



Advocacy and Policy Strategies for Suicide Prevention

Note: This addendum to the Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention was developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) did not contribute to the Advocacy section of this Blueprint and any information described in this section does not necessarily reflect the views of NIMH, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Health and Human Services, or the US government broadly.

Suicide is complex and tragic. It can also be preventable.

Pediatricians, other medical professionals, public health professionals, and community members can engage in policy and advocacy strategies to support youth at immediate risk of suicide, and to address upstream risk and protective strategies that can reduce suicide risk.

Suicide prevention advocacy can focus on any layers of the public health strategy to reduce suicide, outlined earlier in this Blueprint. Examples include:

- **Universal strategies:** advocating for funding for suicide prevention programs and education; promoting mental health parity; promoting education on suicide prevention for school personnel in all communities
- **Selective strategies:** promoting training and skill-building for professionals who work with populations at elevated risk for suicide

- **Indicated strategies:** advocating for policies requiring effective brief interventions for youth with suicidal ideation or behavior; promoting resources for continued recovery for at-risk youth, such as support groups

Policy and advocacy priorities for youth suicide prevention are outlined below. These strategies can be pursued at the community, state, or federal level.

Build the Evidence Base to Address Disparities in Youth Suicide Prevention 

Increase Payment & Insurance Coverage for Mental, Behavioral Health, and Suicide Prevention Services for Youth 

Increase Access to Affordable, Effective Mental Health Care for Youth 

Build the Mental and Behavioral Health Workforce 

Address Lethal Means Access to Reduce Suicide Risk Among Youth 

Address Disparities in Suicide Risk 

Foster Healthy Mental Development in Children and Adolescents 

Support Children and Adolescents in Crisis 

Additional Resources

For a one-page summary of “Advocacy and Policy Priorities for Youth Suicide Prevention,” click [here](#).

For a PDF version of “Advocacy and Policy Priorities for Youth Suicide Prevention,” click [here](#).

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Source American Academy of Pediatrics