Children Annual Luncheon

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

11:30 am – 1:00 pm

DoubleTree Hotel, Little Rock

For more information go to www.aradvocates.org/events

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2022 Soup Sunday

We were back in person for Central Arkansas Soup Sunday on April 10 and Northwest Arkansas Soup Sunday on April 24. We were happy to present safe AND festive events, and we appreciate everyone who helped make both events successful. All proceeds from Soup Sunday benefit the mission of AACF – ensuring that all children and their families have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives and to realize their full potential.



Best Charity Event

See how we celebrated at: www.flickr.com/photos/aacf



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Celebrating 45 Years
A Vision for Education
How to be an Advocate

Advocacy Matters



A Note from Executive Director Rich Huddleston

Since 1977, Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families (AACF) has been a dynamic and effective voice for Arkansas children and families. We are guided by a vision calling for equity for all children. We strive daily to help every Arkansas child live in a safe and stable home, enjoy healthy growth, and receive a quality education to realize their full potential. As we celebrate 45 years of advocacy for Arkansas children and families, I want to share with you our core values. These are fundamental to our work and our approach in promoting good public policy for children and families.

Child Centered: Our efforts are centered on the needs of the child and their family, with an emphasis on those who are most vulnerable.

Integrity: All of our work, both internally and externally, is done with integrity.

Equity: We lead with a racial equity focus while also pursuing equity for all marginalized groups.

Fairness and Justice: We diligently support fairness and justice in all of our work.

our **45th** anniversary year

Research Driven: All of our public policy recommendations are supported by research and data.

Inclusion: We strive to bring everyone to the table through partnerships and coalitions to accomplish our mission.

Community and Home Based: We believe that accessible solutions and services provided to families in their communities and/or within their own homes are better for children.

Affordable and Accessible: We believe that programs and services work best if they are affordable and accessible.

Accountability: We believe that families, providers, and funding agencies should be held accountable for the use of limited public resources.

Family Friendly: We are committed to being a family-friendly organization and workplace.



45 Years of Advocacy

Did you know? In 1990, AACF helped increase the number of schools participating in the school breakfast program and the number of sponsors for the summer food service program administered by the Child Nutrition Program.

In the 2018-2019 school year (latest data available),

31.7 million

school meals were served in Arkansas.

AACF Issue Areas

AACF focuses on key issue areas to help improve child well-being in Arkansas.

- Child welfare
- Economic security
- Early childhood and K-12 education
- Health care
- Hunger
- Immigrant children and families
- Juvenile justice
- Racial equity
- Tax and budget issues

AACF 2022 Board of Directors

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Early Childhood and K-12 Education

Olivia Gardner,
Director of Education Policy



Olivia joined AACF in June 2021. Previously she served as a Policy Analyst for Plurus Strategies, a government relations firm in Washington D.C. She also previously worked for the Association of American Medical Colleges, where she began her work on higher education issues. She received her Bachelor's degree in Government from George Mason University, and she is a student in the Executive Master's in Public Service program at the Clinton School of Public Service. Olivia is a native of Little Rock, where she currently lives with her dog.

Our vision for an education system that works for every Arkansas child:

- The state provides adequate and equitable K-12 school funding and requires effective spending on evidence-based strategies, such as school discipline reform and quality afterschool and summer programs, to give all students an excellent education and meet their developmental needs.
- All children are prepared early to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.
- State and local leaders, educators, and agencies realize their role in improving outcomes for children and work together effectively to increase their impact.



How to Be an Advocate for Children

Why is child advocacy important?

As a high-poverty state, Arkansas can and must do more to ensure that our children and families have the resources and opportunities they need to be healthy and to achieve economic stability. We've been asked, "How much is enough?" when we advocate for better state funding for essential programs for Arkansans. We will say "enough" when 151,000 children aren't living in poverty, when 41,000 kids ages 3 and 4 are attending preschool, when we don't have 71% of fourth graders reading below grade level and 73% of eighth graders performing math below grade level. It'll be enough when 43,000 children aren't going without health insurance and when we aren't ranked 49th in maternal health outcomes. It'll be enough when we don't have the highest teen birth rate in the nation.

solutions, advocacy is the best tool for creating significant and lasting change to make Arkansas a great place for children and families. And kids are counting on us to use our voices to speak up for them when important decisions are being made at the local, state, and federal level.

We have seen the power of policy over the years. Child advocates pushed for the creation of ARKids First; major investment in the state's pre-K program, Arkansas Better Chance; several increases in the state's minimum wage; and significant reforms to Arkansas's juvenile justice system, to name a few.

What can you do?

- Sign up for text alerts and follow policy news at www.aradvocates.org.
- Meet the candidates!
- Ask questions, and make informed choices based on how candidates answer your questions about policies that impact children.
- Make sure your friends and neighbors are registered to vote, and that they have a plan to get to their polling place.
- Vote!
- Follow up regularly with your elected officials. Make sure they hear from you when they do something you like as well as when you disagree.

How can public policy help?



How to Donate to Support Advocacy



Use this QR code to go to AACF's donation page
 Visit www.aradvocates.org/donate
 Text ADVOCATE to 243725
 Call Fran Carter 501-454-5014 or Missy Kincaid 479-466-0771