

Changing conditions for many

Helping one child at a time

Since 1969 • Annual Report • Year ending December 31, 2015



MAC has always been guided by the powerful idea that through the voice of a child, the heart of a parent, a caring community, and the pursuit of effective laws, we'll have a day when all children, regardless of their race or their special needs, will have an opportunity to succeed.

— HUBIE JONES, FOUNDER

A Message from Our Executive Director & Board Chair

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Since our founding in 1969 by Hubie Jones, we've been a voice for Massachusetts's most vulnerable children. 2015 was our 46th year of fighting for the rights of children who face barriers to equal education and life opportunities. We are proud of the ongoing impact we make on children's lives.

Thanks to your support, 2015 was a year of launching new programs and advocacy initiatives as well as achieving successes through existing projects. You'll read about the Boston B-SET (Boston Special Education Transition) task force we're leading to help create pathways for young adults with disabilities to pursue employment opportunities. You'll also learn about Proyecto Acceso, which is making our education advocacy services more accessible to Latino parents.

We also built on the successes of previous years, advocating to implement the laws we previously helped to pass: expanding services for children with autism, enacting fairer school discipline codes; and working steadily to make more schools safe, supportive and trauma-sensitive. These are a few of the long list of 2015 accomplishments you will learn about in this report.

Our advocacy is only possible thanks to your support. With your continued generosity, we will keep fighting to give Massachusetts children a chance to be heard and an opportunity to succeed.



Jerry Mogul



Matt Iverson

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jerry Mogul".

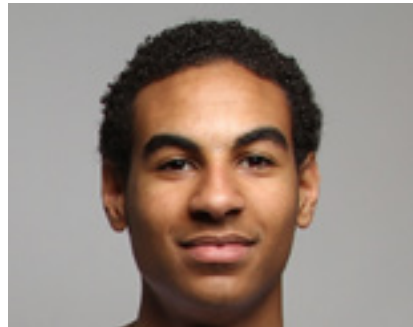
Jerry Mogul
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt Iverson".

Matt Iverson
Chairman, Board of Directors

Why We Do What We Do

Because Children Face Barriers to Success in School



27.4%

of Massachusetts children live in low-income households



82,123

Massachusetts children are English language learners.



50% of adults reported having experienced at least one form of **childhood adversity**. Responses to traumatic events can interfere with a child's ability to learn.



Black and Latino students experience high suspension rates:

6.9% Black	0.8% Asian
5.6% Latino	1.8% White

MORE THAN 
165,000

Massachusetts children have been diagnosed with a disability and found eligible for special needs educational services.





And we know their equal access to education matters

“ Studies have shown the benefits of preventive measures, such as high quality early intervention & education, in costs avoided & the return on investment...of high-quality public education & workforce development. ”

Measures of Poverty: A Boston Indicators Project Special Report

According to the Department of Labor only **20.4%** of people with disabilities have a job, while **68.3%** of people without a disability have a job.

MASSACHUSETTS FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATES IN 2015

	77% Black
	72% Latino
	92% Asian
	92% White

In 2015 **5,346 students** dropped out of school:

67% were high needs
40% were from low income families



We are a voice for children who face significant barriers to equal educational & life opportunities.

* For data citations, visit: www.massadvocates.org/background

We Change Conditions for Many

MAC by the Numbers – 2015 Facts



We launched and led a **70 member task force** that wrote an action plan to increase pathways to employment for Boston youth with disabilities.

Creating opportunities for all children.



More than **115,000 educators and others** received our books on *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*, since publication in 2005.

Fostering safe and supportive school environments.



Suspensions in Massachusetts **declined by 10,500 (20%)**, as the **Chapter 222 School Discipline law** continued to be implemented.

Enacting state-wide laws for children who need a voice.



We answered **approximately 1,000 calls** from parents and professionals, providing guidance and support through our free helpline.

Giving parents a place to turn when a child is struggling.



Thanks to our advocacy **55% of public colleges in Massachusetts** include people with intellectual disabilities.

Leveling the playing field for all.

The Way We Work

Amplify Voices



We Listen.

Starting with a child.

We receive 1,000 Helpline calls annually. We provide individual case advocacy, and listen for themes in order to understand the educational barriers facing vulnerable children.



We act.

Through advocacy.

