

Cogswell-Macy Act

Letter to Parents, Guardians, Grandparents and Caregivers

Copy and paste this onto your letterhead and disseminate, or copy and paste into an email. The power of families—who can share their remarkable stories with members of Congress—cannot be overstated!

Dear Parent, Guardian, Grandparent or Caregiver,

Families are THE most important influence in our lives. The direct care and support a child receives is critical for their growth and development. In addition, your opinions and perspective influence local schools, states and even our country, which encourages access and resources for the education of your child.

As a nation we have come a long way in providing education for children who are deaf/hard of hearing, visually impaired/blind or deafblind. There is much to be proud of and there are many success stories. However, many children have unmet educational needs, which we suspect you know. The stories about opportunities lost are harder to share but deserve attention to improve your child's future.

Concerned professionals and parents of children who are deaf/hard of hearing, visually impaired/blind or deafblind report a pattern of unmet needs. If a child has significant physical or intellectual disability, it is not uncommon for deafness, blindness, or deafblindness to be underreported and subsequently unaddressed. Without an accurate count of these students, it is impossible to have a true picture of how many teachers and other specialists are needed in the education system. To collect better data, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) must be greatly strengthened. If we do not act, we are accepting that many students will continue to be underrepresented and underserved.

A coalition of organizations believes that the issues are different across our country, but there needs to be better accountability and planning in every state. The passage of this legislation will require states to review services and develop plans for unmet needs. We believe that parents should be engaged and participate.

We hope our coalition of organizations will be a strong voice for your children, but without the help of families, the Alice Cogswell and Anne Sullivan Macy Act may never move forward. This crucial legislation will only pass with parents communicating honest concerns. Tell your stories of success, but please do not hold back when sharing concerns with your Senator or Member of Congress.

Your child deserves an equal playing field based on evidence based, best practices. Their ability to learn and grow into productive adults depends on a system that works.

Thank you for considering advocacy for your child and others. If you have any questions about the specifics of the proposed legislation, please complete the contact form on the website www.cogswellmacyact.org.