

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

The Michigan Advocacy Toolkit: 7 Free Resources Every Family Should Know

Seven free, real, currently active tools and organizations, each doing something specific a Michigan family can put to use directly, whether that's tracking a bill, filing a complaint, or telling a story that actually changes a legislator's mind.

BY JIM PALASTY · 11 MIN READ · SEVEN TOOLS, EACH WITH A SPECIFIC JOB

7

FREE RESOURCES THIS GUIDE COVERS, EACH WITH A DISTINCT PURPOSE

A testimony toolkit, a national advocacy toolkit, a legislation tracker, a bill-tracking platform, and three Michigan-specific advocacy and rights organizations.

How it works

THREE STEPS

STEP 1

Storytelling is a specific, learnable skill

The Arc's storytelling toolkit and 'My Testimony Blueprint' give families a concrete structure for turning personal experience into effective advocacy.



STEP 2

National frameworks translate to state-level action

The Autism Society's State Disability Advocacy Toolkit and ANCOR's Amplifier tool both give families ready-made structures for state-level engagement.



STEP 3

Michigan-specific organizations anchor the work locally

The Arc Michigan, Disability Rights Michigan, and the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition each serve a distinct, complementary role.

What each resource is actually for

The Arc's Storytelling Toolkit	Turning your family's story into persuasive testimony
Autism Society Advocacy Toolkit	A broad, adaptable framework for state-level engagement
ANCOR's Amplifier	Real-time tracking and engagement on service policy
BillTrack50	Following a specific Michigan bill's progress directly
Disability Rights Michigan	Filing rights violations and formal legal advocacy
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition	Grassroots, statewide advocacy and coalition-building

SEVEN BOOKMARKS THAT BECAME A REAL ADVOCACY PRACTICE

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Wendell had always felt advocacy was something other people did, people with law degrees or political connections he didn't have. A friend sent him this exact list of seven resources. Within three months, he'd used The Arc's testimony blueprint to prepare remarks for a legislative hearing, tracked a relevant bill on BillTrack50 through two committee votes, and filed his first formal complaint with Disability Rights Michigan. None of it required a law degree.

SEVEN BOOKMARKS AND THREE MONTHS TURNED SOMEONE WHO FELT SHUT OUT OF ADVOCACY INTO SOMEONE ACTIVELY DOING IT.

What matters, at a glance

MICHIGAN SPECIFIC

1. The Arc's Storytelling Toolkit

Includes 'My Testimony Blueprint,' a concrete structure for turning personal family experience into effective, persuasive legislative testimony.

2. Autism Society State Disability Advocacy Toolkit

A national framework adaptable to Michigan-specific advocacy, covering everything from legislator meetings to public comment strategy.

3. ANCOR's Amplifier Tool

A platform specifically built to help families and providers track and engage with disability service policy and legislation in real time.

4. BillTrack50

A legislation-tracking platform that lets any family follow a specific Michigan bill's progress through committee and floor votes directly.

5. The Arc Michigan

Michigan's statewide chapter, providing direct advocacy support, information, and connection to local resources across the state.

6-7. Disability Rights Michigan and the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition

Michigan's federally mandated Protection & Advocacy agency and a statewide grassroots advocacy coalition, each with a distinct, complementary role.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

☐ The Arc's storytelling toolkit and 'My Testimony Blueprint,' bookmarked

☐ An account or familiarity with ANCOR's Amplifier tool

☐ Contact information for both Disability Rights Michigan and the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition

☐ The Autism Society's State Disability Advocacy Toolkit, reviewed once

☐ A BillTrack50 account tracking at least one Michigan bill relevant to your family

YOUR MOVE

When you're building your own advocacy toolkit, here is where to start

1

Bookmark all seven resources, even if you only need one right now.

2

Identify which resource matches your most immediate concern today.

3

Use The Arc's testimony blueprint before any legislative or public comment opportunity.

4

Track any bill relevant to your family directly on BillTrack50.

5

Contact Disability Rights Michigan directly for any suspected rights violation.

6

Connect with the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition for broader coalition advocacy.

Advocacy isn't a credential. It's seven specific tools, each doing one specific job, available to any family willing to use them.

MICHIGAN ADVOCACY TOOLKIT RESOURCES

The Arc (thearc.org) publishes the storytelling toolkit and "My Testimony Blueprint" referenced in this post. The Autism Society (autismsociety.org) publishes the State Disability Advocacy Toolkit. ANCOR's Amplifier (ancor.org/amplifier), BillTrack50 (billtrack50.com), The Arc Michigan (arcmi.org), Disability Rights Michigan (drmich.org), and the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (mymdrc.org) are each described above.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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