After we determine priorities for systemic advocacy, we activate our parent and professional networks. With their help, we advocate for laws & policies that improve educational opportunities for children.



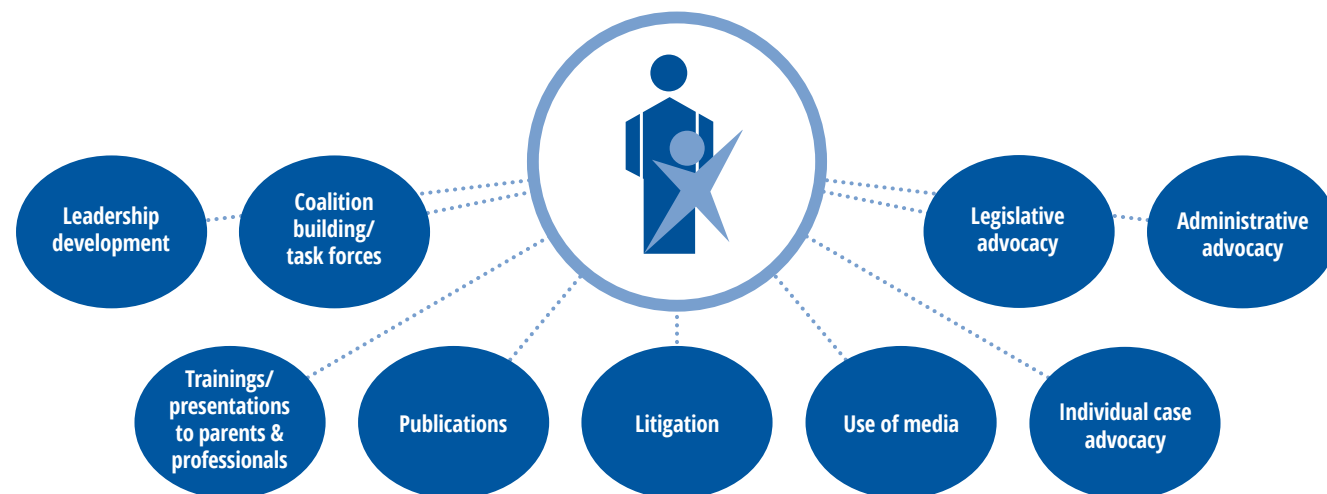
We follow through.

By seeing it through to ensure that laws have impact. We conduct workshops, create training tools, and advocate directly with state and city policy makers. We empower parents, students and educators, so laws are followed & children's rights are protected, enabling them to achieve their potential.



Systemic Advocacy: A Holistic and Collaborative Approach

We are far more than our staff, and we don't accomplish broadscale impact alone. Our long-standing relationships with other non-profits, legal professionals, policy experts, practitioners, legislators and families help us bring the right people to the table whether we are working on behalf of a student or organizing to pass a law. Our partners and collaborators are part of our advocacy circles. Together we tackle the challenge, drawing upon multiple strategies, tailored to the unique nature of every issue:



We Listen

2015 Statistics on Listening



Pro-bono attorneys and advocates play a key role in staffing our Helpline.

2015 Highlights:

- This year we launched **Proyecto Acceso a la Educación Especial**, a new initiative dedicated to providing our services to Spanish-speaking parents. This enabled us to better serve our Spanish-speaking helpline callers.
- We worked with **Harvard Business School Community Action Partners** to expand our pro-bono capacity and improve our Helpline services. We are in the process of implementing their recommendations.

2015 by the numbers:

- 983 parents and educators called the helpline
- 40 parents received free legal representation
- 37% of the calls we received were about children with autism, 19% with emotional impairment
- 19 trained volunteers contributed 397 hours answering calls

Why we volunteer:

“ I know what I had to go through to get my son the help and services he needs, so I can't imagine what it is like for a family who has little or no resources. ” — Shanna T.

“ I see it as a matter of justice. You can have the best system in the world, but it's pointless if no one knows how to use it. ” — Bart D.

At the heart of our advocacy is our free Helpline.

We provide assistance to parents whose children face barriers to education. Our priorities are children with disabilities, children who have been expelled or suspended from school, and children traumatized by exposure to family violence or other adverse experiences. We provide low-income families with free legal representation or arrange for pro-bono legal services.

