



Family First Advocacy: A Family-Run Organization in Mahomet, Illinois

Family First Advocacy is a Family-Run Organization serving families across the Champaign Region. Guided by Systems of Care principles, the organization supports and educates parents and caregivers of children with behavioral health challenges so they can navigate complex systems with confidence and advocate effectively for their children.

Family First Advocacy recognizes that children's challenges affect the entire family. Services are designed to wrap families in coordinated support and help caregivers identify goals, develop action plans, and build long-term sustainability. Educational Advocates partner with caregivers to better understand and navigate the special education system, ensuring children receive appropriate supports and services within school settings. Parent Peer Support Partners, who are caregivers with lived experience, provide individualized guidance, empathy, and practical strategies to families facing similar circumstances.

The organization offers multiple trainings, including its signature IEP Boot Camp, which equips caregivers with the knowledge and tools needed to participate meaningfully in educational planning meetings. Monthly "Bridge" groups (Belonging, Resilience, Inspiration, and Dedication for Growing Empowerment) create structured social opportunities for caregivers and youth to connect with peers on similar journeys. Community events held throughout the Champaign Region, including the Mobile Sensory Museum and inclusive outreach activities, help shift community perceptions and promote authentic inclusion of children with disabilities or mental health challenges.

All services are provided at no cost to families and are delivered in homes, schools, and community settings alongside professional service providers. Family First Advocacy partners with school districts, local organizations, and service agencies to reduce fragmentation and improve coordination across systems.

Through education, peer support, and advocacy, Family First Advocacy strengthens caregiver leadership and contributes to a more responsive and inclusive regional behavioral health system.

Contact Family First Advocacy by website or phone:

www.familyfirstcommunity.org
(217) 898-1058

"We, as an organization, strive to support the family as a whole because no child struggles alone."



Flip to read more about the impact of the ILCHF Children's Mental Health Family-Run Organizations cohort.