



## NDSS/D.A.D.S. Policy 101 for MEN webinar

### What is Public Policy and Advocacy?

**Public policy** can be generally defined as the course of action (or inaction) taken by the government with regard to a particular issue. Shaping public policy is a multifaceted process that involves the interplay of numerous individuals and interest groups collaborating to influence legislators to vote in a particular way. These individuals and groups use a variety of tactics and tools to advance their aims, including advocating their positions publicly, attempting to educate supporters and opponents, and mobilizing allies on a particular issue.

As it relates to Public Policy, **Advocacy** can be defined as attempting to influence through education, lobbying, or political pressure. Advocacy groups often attempt to educate the general public as well as legislators about the nature of problems, what legislation is needed to address problems, and the funding required.

### **Public policy priorities are influenced by advocacy. YOU are your child's advocate!**

In the Down syndrome community, these initiatives are led by the **National Down Syndrome Society Policy Center** in Washington DC.

The mission of the National Down Syndrome Society is to be the national advocate for the value, acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. To this end, the NDSS National Policy Center strives to protect the rights and remove the barriers of all individuals with Down syndrome.

### **The policy center:**

- Works with Congress and federal agencies to develop and improve laws, regulations and other policies
- Trains and educates parents, self-advocates and others to advocate on the local, state and national levels
- Organizes and participates in coalitions of national disability organizations
- Leads national and statewide Governmental Affairs Committees

The legislative and policy priorities of the NDSS National Policy Center span the life experience of individuals with Down syndrome from birth through adulthood and range in issue from healthcare to asset development.

### **These priorities are:**

- Raise expectations and improve outcomes for people Down syndrome in the prenatal period through age five
- Provide a first-class education for children with Down syndrome
- Create an economic future for adults with Down syndrome
- Develop treatments and therapies to improve the quality of life of people with Down syndrome

BUT---the Policy Center does not vote, YOU DO. The Policy Center does not have an elected representative; YOU DO. The Policy Center helps our elected representatives in Washington **understand** initiatives that affect our community, BUT---it takes our collective voices to **generate movement**. The Policy Center is not known in your state capital. BUT---you can be and your D.A.D.S. group should be.

D.A.D.S. National is making Policy a priority. Functionally, it's a natural fit and it should be a key ACTION piece for every D.A.D.S. group and the Policy Center a recipient of each D.A.D.S. groups fund raising efforts.

Our first step is the **NDSS/D.A.D.S. Policy 101 for MEN Webinar**, Tuesday, November 23rd, Noon, EST. To register, use this link: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/585560338>