We Act

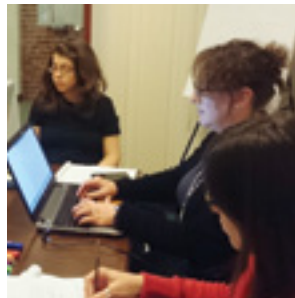
Choosing Strategies So That Children Succeed

MAC uses multiple strategies tailored to the unique nature of every issue facing children. Here are a few examples of those strategies in action:



PARTNERSHIPS: Working with allies to keep kids in school

MAC is a member of the Code of Conduct Advisory Council (COCAC), a group of parents, students, administrators, teachers, advocates, and community partners that advocate with the Boston Public Schools (BPS) to align school discipline rules with Chapter 222, the school discipline law, and to give children more opportunity to stay in school. This includes working to increase the number of schools that use positive discipline measures in lieu of suspensions. MAC and the BPS administration worked successfully to pass the third iteration of the Code of Conduct so that it more closely aligns with Chapter 222.



POLICY ADVOCACY: Implementing new laws we helped to pass

In 2014, MAC helped pass the Autism Omnibus Act and the Safe and Supportive Schools law. In 2015, we worked hard to implement these laws. For the Autism Omnibus Act, we successfully fought for MassHealth coverage of assistive technology devices and applied behavior analysis therapy. For the Safe and Supportive Schools law, MAC's director of our Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI) is the co-chair of the Safe and Supportive Schools Commission. She and the TLPI team have lead deliberations and helped draft the First Annual Report of the Commission required to be submitted to the legislature by law. The report articulates a vision for ensuring every school in the Commonwealth is a safe and supportive environment. It outlines five recommendations to the legislature to carry out this vision.



LANGUAGE ACCESS: Introducing Spanish language services

Thanks to seed funding from a generous donor, MAC launched **Proyecto Acceso a la Educación Especial** in 2015. This new initiative provides MAC's services, which include outreach, training, and case advocacy, for children with autism or other disabilities, to Spanish-speakers. MAC now has a dedicated attorney who can handle the needs of Spanish-speaking families. This enabled us to expand the services we offered to Spanish-speakers including taking more calls and cases, and providing more workshops in Spanish.

We Follow Through

The Individual Impact

Just because a law is passed doesn't mean it's always applied. Every day families call our Helpline because they need help understanding what services their children are entitled to under the law. In 2015, MAC represented 40 income-eligible parents and their children through staff and pro-bono attorneys.

The Right to Inclusion

The trouble started in second grade. Lisa's* son, Steven* has autism and was in a combined class of first graders and kindergarten with disabilities. Lisa knew Steven wasn't being challenged enough. Given the proper supports, she believed he would accomplish more if he was placed in a general education classroom for second grade.

However, just before second grade began, Steven's school told Lisa they did not have a class for second graders with disabilities, and Steven should transfer to a school further away. Steven had made friends and built relationships with his teachers. In addition, his brother attended the same school. Lisa wanted Steven to stay at his school, where he was familiar with everyone. She rejected the school's recommendation of a transfer, but Steven was still placed in a class for student with disabilities rather than a general classroom.

Steven's performance started declining and he started acting out in class. The school insisted they did not have the proper services for him. Then they filed for a hearing to get Steven removed and placed somewhere else.

That's when Lisa got in touch with MAC, who referred her to attorney Lillian Wong as a pro bono case. Within the span of two months the school withdrew their legal action. Steven was allowed in the general education track for third grade, where he is thriving both academically and socially.

Today, Steven is flourishing in his third grade classroom, and on track to be in the advanced class for fourth grade.

**Names changed*



“As a solo practitioner, I prefer to take all my pro bono cases from MAC. MAC is able to screen potential cases and introduce me to these new clients. MAC attorneys and advocates are also available for case consultation and collaboration. Just knowing that MAC is there for support makes me more willing to take on pro bono cases.”

— Lillian Wong, Attorney

“I'm so thankful to MAC for being there with me through every move and every update. It was a long, long journey...I was so happy to have Lillian. She's very good and she's so smart. Whatever I told her, she understood.

I want to share my story to let other parents know: don't give up. If you know you are right, don't give up. Get professional help. You definitely need someone to stand by you at a hearing.”

— Lisa, Parent

Year in Review

Key Accomplishments



The Autism Center

A pioneering voice in autism advocacy

The Autism Center works with elected officials to create laws and regulations to ensure that children and young adults with autism have access to the services and resources they need in order to reach their full potential. In 2015, we:

- Helped implement a **new law requiring state Medicaid** coverage of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices.
- Fought for **\$137 million in the state budget for Medicaid** coverage of ABA services. Children from low income families now have similar coverage to children with private insurance.
- Developed a **curriculum to train 350 parents and professionals** on the services covered by the Autism Omnibus Act, as well as strategies to obtain them.
- **Advocated for \$4.5 million** (a 12.5% increase) for state funding to support the Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver which provides in-home and community services for low-income children with autism who are at risk of being separated from their families.

- Partnered with a parent group in Lawrence to get more services, assistive technology, and higher education opportunities in the Lawrence school district for students with autism.

Boston Public School Reform (BSR)

Championing Equal Opportunity

BSR's goal is to eliminate racial and systemic achievement gaps so that all children in the Boston Public Schools (BPS) can succeed, regardless of race, class, native language or neighborhood. In 2015, we:

- Advocated for a **new Opportunity and Achievement Gap Task Force** to address opportunity and achievement disparities for Black and Latino students. Our BSR director was appointed as a member.
- Played a prominent role in the **BPS superintendent search process**. Our staff was on the interview panel and organized a community process to evaluate the finalists. We served on the new superintendent's transition team, organized an "East Boston Day," and contributed to the development of Dr. Tommy Chang's 100 Day Plan.
- Continued to fight for the **recruitment, hiring, development of diverse teachers in BPS**. Our advocacy led to the preservation and expansion of alternative teacher pathway programs within BPS. These programs offer high quality candidates, who did not pursue teaching through traditional means, an accelerated training program.
- Collaborated with the Code of Conduct Advisory Committee and senior BPS officials to **revise the BPS Code of Conduct** to help keep children in school and on a path to achievement.

Year in Review

Key Accomplishments (continued)

Special Education

Advocating for children with disabilities

As the leading policy advocate in the state, MAC protects the rights of students with disabilities, educates and empowers parents of children with disabilities, and defends special education. In 2015, we:

- Continued to lead the Boston Special Education Transition Project (B-SET), a **70 member task force, which produced an action plan to increase employment and higher education opportunities** for Boston youth with disabilities. (www.b-setforcareer.org)
- **Secured \$1.2 million in state funding**, (a 20% increase from 2014) for Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment grants. These grants are for schools to partner with colleges so youth with autism or other intellectual disabilities can participate in public college.
- Advocated for a **new state policy which requiring the use of paraprofessionals** to support students with autism and other disabilities in the least restrictive school environment.

School Discipline

Keeping students in school

The School Discipline project combats on school exclusion and the effects of zero tolerance policies, particularly on students of color and students with disabilities. In 2012, MAC helped passed Chapter 222, the School Discipline Law, which curbs the overuse of suspensions and expulsions. In 2015, we:

- Advocated for a **stronger rollout of the 2012 school discipline law** to ensure local districts and charter schools comply with the law.
- Recommended that "emergency removals" are included in out-of-school suspension statistics.

- Pushed for data collection to support our advocacy around non-exclusionary disciplinary alternatives.

Trauma & Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI)

Helping children with trauma learn

TLPI is a nationally recognized collaboration between MAC and Harvard Law School. It works to ensure children impacted by trauma succeed in school. In 2014, TLPI successfully advocated to pass the Safe and Supportive schools law, which uses TLPI's framework to create trauma-sensitive schools. This year we:

- Distributed over **4,200 copies of our publication *Helping Traumatized Children Learn***. Over the past 10 years, 115,000 downloads and print copies of both volumes have been circulated. The TLPI website had 74,000 visitors from over 150 countries.
- Led the **implementation of the new Safe and Supportive schools law**. TLPI's director serves as co-chair of the Safe and Supportive Schools Commission. She and the TLPI team helped developed the First Annual Report of the Safe and Supportive Commission for the legislature with recommendations for creating safe and supportive schools.
- Successfully advocated for half a million dollars to be used for implementation of the safe and supportive schools framework.
- Continued running the Harvard Law School clinic, which teaches law students to advocate for students with disabilities in team meetings and hearings.
- Launched a **pilot in five schools** to evaluate TLPI's approach to become a trauma-sensitive school. The American Institutes of Research began to study the schools and compile data about the process and its impact on school culture and student outcomes.

At Our Core: Self-Advocacy for Everyone

MAC's Young Adult Leader Fellowship

The Young Adult Leaders Fellowship is a partnership between Massachusetts Advocates for Children and the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston. It provides opportunities for young adults with an intellectual disability and/or autism between the ages of 18-26 to spend a year in MAC's office environment, while learning the professional skills needed to advocate on behalf of other youth with disabilities.

MAC fellows work for twenty hours a week, doing office tasks as well as participating in a range of advocacy activities. They participate in legislative briefings, take part in MAC legal trainings for parents and professionals, and attend IEP (Individualized Education Program) meetings for MAC clients. Each fellow is paired with a legal intern and supervised by a senior attorney and a MAC advocate. Not only is the Fellowship a meaningful experience for the fellows, but their presence and involvement improves the result of our advocacy in the State House and at IEP meetings.



Fellow Harry Goulart, fellowship coordinator Catherine Mayes, and fellow Lumene Montissol

Spotlight on Val Maclver: MAC Young Adult Fellow



When Val Maclver was thirteen, she accidentally read her mother's email and learned she had autism. During her stint as a 2015 Young Adult Leaders Fellow for MAC, she produced a series of three videos discussing her journey with autism from diagnosis to self-advocacy.

Val on the Fellowship:

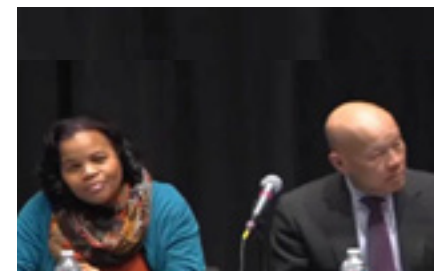
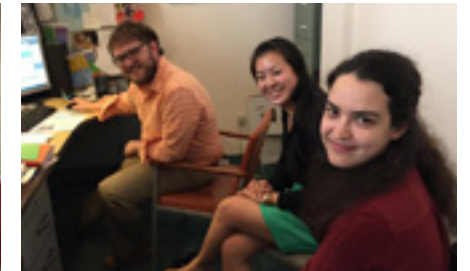
“Each day at MAC is an amazing experience. On some days, I attend a meeting or a lecture at the State House, write an essay on my experience, and make

phone calls to representatives regarding budget concerns. I have presented about transition at different trainings with different staff from MAC. In addition, I'm learning how to work in an office setting.

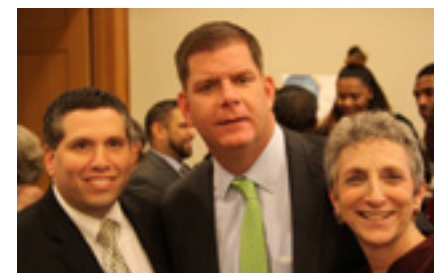
In my opinion, the Fellowship has a significant role in bridging gaps in my abilities to prepare me for a future career. I am passionate about improving my advocacy skills because I desire to grow as an individual. MAC is helping me to discover ways to branch out, stretch my comfort zone, and find out more about who I am as a person on the autism spectrum.”

2015 in Pictures

Photo Album



MAC at work: Top left: Jerry Mogul presents at the B-SET Action Plan release. (Photo from disabilityimages.com) Top middle: Representative Sannicandro with Young Adult Leader Fellow Val Maclver and Mike Mayes who presented at a MAC anti-bullying workshop. Top right: MAC legal and development interns Matt, Julia and Olivia. Left: BSR's Kim Janey sitting on the panel for the Boston Public Schools Superintendent interview process.



Celebrating Voices: At our October Gala, we recognized Charlotte Golar Richie as our honoree and TLPI legislative champions Representative Ruth Balse and Senator Sal DiDomenico. Left: (from left to right) Senator DiDomenico, Mayor Walsh and Representative Balse. Center: (from left to right) Jerry Mogul, MAC founder Hubie Jones, Charlotte Golar Richie, and Dr. Katherine Butler Jones. Right: the crowd at the gala.



Friends of the Autism Center
Left: The Friends' Author's Tea featuring Jess Wilson (left), Scott Lentine, and Susan Senator (right), pictured with Julia Landau. Right: The Friends threw an inclusive Halloween party.

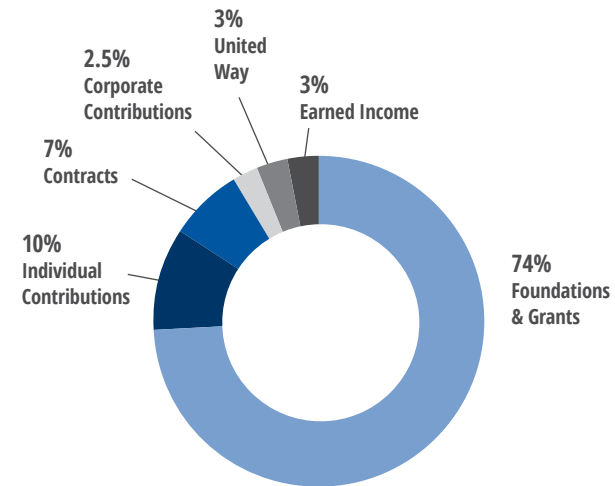
2015 Financials

Overview

Revenue and Support

Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2015

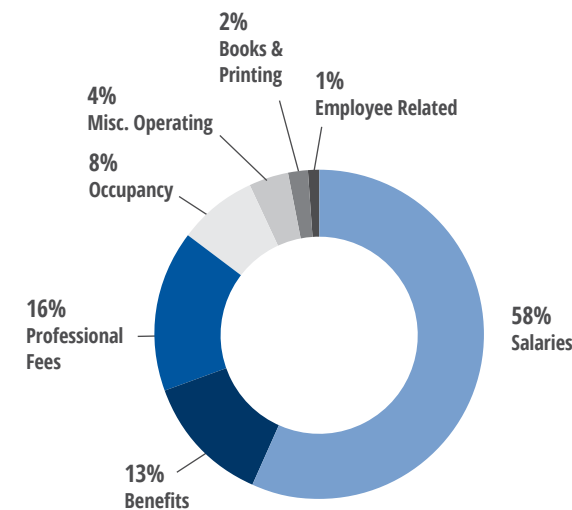
Foundations & Grants	\$ 1,041,065
Individual Contributions	138,198
Contracts	96,675
Corporate Contributions	35,750
United Way	44,100
Income (books, trainings, honorarium)	46,589
Miscellaneous	2,620
TOTAL	\$ 1,404,997



Expenses

Fiscal Year ending December 31, 2014

Salaries	\$ 810,162
Benefits	183,056
Professional Fees (consultants, audit, etc.)	206,245
Occupancy (rent, utilities, insurance)	101,644
Employee Related (travel, prof. devel., insurance, etc.)	17,494
Books & Printing	28,887
Misc Operating (phone, internet, supplies, equip., etc.)	57,519
TOTAL	\$ 1,405,007



Net Assets

Fiscal year ending December 31, 2015

Unrestricted	\$ 195,187
Temporarily Restricted	920,535
TOTAL	\$ 1,115,722

Our Team

Passionate Advocates

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Helping Parents Wherever They Are

Webinar thank yous

We know the parents and caregivers we serve sometimes have trouble attending meetings...So, in November of 2015, we launched our first webinar. In it, we discussed the major components of the new Autism Omnibus Bill which significantly expands services and opportunities for children and adults with autism. The webinar brought our trainings directly into the homes of our audiences making them accessible to broader audiences.

Below are a few words from our audience:

"This was excellent because of my own vision issues at night, I haven't been able to attend these types of information sessions. Thank you. Thank you." — Parent

"This is a subject I know very little about...the entire presentation was helpful." — Parent

"I have attended other trainings for this topic but found this one concise and clear. The presenters did a great job." — Parent

"It was excellent...I would love to see some families I provide home consultation services for take a similar webinar..."
— Audience member after attending our webinar

Our Mission Since 1969

Massachusetts Advocates for Children is an independent and effective voice for children who face significant barriers to equal educational and life opportunities, particularly those who have disabilities, are low income and/or are racially, culturally, or linguistically diverse.

MAC works to overcome these barriers by changing conditions for many children, while also helping one child at a time.

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